



Seven Ways to Control Your Blood Pressure

- 1. Eat more fruit, vegetables and low fat dairy products.** The D.A.S.H. (Dietary Approaches to Stopping Hypertension) Diet is a proven way to lower your blood pressure. To follow it:
 - Slowly increase your intake of fruits and vegetables to eight servings per day (2 servings per meal and 2 snacks)
 - Have three servings of non-fat or reduced fat dairy foods per day (1 per meal)
 - Choose whole grain breads, cereals and grains instead of white bread, low fiber cereals and refined grains
 - Eat no more than 6 ounces of meat, fish or poultry per day (3 ounces or less per meal)
 - Have only 2–3 small servings per day of soft or liquid margarine and vegetable oils
 - Eat nuts, seeds and dried beans 4–5 times per week
- 2. Eat less sodium.** The D.A.S.H. diet works even better if you cut back on sodium. Sodium is one of the chemicals in salt. Nutrition labels tell you how much sodium a food has. Eat less than 2400 milligrams per day. Getting used to less salt will take you about 2–3 weeks, but you can learn to like less.
 - Eat more fresh food and fewer convenience foods, canned vegetables and soups, salty snacks and cured meats
 - Use low sodium and salt-free foods
 - Eat out less often – restaurant food tends to be high in sodium
 - Take the salt shaker off the table
 - Slowly cut the salt added in cooking by at least half
- 3. Be active 30 minutes or more a day at least 5 days a week.** You can even divide the 30 minutes into 10–15 minute periods. Add lively music and you'll enjoy the activity more and do it with more energy. Moderate activity includes:
 - Brisk walking
 - Swimming
 - House cleaning
 - Cycling
 - Lawn care
 - Walking a golf course
 - Gardening
 - Racquet sports
 - Dancing
- 4. Lose weight if you are overweight.** If you follow the D.A.S.H. diet and become more active, you will likely lose weight. You will feel better and put less stress on your heart.

(over, please.)

5. **Limit alcohol.** Drinking more than one drink per day seems to increase blood pressure. One drink equals 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1½ ounces of liquor.
6. **Don't smoke.** Each time you smoke your heart works harder and your blood pressure rises. If you follow the D.A.S.H. diet and become more active, you may not gain weight when you quit.
7. **Take your blood pressure medicine.** If your doctor prescribes blood pressure medicine, don't stop taking it! Report any side effects like dizziness, nausea or fatigue, to your doctor. There are many medicines to choose from, so you can always try another one. How you "feel" will not tell you how high your blood pressure is. With time, if you eat better and exercise more, you may be able to cut your medicine down, but only with your doctor's OK.

Questions to ask yourself

1. What fruits can I add to my diet?
2. What vegetables can I add?
3. What non-fat or reduced fat dairy foods can I add?
4. How can I lower my sodium intake this week?
5. How can I get more active today?

Source: Indiana Chronic Disease Management Program