

Seven Successful Strategies for Lowering Blood Pressure

Maintaining a healthy blood pressure is among the most critical factors in protecting your overall heart health. Be sure to have it measured regularly, and if your blood pressure is high, it's time to take action. There's not much you can do about your age or family history of high blood pressure, but most risk factors are within your control.

Try the following natural strategies to help lower your blood pressure:

- **Lose weight.** If you're overweight, this may be the most helpful thing you can do for your blood pressure and your overall health. Weight loss significantly reduces blood pressure in most people who are above their ideal weight.
- **Limit your salt intake.** Not everyone will benefit from limiting their salt intake. Some people are not "salt sensitive." But if you are, eating less salt can help get your blood pressure to where it needs to be.
- **Get enough calcium, magnesium, and potassium.** These minerals play an important role in maintaining blood pressure.
- **Watch your fat and cholesterol.** Try to limit your intake of saturated fat and foods high in cholesterol.
- **Stay active.** Regular exercise alone can help lower your blood pressure. If you also lose weight, you'll lower it even more.
- **Limit your alcohol.** Too much alcohol can increase your blood pressure. Many people have high blood pressure solely because they drink too much alcohol. Daily intake should be no more than 24 ounces of beer, eight ounces of wine, or two ounces of liquor.
- **Stop smoking.** People with high blood pressure who smoke are three to five times more likely to die from heart disease than nonsmokers.