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5 Ways to Lower Blood Pressure Naturally

Making sure your blood pressure is in the normal range is an important part of managing your overall health and wellness. High blood pressure, or hypertension, increases your risk of serious health problems such as heart attack, stroke, kidney disease, and vision loss. The good news — there are simple lifestyle changes you can make today to keep your blood pressure in the normal range.

"Fortunately, along with taking medications as prescribed, you can lower blood pressure naturally," explained Bayhealth Family Medicine Physician Pavandip Virdi, MD. With that in mind, Dr. Virdi shares five ways to lower your blood pressure naturally and keep it in the healthy range. And if you haven't been diagnosed with hypertension, the following can also help prevent it.

1. Eat more fruits and vegetables. They contain nutrients that keep your blood pressure in check. Some examples include bananas, watermelon, and potatoes, which are rich in potassium, and leafy greens, which contain potassium and magnesium. Potassium and magnesium help your blood vessels to relax. Potassium is also important because it helps your body eliminate sodium, which, in turn, lowers blood pressure.
2. Reduce sodium. Along with increasing the amount of potassium in your diet, you need to cut back on how much sodium you eat. You can do this by avoiding—or at least limiting—processed foods and using herbs and other salt-free seasonings to add flavor to your food. Aim for 1,500-2,300 mg of sodium per day.
3. Do 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days per week. Research has found that 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week can help lower blood pressure. Examples of moderate exercise include walking at a brisk pace, bicycling, raking leaves, and gardening. Moderate exercise means your heart is beating faster than it would if you were just walking at a normal pace, for example. When doing moderate exercise, you can still carry on a conversation but you'll be breathing heavier. And you'll notice that you are starting to sweat.
4. Limit alcohol and caffeine. Consuming too much alcohol and caffeine has been shown to raise blood pressure. Women should have no more than one alcoholic drink per day and men should stick to no more than two drinks per day. Moderation is also the best approach when it comes to caffeine, especially for those who are sensitive to it.
5. Reduce stress with deep breathing exercises. It probably comes as no surprise that stress can easily and quickly drive up blood pressure. That's why it's important to take steps to reduce stress. One technique you can use is deep breathing. Research has found it not only lowers your blood pressure, but your heart rate as well.

"As you can see, making some changes to your diet, getting regular exercise, and reducing stress are all ways you can lower your blood pressure naturally," said Dr. Virdi. "And, if you need to lose a pound or two, these lifestyle changes can also help with weight loss, which can make a big difference in blood pressure reduction in and of itself."

Visit our [Community Health and Wellness blog](#) at for tips on other health topics. Dr. Virdi recently joined the Bayhealth Family Medicine, Dover practice and is accepting new patients. To make an appointment, call 302-725-3200.

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