

Six foods that may help win the blood pressure battle

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In the United States more than 77 million adults have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, which can cause heart disease and stroke. In the October issue of *Food Technology* magazine, Contributing Editor Linda Milo Ohr writes about six foods that have been shown in studies to have a beneficial effect on lowering blood pressure.

Grape Seed Extract:

Results from a study of 32 pre-hypertensive adult subjects showed that a patented grape seed extract may help to lower both systolic and diastolic [blood pressure](#) after just eight weeks (Polyphenolics, 2013a). In another study, 36 pre-hypertensive adult subjects were either given a drink with a placebo or grape seed extract. The participants that consumed the [grape seed extract](#) experienced significant reductions in blood pressure compared to those who consumed the placebo (Polyphenolics, 2013b).

Nuts:

A study (Katz et al, 2012) showed that 56 g of walnuts a day reduced systolic blood pressure and did not lead to weight gain. In another study (West et al 2012), 28 subjects with high cholesterol showed reductions in systolic blood pressure after one serving of pistachios a day.

Beetroot Juice:

Beetroot juice contains dietary nitrate which may help relax blood vessel

walls and improve blood flow. A study (American Heart Association, 2013) showed that a cup of [beetroot juice](#) a day may help lower systolic and [diastolic blood pressure](#).

Dairy Foods:

While additional research is still being conducted, several studies have showed that a diet with more dairy and nuts, but less meat, is related to a lower risk of developing hypertension (Weng et al, 2013), and associated with having lower systolic blood pressure.

Raisins:

During a 12-week study, researches gave 46 pre-hypertensive subjects raisins or other snacks equal in calorie value three times a day. At weeks four, eight and 12 weeks, subjects eating the raisins showed a significantly reduced [systolic blood pressure](#) (Bays et al, 2012).

Flaxseed:

A study (Rodrigues et al, 2012) examined the effects of dietary flaxseed on systolic and diastolic blood pressure in subjects with narrowed arteries (peripheral artery disease). After six months of 30g of milled flaxseed a day, both systolic and diastolic blood pressure was lower.

More information: www.ift.org/food-technology/pa.../nutraceuticals.aspx

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