

Ways to lower blood pressure

Being inactive is linked to high blood pressure. Increasing your activity levels will reduce your blood pressure.

Diet

Eat a diet that is full of fruit, vegetables and salad and practice eating 5-a-day. Reduce saturated fat intake by limiting sweet treats and snacking. Bake, grill or roast foods rather than frying in oil. Reduce adding salt to your meals and use herbs and spices to add flavour.

Reduce alcohol intake, current government guidelines recommend no more than 14 units of alcohol per week for men and women.

Your body mass index (BMI) is a measure of whether an individual is a healthy weight for their height. If an individual has a BMI above the healthy range, they may be at risk of health problems. Try and maintain a waist measurement below 32" (80cm) for women and 37" (94cm) for men.

If you are a south Asian man, you should aim for a waist measurement below 35" (90cm). Exercise regularly and try to be active for at least 150 minutes a week. This activity should help keep your blood pressure down.

Smoking

Stopping smoking does not reduce your blood pressure as such, but by stopping smoking you will reduce your risks of developing cardiovascular disease.

**For further information,
please call us on**

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Blood Pressure

Know the signs -
and what to look out for



Medication

If your blood pressure is very high or making changes to your lifestyle doesn't lower it enough, your doctor might suggest that you take medication to control it and lower your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. It is very important that you take your medication daily, and that you attend your GP surgery for regular reviews.

What is normal blood pressure?

What is a normal blood pressure? Ideally a healthy blood pressure should be below 140/90. If your blood pressure is between 140/90 and 160/95 you should try to follow the lifestyle changes in this leaflet to attempt to bring your blood pressure down. If your blood pressure is between 160/95 and 180/100 you should see your GP for further review and possible treatment.

If your reading is above 180/100 you should see your doctor as soon as possible. If your work is safety critical or involves vocational driving, you will not be able to continue in your role until your blood pressure is reduced to an acceptable reading.

What is high blood pressure?

High blood pressure (hypertension) puts extra pressure on the walls on your arteries. Over a period of time this can damage your arteries and means that they are more likely to get clogged up. Having high blood pressure puts you at a higher risk of cardiovascular disease (having a heart attack or stroke), eye and kidney damage.

Most people do not have symptoms when their blood pressure is high, and only find out when they have their blood pressure checked. However, in some rare cases, someone with high blood pressure might have blurred or double vision, nosebleeds, shortness of breath or a headache that goes on for a long time.

The British Heart Foundation recommends healthy adults aged over 40 should have their blood pressure checked at least once every five years. If you are at an increased risk of high blood pressure you should have your blood pressure checked more often, ideally once a year.

What are the causes of high blood pressure?

It can be hard to identify what has caused high blood pressure, but the following are risk factors that are likely to contribute towards hypertension.

1. You are overweight
2. You have too much salt in your diet
3. You don't do enough physical activity
4. You drink too much alcohol too often
5. A close member of your family has high blood pressure

The benefits of reducing your blood pressure

High blood pressure is just one of several possible risk factors for developing cardiovascular disease. Others include smoking, alcohol, high cholesterol, diabetes, age, male gender, strong family history, sedentary lifestyle, ethnic origin and obesity.

The benefit of lowering a high blood pressure is to reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease in the future

Useful websites

- <https://www.bloodpressureuk.org>
- <https://www.bhf.org.uk/>

