

## TIPS TO REDUCE BLOOD PRESSURE

### 15 Natural ways to lower your blood pressure

#### 1. Walk and exercise regularly

Exercise is one of the best things you can do to lower high blood pressure.

Regular exercise helps make your heart stronger and more efficient at pumping blood, which lowers the pressure in your arteries.

In fact, getting 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise, such as walking, or 75 minutes per week of vigorous exercise, such as running, can help lower blood pressure and improve heart health (3Trusted Source).

Additionally, some research suggests that doing more exercise than this reduces your blood pressure even further (4Trusted Source).

Bottom line: Walking for just 30 minutes a day can help lower your blood pressure. Getting more exercise helps reduce it even further.

#### 2. Reduce your sodium intake

Salt intake is high around the world. This is largely due to increased consumption of processed and prepared foods.

Many studies have linked high salt intake with high blood pressure and heart events, including stroke.

However, other research indicates that the relationship between sodium and high blood pressure is less clear.

One reason for this may be genetic differences in how people process sodium. About half of people with high blood pressure and a quarter of people with typical levels seem to have a sensitivity to salt.

If you already have high blood pressure, it's worth cutting back your sodium intake to see whether it makes a difference. Swap processed foods for fresh ingredients and try seasoning with herbs and spices rather than salt.

Bottom line: Most guidelines for lowering blood pressure recommend reducing sodium intake. However, that recommendation might make the most sense for people who are sensitive to the effects of salt.

#### 3. Drink less alcohol

Drinking alcohol can raise blood pressure and increase the risk of several chronic health conditions, including high blood pressure.

While some research has suggested that low to moderate amounts of alcohol consumption may protect the heart, those benefits may be offset by negative effects.

Bottom line: Drinking any amount of alcohol may raise your blood pressure. Therefore, it's best to moderate your intake.

## 4. Eat more potassium-rich foods

Potassium is an important mineral that helps your body get rid of sodium and eases pressure on your blood vessels.

Modern diets have increased most people's sodium intake while decreasing potassium intake.

To get a better balance of potassium and sodium in your diet, focus on eating fewer processed foods and more fresh, whole foods.

Foods that are particularly high in potassium

- vegetables, especially leafy greens, tomatoes, potatoes, and sweet potatoes
- fruit, including melons, bananas, avocados, oranges, and apricots
- dairy, such as milk and yogurt
- tuna and salmon
- nuts and seeds
- beans

Bottom line: Eating fresh fruits and vegetables, which are rich in potassium, can help lower blood pressure.

## 5. Cut back on caffeine

If you've ever downed a cup of coffee before you've had your blood pressure taken, you'll know that caffeine causes an instant blood pressure boost.

However, there's not much evidence to suggest that drinking caffeine regularly can cause a lasting increase (15Trusted Source).

In fact, people who drink caffeinated coffee or tea tend to have a lower risk of heart disease, including high blood pressure, than those who do not drink it (16Trusted Source).

Still, if you suspect you're sensitive to the effects of caffeine, consider cutting back to see whether it lowers your blood pressure.

Bottom line: Caffeine can cause a short-term spike in blood pressure. However, for many people, it does not cause a lasting increase.

## 6. Learn to manage stress

Stress is a key driver of high blood pressure.

When you're chronically stressed, your body is in a constant fight-or-flight mode. On a physical level, that means a faster heart rate and constricted blood vessels).

When you experience stress, you might also be more likely to engage in habits that can have negative effects on blood pressure, such as drinking alcohol and eating processed foods (17Trusted Source).

Several studies have explored how reducing stress can help lower blood pressure. Here are two evidence-based tips to try:

- **Listen to soothing music:** Calming music can help relax your nervous system. Research has shown that it's an effective complement to other blood pressure therapies.
- **Work less:** Working a lot and stressful work situations are both linked to high blood pressure

Bottom line: Chronic stress can contribute to high blood pressure. Finding ways to manage stress can help.

## **7. Eat dark chocolate or cocoa**

While eating massive amounts of dark chocolate probably won't help your heart, small amounts may.

That's because dark chocolate and cocoa powder are rich in flavonoids, which are plant compounds that cause blood vessels to dilate.

A 2017 review of studies found that flavonoid-rich cocoa may reduce short-term blood pressure levels in healthy adults (21Trusted Source).

For the strongest effects, use non-alkalized cocoa powder, which is especially high in flavonoids and has no added sugars.

Bottom line: Dark chocolate and cocoa powder contain plant compounds that help relax blood vessels, which may lower blood pressure.

## **8. Try to lose weight, if necessary**

In people who are overweight, losing weight can make a big difference to heart health.

According to a 2016 study, losing 5% of your body weight could significantly lower high blood pressure.

The effect is even greater when weight loss is paired with exercise.

Losing weight can help your blood vessels do a better job of expanding and contracting, making it easier for the left ventricle of your heart to pump blood.

Bottom line: Losing weight can significantly lower high blood pressure. This effect is even more pronounced when you exercise.

## **9. If you smoke, consider quitting**

Among the many reasons to quit smoking is that the habit is a strong risk factor for heart disease.

Every puff of cigarette smoke causes a slight, temporary increase in blood pressure. The chemicals in tobacco are also known to damage blood vessels.

