

Home remedies: controlling and managing your blood pressure

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Lifestyle changes can help you control and prevent high blood pressure, even if you're taking blood pressure medication.

Here's what you can do:

Eat healthy foods. Eat a healthy diet. Try the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet, which emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, poultry, fish and low-fat dairy foods. Get plenty of potassium, which can help prevent and control high blood pressure. Eat less saturated fat and trans fat.

Decrease the salt in your diet. A lower sodium level - 1,500 mg a day - is appropriate for people 51 years of age or older, and individuals of any age who are black or who have hypertension, diabetes or chronic kidney disease.

Otherwise healthy people can aim for 2,300 mg a day or less. While you can reduce the amount of salt you eat by putting down the saltshaker, you generally should also pay attention to the amount of salt that's in the processed foods you eat, such as canned soups or frozen dinners.

Maintain a healthy weight. Keeping a [healthy weight](#), or losing weight if you're overweight or obese, can help you control your high blood pressure and lower your risk of related health problems. If you're overweight, losing even 5 pounds (2.3 kilograms) can lower your blood pressure.

Increase physical activity. Regular physical activity can help lower your blood pressure, manage stress, reduce your risk of several health problems and keep your weight under control.

For most healthy adults, the Department of Health and Human Services recommends that you get at least 150 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes a week of vigorous aerobic activity, or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity. Aim to do muscle-strengthening exercises at least two days a week.

Limit alcohol. Even if you're healthy, alcohol can raise your blood pressure. If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation. For healthy adults, that means up to one drink a day for women of all ages and men older than age 65, and up to two drinks a day for men age 65 and younger. One drink equals 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor.

Don't smoke. Tobacco injures blood vessel walls and speeds up the process of hardening of the arteries. If you smoke, ask your doctor to help you quit.

Manage stress. Reduce stress as much as possible. Practice healthy coping techniques, such as muscle relaxation, deep breathing or meditation. Getting [regular physical activity](#) and plenty of sleep can help, too.

Monitor your blood pressure at home. Home [blood pressure monitoring](#) can help you keep closer tabs on your blood pressure, show if medication is working, and even alert you and your doctor to potential complications. Home blood pressure monitoring isn't a substitute for visits to your doctor, and home blood pressure monitors may have some limitations. Even if you get normal readings, don't stop or change your medications or alter your diet without talking to your doctor first.

If your blood pressure is under control, you may be able to make fewer visits to your doctor if you monitor your blood pressure at home.

Practice relaxation or slow, deep breathing. Practice taking deep, slow breaths to help relax. There are some devices available that promote slow, [deep breathing](#). However, it's questionable whether these devices have a significant effect on lowering your blood pressure.

Control [blood pressure](#) during pregnancy. If you're a woman with [high](#)

[blood pressure](#), discuss with your doctor how to control your [blood pressure](#) during pregnancy.

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