

Can Nitrates Help Control High Blood Pressure?

Just as CoQ10 appears to be beneficial in reducing blood pressure levels, nitrates, another alternative natural remedy, also appear to have a positive affect on reducing hypertension. What are nitrates? Nitrate is a salt of nitric acid, and is an essential plant nutrient found in soil that is taken in by plants and used as their primary nitrogen source. Thus, nitrate is a natural part of all vegetables, fruits and cereals. Nitrate should not be confused with nitrite – a chemical substance within the body created by the digestion of foods containing nitrite (fish, meat and poultry preservatives) or nitrate. How can nitrates help with hypertension? New studies have found that nitrates, nutrients found in leafy green vegetables such as lettuce and spinach, may actually help control blood pressure by maintaining the health of blood vessels. This may not come as a surprise to some people, especially considering the fact that past studies have discovered that the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet, a diet rich in vegetables and fruits, can lower blood pressure. However, although the DASH diet has had a positive effect on those with hypertension, researchers are not sure what exact nutrients within vegetables and fruits are responsible for lowering blood pressure. For this reason, new studies that focus on nitrate have been conducted to determine if nitrate is one of the main reasons for the drop in hypertension. One short-term study involving 17, non-smoking and healthy young adults, observed the effects a nitrate supplement had on the participants. Each person was given a daily dose of nitrate supplement that equalled the amount found in 150-250 grams of vegetables rich in nitrate (IE. lettuce, spinach, beetroot, etc.). They were to take the supplement for three days, and then take a daily placebo during three different days. The results of the study concluded that although the nitrate supplement did not reduce systolic blood pressure (the higher number of a blood pressure reading), it lowered diastolic blood pressure by an average reduction of 3.7 mm Hg. The researchers that conducted the study found that the benefits of the nitrate supplement were similar to those found in the DASH studies that were also tested on healthy individuals. Nevertheless, despite the findings, it is clear that more research needs to be done in order to find out just how effective nitrate supplements are in lowering blood pressure. That being said, you don't need to wait for research to prove the affects nitrate has on lowering blood pressure, when it is common knowledge that fruits and vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet and are required to maintain a strong and healthy immune system. Therefore, there is no harm in adding more nitrate-rich foods to your diet and cutting back on fatty fried foods. The following is a list of foods high in nitrates. You may find that you've already made many of these foods an active part of your lifestyle:- Lettuce

- Spinach
- Cabbage
- Beets
- Radishes
- Carrots

Nitrate can also be found in the air, water and is also a preservative found in foods including cheese, processed meats, and fish, as well as in spirits and liqueurs.

About the Author

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