However, studies haven't found a conclusive link between smoking and high blood pressure. This could be because people who smoke regularly develop a tolerance over time (25Trusted Source).

Still, since both smoking and high blood pressure raise the risk of heart disease, quitting smoking can help lessen that risk (26).

Bottom line: Though there's conflicting research about smoking and high blood pressure, both increase the risk of heart disease.

## 10. Cut added sugar and refined carbs

There's a growing body of research showing a link between added sugar intake and high blood pressure.

A 2020 research review found that increased consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages was linked to higher blood pressure levels in children and adolescents.

And it's not just sugar – all refined carbs, such as the kind found in white flour, convert rapidly to sugar in your bloodstream and could cause problems.

Some studies have shown that low carb diets may also help reduce blood pressure.

In fact, one review of 12 studies showed that following a low carb diet could reduce systolic and diastolic blood pressure, along with several other risk factors for heart disease (29Trusted Source).

Bottom line: Consuming refined carbs, especially sugar, may raise blood pressure. Some studies have shown that low carb diets may help lower your blood pressure levels.

## 11. Eat berries

Berries are full of more than just juicy flavour.

They're also packed with polyphenols, natural plant compounds that are good for your heart.

Polyphenols can reduce the risk of stroke, heart conditions, and diabetes and improve blood pressure, insulin resistance, and systemic inflammation (30).

In one study, researchers assigned people with high blood pressure to a low polyphenol diet or a high polyphenol diet containing berries, chocolate, fruits, and vegetables (31).

Those consuming berries and polyphenol-rich foods experienced improved markers of heart disease risk.

Bottom line: Berries are rich in polyphenols, which can help lower blood pressure and the overall risk of heart disease.

## 12. Try meditation or deep breathing

While these two behaviors could also fall under "stress reduction techniques," meditation and deep breathing deserve specific mention.

Both meditation and deep breathing may activate the parasympathetic nervous system. This system is engaged when the body relaxes, slowing the heart rate and lowering blood pressure.

There's quite a bit of research in this area, with studies showing that different styles of

meditation appear to have benefits for lowering blood pressure (32Trusted Source).

Deep breathing techniques can also be quite effective.

The authors of a 2021 review concluded that practicing diaphragmatic breathing, a deep breathing technique, twice daily for 4 weeks could lead to a reduction in systolic and diastolic blood pressure (33).

Try guided meditation or deep breathing.

Bottom line: Both meditation and deep breathing can activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps slow your heart rate and lower blood pressure.

### 13. Eat calcium-rich foods

People with low calcium intake often have high blood pressure.

While calcium supplements haven't been conclusively shown to lower blood pressure, calcium-rich diets do seem to be linked to healthy blood pressure levels.

For most adults, the calcium recommendation is 1,000 milligrams (mg) per day. However, some people, including older adults, may need more.

In addition to dairy, you can get calcium from collard greens and other leafy greens, beans, sardines, and tofu. Here is a list of calcium-rich plant-based foods.

Bottom line: Calcium-rich diets are linked to healthy blood pressure levels. You can get calcium by eating dark leafy greens, tofu, and dairy products.

### 14. Take natural supplements

Some natural supplements may also help lower blood pressure. Here are some of the main supplements that have evidence behind them:

- Aged garlic extract: Researchers have used aged garlic extract successfully as a stand-alone treatment and along with conventional therapies for lowering blood pressure.
- Fish oil: Long credited with improving heart health, fish oil may benefit people with high blood pressure the most.

### 15. Eat foods rich in magnesium

Magnesium is an important mineral that helps blood vessels relax.

While magnesium deficiency is pretty rare, many people don't get enough magnesium in their diet.

Still, you can ensure that you're meeting your needs by enjoying a variety of magnesium-rich foods, such as vegetables, dairy products, legumes, chicken, beef, and whole grains.

Bottom line: Magnesium is an essential mineral that helps regulate blood pressure. It can be found in a wide range of whole foods, including legumes and whole grains.

## Frequently asked questions

Below are the answers to some frequently asked questions about lowering high blood pressure.

What will bring blood pressure down quickly?

Long-term lifestyle changes, such as reducing salt intake and managing stress, are the best way to bring blood pressure down. An immediate way to reduce stress is to get active, stretch, and practice deep breathing.

What lowers blood pressure fast naturally?

Natural ways to lower blood pressure include:

- reduce stress, such as through breathing exercises, meditation, or yoga
- exercise regularly
- eat a balanced diet
- reduce alcohol, sodium, and caffeine intake
- maintain a moderate weight
- quit smoking

What home remedy can someone drink to lower blood pressure?

A small 2020 study found that people who drank an additional two bottles of water on top of their usual daily intake experienced decreased systolic blood pressure. However, more research is needed to support this finding.

Can someone reverse blood pressure naturally?

Natural lifestyle changes, including dietary changes and regular exercise, can help lower high blood pressure levels and reduce a person's risk of associated health complications.

## Summary

High blood pressure affects a large proportion of the world's population.

While medication is one way to treat the condition, there are many natural techniques that can help, including eating certain foods.

Managing your blood pressure through the methods in this article may ultimately help you lower your risk of heart disease.