

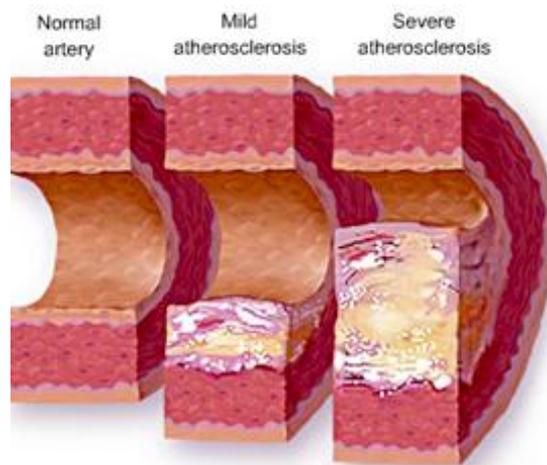
High Blood Pressure and How It Impacts Your Heart Health

Blood pressure measurement consists of two numbers. The systolic (the higher number) measures the pressure when your heart is contracting to force blood out, while the diastolic measures the pressure your when your heart is at rest. A normal reading is about 120/80 mmHG. If your blood pressure is above 140/90 you are considered to have high blood pressure or 'hypertension', which makes you more susceptible to heart disease, strokes and kidney disease.



Measuring blood pressure can tell us a lot about the health of our arteries, and there is no reason why you shouldn't have a blood pressure reading of 120/80 when you're in your 80's, once you take good care of your body and your arteries.

When we talk about high blood pressure it's important to remember that high blood pressure is a symptom of a problem, not the problem itself. The problem occurs when arteries become inflamed, constricted, and 'furred-up', this is known as atherosclerosis. Narrower arteries mean the oxygen supply to your body's tissues is reduced and so the heart must work even harder, which further raises blood pressure, which in turn causes further damage to the arterial walls...and so the spiral of degenerating health continues.



Another factor to consider with high blood pressure is the tension of the arterial muscle. The arterial walls are flexible to ensure smooth blood flow, and are surrounded by smooth muscle that can expand & contract as required. If these muscles are too tense, then blood pressure will be high. This

tension is controlled by the balance of the minerals sodium and potassium, and calcium and magnesium, inside and outside of the body's cells. What source does our body's have to rely on to provide this balance of essential minerals? Our diets of course!

How To Help Lower High Blood Pressure or Maintain Healthy Blood Pressure Through Diet and Lifestyle

Foods to Avoid:

- Reduce refined grains & their products such as white bread, white pasta, pizza etc, as well as confectionary & sugary foods like sweets, biscuits, cakes and so on.
- Avoid hydrogenated oils and fats found in processed margarines, pies, pastries and cakes.
- Many people with high blood pressure benefit from a low sodium (salt) diet. Sodium causes water to be retained by the kidneys, this in turn makes our blood volume larger, and therefore blood pressure higher. Cutting out processed foods will greatly reduce the level of sodium in your diet. Break the habit of bringing the salt cellar to the table. It's also a good idea to switch to a more potassium & magnesium based salt such as 'Solo' or 'Himalayan Rock Salt'. ***Remember, potassium and magnesium rich foods lower blood pressure, and sodium raises it.***
- Reduce stimulants such as tea & coffee, and eliminate nicotine & tobacco. Stimulants increase blood pressure and too many combined with existing hypertension greatly increases your risk for heart disease or stroke.
- Keep intake of red meat and dairy produce at a low to moderate level.

Foods to Include:

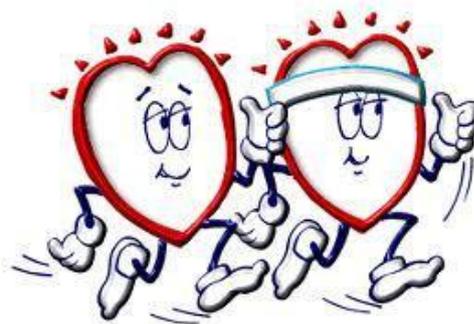
- Plenty of fresh vegetables, particularly green and brightly coloured veg such as broccoli, kale, spinach, avocados, tomatoes, red peppers, butternut squash, carrots, beetroot etc. These are high in antioxidants which are heart protective, as well as potassium and magnesium for healthy blood pressure.



- Plenty of fresh fruit such as oranges, grapefruits, blueberries, raspberries, peaches, mangoes, pineapple etc. Important sources of soluble fibre, anti-oxidants, potassium & magnesium.
- Eat whole grains; brown rice, quinoa, beans, pulses, nuts & seeds regularly. Rich in B Vitamins for energy metabolism, folic acid, fibre, protein, potassium and magnesium.
- Increase consumption of garlic, onions and celery for their anti-oxidant, anti viral and anti-bacterial benefits.
- Make sure you get enough healthy essential fats. Eat oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines 3 times per week, and use unrefined cold-pressed virgin olive/ walnut/ pumpkin/ flaxseed oil for salad dressings.
- Drink plenty of water - 8 glasses per day. A lack of water causes sodium levels inside cells to increase, as its job is to hold onto water, consequently blood pressure rises.
- Switch to Solo, Himalayan rock salt or Herbamare for seasoning food.

Lifestyle Factors to Consider:

- Stress is a major factor in high blood pressure, in fact it is often a causative factor. Stress raises adrenaline which increases your heart rate, breathing and blood pressure, and also constricts arteries. The key issue is response and processing of stress Explore stress management techniques and methods of relaxation such as deep breathing exercises, yoga, meditation and tai chi.



- If you are overweight it is crucial that you engage in a healthy eating plan to achieve a healthy weight. Excess weight increases the burden on your heart and entire vascular system.
- Get active! Exercise is vital for reducing blood pressure. According to researchers, little more than half an hour of exercise every day could cut your risk of high blood pressure by almost a fifth. A mere four hours a week of physical activity during leisure time could make the

difference between a healthy blood pressure and having to take drugs for life. It also has the added bonus of triggering the release of 'feel-good' hormones, and helps keep you in shape!

- Quit smoking! Cigarettes and the chemicals they contain damage your arteries, increase blood clotting which subsequently increases your risk for heart disease and stroke.

N.B. Always consult your GP before under-taking any major diet and/or lifestyle changes, especially if you are on medication.

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