

How Can You Prevent High Blood Pressure?

1. Be more physically active.

People who are physically active have a lower risk of getting high blood pressure – 20 to 50 percent lower – than people who are not active. You don't have to be a marathon runner to benefit from physical activity. Even light activities, if done daily, can help lower your risk of heart disease. So you can fit physical activity into your daily routine in small but important ways.

2. Healthy eating.

Americans eat more salt (sodium chloride) and other forms of sodium than they need. They also have higher rates of high blood pressure than people in other countries who eat less salt.

Often, if people with high blood pressure cut back on salt and sodium, their blood pressure falls. Cutting back on salt and sodium also prevents blood pressure from rising. Some people like African Americans are more affected by sodium than others.

All Americans, especially people with high blood pressure, should eat no more than about 6 grams of salt a day, which equals about 2,400 milligrams of sodium. That's about 1 teaspoon of table salt. But remember to keep track of ALL salt eaten – including that in processed foods and added during cooking or at the table. Americans eat 4,000 to 6,000 milligrams of sodium a day, so most people need to cut back on salt and sodium. You can teach your taste buds to enjoy less salty foods. Here are a few tips:

- Check food labels for the amount of sodium in foods. Choose those lower in sodium most of the time. Look for products that say “sodium free,” “very low sodium,” “low sodium,” “light in sodium,” “reduced or less sodium,” or “unsalted,”

especially on cans, boxes, bottles, and bags.

- Buy fresh, plain frozen, or canned with “no salt added” vegetables. Use fresh poultry, fish and lean meat, rather than canned or processed types.
- Use herbs, spices, and salt-free seasoning blends in cooking and at the table instead of salt.
- Cut back on instant or flavored rice, pasta, and cereal mixes because they usually have added salt.
- Potassium. Eating foods rich in potassium will help protect some people from developing high blood pressure. You probably can get enough potassium from your diet, so a supplement isn't necessary. Many fruits, vegetables, dairy foods, and fish are good sources of potassium.
- Calcium. Populations with low calcium intakes have high rates of high blood pressure. However, it has not been proven that taking calcium tablets will prevent high blood pressure. But it is important to be sure to get at least the recommended amount of calcium – 800 milligrams per day for adults (pregnant and breast feeding women need more) – from the foods you eat. Dairy foods like low fat selections of milk, yogurt, and cheese are good sources of calcium. Low fat and nonfat dairy products have even more calcium than the high fat types.
- Magnesium. A diet low in magnesium may make your blood pressure rise. But doctors don't recommend taking extra magnesium to help prevent high blood pressure – the amount you get in a healthy diet is enough. Magnesium is found in whole grains, green leafy vegetables, nuts, seeds, and dry peas and beans.
- Caffeine. The caffeine in drinks like coffee, tea, and sodas may cause bloods pressure to go up, but only temporarily. In

a short time your blood pressure will go back down. Unless you are sensitive to caffeine and your blood pressure does not go down, you do not have to limit caffeine to prevent developing high blood pressure.

3. If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

Drinking too much alcohol can raise your blood pressure. It may also lead to the development of high blood pressure. Limit how much you drink to no more than 2 drinks a day.

People who consume only a drink or two a day have lower blood pressure and live longer than those who consume excessive amounts of alcohol. Red wine raises the “good” blood cholesterol that prevents the build up of fats in the arteries. Remember, too much alcohol contributes to a host of other health problems. Alcohol is also high in calories.

4. Maintain a healthy weight, or lose weight if you are overweight.

As your body weight increases, your blood pressure may rise. In fact, being overweight can make you two to six times more likely to develop high blood pressure than if you are at your desirable weight. It's not just how much you weight that's important: it also matters where your body stores extra fat. “Apple shaped” people who have a pot belly (that is, extra fat at the waist) appear to have higher health risks than “pear-shaped” people with heavy hips and thighs. Women with a 35-inch plus or men with a 40-inch plus waist measurement are at high risk.

To lose weight, you need to eat fewer calories than you burn. The healthiest and longest lasting weight loss happens when you do it slowly, losing ½ to 1 pound a week. By cutting back by 500 calories a day by eating less and being more physically active, you can lose about 1 pound (which equals 3,500 calories) in a week.

Will Drinking a Lot of Coffee Send Your Blood Pressure Up?

Caffeine in coffee as well as in other drinks, such as tea and sodas, only raises blood pressure temporarily. So you should be able to continue to have drinks that contain caffeine, unless you are sensitive to it or have heart disease and your doctor tells you not to have any.

Does Stress Cause High Blood Pressure?

Stress can make blood pressure go up for a while, and it has been thought to contribute to high blood pressure. But the long-term effects of stress are as yet unclear. Stress management techniques do not seem to prevent high blood pressure. However, such techniques may have other benefits, such as making you feel better or helping you to control over-eating.

Does Smoking Tobacco Cause High Blood Pressure?

No. However, it can temporarily raise blood pressure, and it DOES increase the risk of heart and blood vessel diseases.

Can Tranquilizers and Sedatives Lower Blood Pressure?

Tranquilizers and sedatives will not keep your blood pressure down.

For more information click on:
National Heart, Blood and Lung Institute
<http://rover.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp>

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is committed to equal opportunity in its education programs, activities and employment policies for all persons regardless of race, color, gender, creed, religion, age, ancestry, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, Vietnamese veteran status, parental status, and pregnancy.

Document Name: T:\UHCS\Cardio\Down With High Blood Pressure.doc
Review Date: 02-06
Next Review: 02-07

UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND COUNSELING SERVICES

www.uww.edu/uhcs
Corner of Prairie and Starin
Division of Student Affairs, UW-Whitewater
www.uww.edu/staffair

Hours

Monday-Friday 8:00 - 4:30; summer & evening hours may vary.

Health Services 472-1300

- * Examinations and treatment for illnesses and minor injuries
- * Laboratory tests and medications
- * Allergy injections and immunizations
- * Pelvic exam and Pap test
- * Contraceptives
- * STD and HIV antibody testing
- * Cold self care
- * Referrals to specialists
- * Phone consultations with RN
- * Rehabilitation for students with disabilities

Counseling Services 472-1305

- * Individual counseling for many concerns, including...
 - * Relationships
 - * Depression
 - * Self-esteem
 - * Values clarification
 - * Alcohol and other drugs use
 - * Sexual assault and abuse
 - * Decision-making
 - * Anxiety
 - * Sexual orientation
 - * Stress
- * Group counseling options
- * Consultations with staff
- * Referrals to community agencies
- * Crisis intervention
- * Practicum training site

Wellness Services 472-1300 ext. 2244

- * Lobby Resource Center
- * [Royal Purple](#) articles
- * Bulletin board kits
- * Healthy U newsletter
- * Web site
- * Posters
- * Wellness fairs
- * Educational presentations

Employee Assistance Program 472-1305

- * Confidential assistance and referral for employees with concerns such as:
 - * Stress
 - * Depression
 - * Finances
 - * Alcohol and other drug use
 - * Troubled coworkers
 - * Marriage/family
 - * Health

24-Hour Emergency help:

911 Whitewater Rescue Squad

472-1060 Sexual Assault Response Team
262-741-3200 or 1-800-365-1587 Crisis Line

DOWN WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Specializing in the Unique Need of College Students