



Hypertension, Diet & Lifestyle

The circulatory system is the “highway” of our bodies. It delivers nutrients and moves wastes to be moved out of our bodies. The pressure of blood flowing against the walls of your arteries is blood pressure. Normally, blood pressure will rise and fall throughout the day, however if it remains elevated for a long time it can damage the heart and other parts of our body. Uncontrolled blood pressure can ultimately cause stroke, heart attack, kidney failure, heart failure and sexual dysfunction. Hypertension occurs when the blood pressure is higher than normal.



Blood Pressure Levels:

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic mm Hg (Upper Number)		Diastolic mm Hg (lower number)
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129	and	Less than 80
High Blood Pressure- Stage 1	130-139	or	80-89
High Blood Pressure- Stage 2	140 or higher	or	90 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis	Higher than 180	And /or	Higher than 120

Risk Factors for hypertension include:

Modifiable Risks	Non-Modifiable Risks
Smoking, second-hand smoke, Diabetes, Being obese or overweight, high cholesterol, poor diet, and inactivity	Family history, race/ethnicity, sleep apnea, male gender, chronic kidney disease and advancing age.

General Nutrition Guidelines:

- ❖ Consuming a healthy diet high in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products but low in saturated fats and trans fats is helpful to improve blood pressure levels.
- ❖ Salt intake, specifically sodium consumption should be limited. 1,500 mg/day of Na/Salt is a good goal to work toward, but limiting to 1,000mg/day may be even more helpful to regulate blood pressure. Limiting processed foods which tend to be high in salt is a good way to start. Check with your doctor and dietitian for the level that is best for you.
- ❖ Increasing potassium intake to 3,000 to 5,000 mg per day is also beneficial.
- ❖ Speak with your doctor regarding alcohol consumption. Generally, it is advised for men to limit consumption to drinks per day and one drink per for women.

Foods to Choose	Foods to Limit/Avoid
Breads: whole wheat breads, unsalted breads, and rolls	Breads or rolls with salted tops, packaged stuffing, biscuits, corn bread, bread crumb mixes
Cereals: regular cooked cereals, puffed wheat, puffed rice and shredded wheat cereals	Instant cereals, regular ready to eat cereals
Crackers& snacks: unsalted crackers and snacks and unsalted peanut butter	Salted crackers and snacks, party spreads & dips, regular peanut butter
Pasta, rice & potatoes: all types	Pre-made, processed, canned, frozen
Dried beans& peas: all types	Pre-made, processed, canned
Meats& alternatives: fresh or frozen, low Na canned varieties	Salted, smoked, canned, spiced, pickled, flavored, marinated, processed, frozen dinners, cold cuts, luncheon meats, meat pies.
Fruits & Vegetables: fresh or low sodium canned or frozen, low Na canned varieties	Canned products, frozen products with sauces or flavoring
Dairy products: milk, cream sour cream, yogurt, low Na cottage cheese, low Na cheeses	Buttermilk, processed cheeses, slices and spreads, regular cheeses and cottage cheeses
Fats & oils: unsalted margarine, regular butter, or mayonnaise, cooking oils, salt free gravies, low Na salad dressings and sauces * limit for healthy eating	Bacon fat/grease, salt pork, gravies and commercial salad dressing and sauces
Soups: salt free soup and low sodium bouillon cubes	Regular canned or prepared soups, stews, broths, bouillon and packaged frozen soups
Desserts: sherbet, fruit ices, gelatin, pudding, ice cream, marmalade, jelly, jam and honey *limit for healthy eating	Commercially prepared and packaged baked goods and chocolate candies
Beverages: coffee, tea, soft drinks, fruit flavored drinks without Na	Carbonated beverages with Na or salt added; softened water
Condiments: fresh & dried herbs, low Na products, vinegar, lemon, lime, seasoning blends without salt	Table salt and any form of salt, bouillon cubes, MSG, meat extra, Worcestershire Sauce, tarter sauce, ketchup, chili sauce

Exercise:

Physical activity and losing weight with diet and movement may help reduce blood pressure. 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity or at least 75 minutes of vigorous per week or a combination of both may be helpful for overall health. Check with your doctor before beginning an exercise regimen.



Medications:

Sometimes medications will be prescribed to help control your blood pressure. It is important to take medications as directed. These may include ones that **diuretics**, which help eliminate sodium and water from the body, **ACE inhibitors** (Angiotensin-converting enzyme) & **ARBs** (Angiotensin II receptor blockers), which relax the blood vessels and decrease narrowing, and **Calcium channel blockers** which work on the muscle of the blood vessels. (Grapefruit should be avoided with Calcium channel blockers) Other medication may be added if blood pressure does not improve.

References

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