

How to Lower Your Blood Pressure



High blood pressure is considered any reading over 140 on the top number (systolic blood pressure) and/or 90 on the bottom number (diastolic blood pressure). Constant high pressure exerts undue stress and strain on your blood vessels and organs. Over time, the damage that this causes sometimes leads to heart attack and stroke. For many people, there are no signs or symptoms of high blood pressure. For this reason it is called the “Silent Killer” because the first symptom is a severe stroke or heart attack. The best way to know if you suffer from this disease is regular checking of your blood pressure by you or your primary care physician.



Limit Salt

Salt causes your body to hold fluid. For some people that directly affects their blood pressure. Do not add salt to foods when cooking or eating, limit the amount of processed food, snack foods, and read food labels to look for the amount of salt in what you are eating.

Lose Weight

Being overweight puts additional strain on your heart. It has to work harder to get blood to all your organs. Losing weight will not only make you feel better, but it can also lower your blood pressure. A low fat diet and at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day is a good place to start.

Exercise

Exercise not only helps to lose weight, but it is also a great stress reliever. Stress can cause your blood pressure to go up. The best way to get started is to find something you enjoy, start slow – a little is better than none – and don't give up. If you don't like what you start try something different! Ideally, you should aim for some type of physical activity for 30 minutes at least 3-5 times per week.

Medicine

Many people need medicine to keep their blood pressure within the normal range. The most important thing to remember when taking medicine is that you do not stop it without talking to your doctor and you take it exactly as the doctor tells you to. It is not unusual to have to change medicine after a period of time or adjust the dosage. If you are having any side effects, talk with your doctor.