



High blood pressure diet

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE OVERVIEW – hypertension (high blood pressure) is a common condition that can lead to serious complications if untreated. These complications can include stroke, heart failure, heart attack, and kidney damage. Making dietary changes and losing weight are effective treatments for reducing blood pressure. Other lifestyle changes that can help to reduce blood pressure include stop smoking, reducing stress reducing alcohol consumption, and exercising regularly. These changes are effective when used alone but often have the greatest benefit when used together. Many patients with hypertension will also require medications to lower their blood pressure to safe level.

DIETARY CHANGES AND BLOOD PRESSURE – making changes in what you eat can help to control high blood pressure.

Reduce sodium (salt) – the main source of sodium in the diet is the salt contained in packaged and processed foods and in food from restaurants.

The body requires a small amount of sodium in the diet. However, most people consume more sodium than they need. A low-sodium diet contains fewer than 2 grams (2000 milligrams) of sodium each day.

Reducing the amount of sodium you consume can lower blood pressure if you have high or borderline-high blood pressure.

Reduce alcohol – drinking an excessive amount of alcohol increases your risk of developing high blood pressure. People who have more than two drinks per day have an increased risk of high blood pressure compared with nondrinkers.

On the other hand, drinking one (for women) or two (for men) alcoholic beverages per day appears to benefit the heart in people greater than 40 years old. The protective effect applies with preexisting high blood pressure.

Eat more fruits and vegetables – adding more fruits and vegetables to your diet may reduce high blood pressure or protect against developing high blood pressure. A strict vegetarian diet may not be necessary.

Eat more fiber – eating an increased amount of fiber may decrease blood pressure. The recommended amount of dietary fiber is 20 to 35 grams of fiber per day. Many breakfast cereals are excellent sources of dietary fiber.



Eat more fish – eating more fish may help to lower blood pressure, essentially when combined with weight loss.

Caffeine – caffeine may cause a small rise in blood pressure, although this effect is usually temporary. Drinking a moderate amount of caffeine (less than 2 cups of coffee per day) does not increase the risk of high blood pressure in most people.

Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan – the DASH eating plan combines many of the interventions noted above. It is high fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy, and fiber. Patients who strictly follow the DASH eating plan can have fairly significant reduction in weight, particularly when combined with low-sodium diet.

Exercise – regular exercise (walking, running) for 30 minutes most days of the week can lower your blood pressure, even if you don't lose weight. To maintain this benefit, you must continue to exercise.

WEIGHT LOSS AND BLOOD PRESSURE – being overweight or obese increases your risk of having high blood pressure, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. The definition of overweight and obese are based up on a calculation called body mass index (BMI). A patient is said to be overweight if his or her BMI is greater than 25, while a patient with BMI of 30 or greater is said to be obese. People who are overweight or obese can see significant reduction in blood pressure with even modest weight loss.

AVOID TAKING MEDICATION AND SUPPLEMENTS THAT INCREASE BLOOD PRESSURE – in susceptible individuals, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications, otherwise known as NSAIDs (ibuprofen, naprosyn, etc), can increase blood pressure. Oral contraceptive pills (OCPs) may increase blood pressure in some women. Additionally, any stimulant, including those found in some decongestants, weight loss products, and illicit drugs, can increase blood pressure. If you are regularly consuming any of these substances, you can talk to your health care provider about potential substitutions.

WHAT IF I STILL HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE? – if you continue to have high blood pressure despite making changes in your diet, exercising more, and losing weight, you may need a medication to reduce your blood pressure.