

Lower Your Blood Pressure the Nutritional Way

Hypertension has been called “the silent killer” because blood pressure can creep up quietly over time before striking suddenly via a heart attack or stroke. Often, people in their 40’s and 50’s will find out during their annual physical examination that their pressure is climbing, and they may need to go on medication to control it. But before it reaches the point of requiring medical intervention, you can implement some lifestyle changes that may lower your blood pressure before prescription meds are needed. You may want to check with your doctor first, but healthy adjustments like those described below can sometimes make a difference.

1. Get more calcium. Research shows that calcium products can play a role in reducing blood pressure. Look for low-fat varieties of certain dairy products, and experiment to find the foods or beverages you most enjoy. Try to get three servings of calcium-based foods each day. This could take the form of eight-ounce glasses of milk, a combination of yogurt and milk products, or even some foods that contain calcium, like broccoli.
2. Reduce your salt intake. Salt continues under investigation as a probable instigator of hypertension. Keep the saltshaker in the cupboard so you will be less tempted to use it. Don’t salt foods automatically while cooking them, and taste prepared food before adding salt as a seasoning. Beware of hidden salt in processed foods like lunchmeats or as a preservative in frozen foods, especially those that are precooked before freezing. Your body needs some salt, however; so don’t give it up altogether without your doctor’s knowledge.
3. Stay away from fatty foods. Fat clogs the arteries, thus contributing to a rise in blood pressure over time. Cut back on fried foods, fatty cuts of red meat, and foods cooked in oil or butter. Substitute other types of seasonings, like lemon juice or herbs, to replace the taste of fatty flavorings in salads or deep-fried items.
4. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. Many disease associations, like the American Diabetes Association or the American Heart Association, recommend a diet that includes several daily helpings of fruit and vegetables. These can be eaten fresh, frozen, canned, or cooked. Plant foods often contain fiber, which has been shown to reduce blood clotting and improve circulation, thereby contributing to lower blood pressure.
5. Cut back on sweets. Commercially prepared cookies, cakes, and other goodies often contain unhealthy levels of fat, salt, and calories. Eating these too often can interfere with the intake of healthier foods that can help to control blood pressure. When you want to snack, eat low-fat veggie dips, fresh fruit, or baked chips instead of the fried variety.

Changing your diet may not be enough to lower or manage your blood pressure. But it might delay an increase in your numbers, or when combined with other therapies like exercise, stress reduction, and medication, helps to keep your numbers where they belong. Ask your doctor about the role that nutrition might be able to play in controlling your blood pressure.

About the Author

The Food Standards Agency carries out a varied programme of work on nutrition, including practical initiatives, such as the Cooking Bus, and research.

Source: <http://www.productsherbal.com>