

Lifestyle Tips to Lowering Your Blood Pressure



How can I lower or prevent high blood pressure?

Follow the guidelines below to help lower or prevent high blood pressure (also called hypertension).

1. Maintain healthy body weight

- Check with your health care provider to see if you are a healthy weight
- If you do plan to lose weight, do so slowly through healthy eating and physical activity.

2. Enjoy active living

- Regular exercise can lower blood pressure in some people. It can also help with weight control, lowering cholesterol, and stress management.
- Choose an activity you enjoy such as walking, jogging, cycling, or swimming.
- Start slowly, and gradually work your way up to 30-60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity, most days of the week.

3. Limit alcohol

- High amounts of alcohol can increase your blood pressure and can contribute to weight gain. You may choose to avoid alcohol altogether.
- If you have high blood pressure and you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation. Limit alcohol intake to no more than 1 drink per day for women and 2 drinks a day for men.

4. Do not smoke

- Smoking cigarettes does not cause high blood pressure. However, smoking increases the risk of heart disease and stroke, and may make your blood pressure lowering medicine less effective.
- If you smoke, give quitting a try- on your own or with the support of your doctor or a lifestyle counsellor.

5. Reduce your stress

- How you handle stress can affect your blood pressure. Ask your doctor for help if you have problems managing stress in your life.

6. Lower your salt intake

- The sodium in your diet can raise your blood pressure by causing your body to hold onto fluid.
- Lower your sodium intake by eating less canned, processed, and fast foods- these account for most of the sodium we eat.
- Table salt (including sea salt, and Kosher salt) is another dietary source of sodium

7. Take your medications as directed

- Your medications will only work effectively if you remember to take them regularly
- Even when making lifestyle changes, it is important to continue taking your medications, as directed by your physician and/ or pharmacist.

8. Follow a healthy eating plan

- Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy, lean meat and legumes
- Limit foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol and avoid foods containing trans fat
- The **DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)** way of eating has been proven to reduce blood pressure.