



8 Ways To Control High Blood Pressure

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If you've been diagnosed with high blood pressure, you might be worried about taking medication to bring your numbers down. Lifestyle plays an important role in treating your high blood pressure. If you successfully control your blood pressure with a healthy lifestyle, you might avoid, delay or reduce the need for medication.

Here are 8 lifestyle changes you can make to lower your blood pressure and reduce your risk of heart disease.

- 1. Lose weight** - Blood pressure often increases as weight increases. Being overweight also can cause disrupted breathing while you sleep (sleep apnea), which further raises your blood pressure. Weight loss is one of the most effective lifestyle changes for controlling blood pressure. Losing even a small amount of weight if you're overweight can help reduce your blood pressure.
- 2. Watch your waistline-** Carrying too much weight around your waist can also put you at greater risk of high blood pressure. In general:
 - Men are at risk if their waist measurement is greater than 102cm.
 - Women are at risk if their waist measurement is greater than 89cm.
- 3. Exercise regularly-** Regular physical activity such as 150 minutes a week, or about 30 minutes most days of the week, can lower your blood pressure by about 5 to 8mm Hg if you have high blood pressure. It's important to be consistent because if you stop exercising, your blood pressure can rise again. If you have elevated blood pressure, exercise can help you avoid developing hypertension. If you already have hypertension, regular physical activity can bring your blood pressure down to safer levels.



4. **Eat a healthy diet** - Eating a diet that is rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products and skimps on saturated fat and cholesterol can lower your blood pressure by up to 11mm Hg if you have high blood pressure.
 - **Keep a food diary** - Writing down what you eat, even for just a week, can shed surprising light on your true eating habits. Monitor what you eat, how much, when and why.
 - **Consider boosting potassium**- Potassium can lessen the effects of sodium on blood pressure. The best source of potassium is food, such as fruits and vegetables, rather than supplements.
 - **Be a smart shopper** - Read food labels when you shop and stick to your healthy-eating plan when you're dining out.
5. **Limit the amount of alcohol you drink** - By drinking alcohol in moderation, generally one drink a day for women, or two a day for men — you can potentially lower your blood pressure by about 4mm Hg. Drinking more than moderate amounts of alcohol can raise blood pressure by several points. It can also reduce the effectiveness of blood pressure medications.
6. **Quit smoking** - Each cigarette you smoke increases your blood pressure for many minutes after you finish. Stopping smoking helps your blood pressure return to normal. Quitting smoking can reduce your risk of heart disease and improve your overall health.
7. **Cut back on caffeine** - The role caffeine plays in blood pressure is still debated. Caffeine can raise blood pressure up to 10mm Hg in people who rarely consume it. But people who drink coffee regularly may experience little or no effect on their blood pressure. Although the long-term effects of caffeine on blood pressure aren't clear, it's possible blood pressure may slightly increase. In order to see if caffeine raises your blood pressure, check your pressure within 30 minutes of drinking a caffeinated beverage. If your blood pressure increases by 5 to 10mm Hg, you may be sensitive to the blood pressure raising effects of caffeine.
8. **Reduce sodium in your diet** - Even a small reduction in the sodium in your diet can improve your heart health and reduce blood pressure by about 5 to 6mm Hg if you have high blood pressure. The effect of sodium intake on blood pressure varies among groups of people. In general, limit sodium to 2,300 milligrams (mg) a day or less. However, a lower sodium intake of 1,500 mg a day or less is ideal for most adults.



To decrease sodium in your diet, consider these tips:

- **Read food labels.** If possible, choose low-sodium alternatives of the foods and beverages you normally buy.
- **Eat fewer processed foods.** Only a small amount of sodium occurs naturally in foods. Most sodium is added during processing.
- **Don't add salt.** Just 1 level teaspoon of salt has 2,300 mg of sodium. Use herbs or spices to add flavour to your food.
- **Ease into it.** If you don't feel you can drastically reduce the sodium in your diet suddenly, cut back gradually. Your palate will adjust over time.

Evie's Eats - Chilli & Garlic Calamari Salad (Serves 2)

Ingredients:

- 1 red chilli, deseeded, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 large lemon, juiced
- 2-3 tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 kg whole small calamari hoods and tentacles cleaned.
- 1 tomato, sliced
- 1 green capsicum, sliced
- 1 cucumber, sliced
- 1 red onion, sliced
- 1 carrot, grated
- Handful of mixed lettuce leaves

Method:

1. Place chilli, garlic, 1/4 cup lemon juice, and a tablespoon of oil in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper and stir to combine.
2. Score inside flesh of calamari hoods in a criss-cross pattern and cut crossways into thick strips. Place calamari into bowl to marinate for 30min in the fridge.
3. In the meantime, make the salad by adding olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper and set aside.
4. In a hot pan, add a little olive oil and cook calamari strips and tentacles. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes each side or until curled and just cooked through.
5. Arrange salad on serving plates, Spoon over calamari. Serve and enjoy!

Quote of the Month - **Today I will do what others won't so tomorrow I can do what others can't.**



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Take control your life, be happy! – rock on!

Until next month... *Evie*