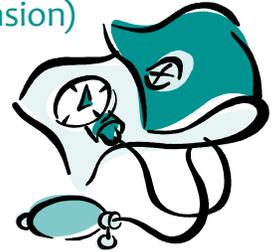


The High Blood Pressure Mystery

by Carol Jamison NMD

Are you aware that high blood pressure (also known as hypertension) is a growing problem in the United States, even amongst young adults and children? The American Heart Association is reporting that 74.5 million Americans over 20 years old have hypertension. Another scary fact is that hypertension killed 56,561 people in the United States in 2006.



What is going on in the body? How is this life giving flow of blood damaging the very body it is trying to nourish?

Blood pressure is determined by the amount of blood your heart pumps and the amount of resistance (or pressure) to blood flow in your arteries. The more blood your heart pumps and the narrower your arteries, the higher your blood pressure. Reasons your arteries narrow include plaque formation, vessel constriction, and vessel inflammation or damage.

The cause of hypertension in 90% of the population is unknown. We know that coffee, more than 2-3 alcoholic beverages at a sitting, stress, lack of exercise, smoking, and atherosclerosis and obesity increase blood pressure. Family history, race, complications of pregnancy and aging in general are also factors.

What else is known is that blood pressure rises in response or as a result of a health issue such as kidney problems, obesity, pancreatic hypoglycemia, damaged aorta, vessel defects, diabetes, sleep apnea and endocrine disorders like Cushing's or adrenal gland tumors. Another growing cause of high blood pressure is secondary to medications like birth control pills, cold remedies, decongestants, over the counter pain medications, some prescription drugs and illegal drugs like cocaine and amphetamines.

Some people really are sensitive to sodium. Often it is the combination of too much sodium in the diet and too little potassium, which has the effect of increasing fluid volume and impairment of the blood pressure regulating mechanisms.

Diets with too much sugar and saturated fats can increase pressure, especially in combination with a diet low in fiber, essential fatty acids, vitamin C and the minerals calcium and magnesium.

In most cases blood pressure slowly increases over years and many are unaware of the change. *There may be no symptoms as with most people*, until very late in the disease. Dull headaches that get progressively worse and may concentrate in the back of the head or temples are often a symptom of elevated pressure.

Other symptoms are dizziness, heart palpitations, blurred vision, nose bleeds, blood in the urine and occasionally a feeling of internal tension, despite appearing calm on the outside.

If hypertension is allowed to continue it can wreak havoc on your internal vessels. One example is the famous landmark of Arizona—the Grand Canyon—a giant chasm formed through the persistent pressure of water. Is it so surprising then that your own blood pulsing through your very tiny, delicate vessels, especially in the eyes and kidneys, are being damaged from long term increased pressure?

The most serious of side effects of uncontrolled hypertension are heart attack, stroke and aneurysm. Other very unpleasant consequences can be 1) heart failure, 2) weakened and narrowed kidney vessels which is one of the top reasons people end up on dialysis (the process of relying on a machine to filter your blood); 3) vision loss also due to thickening and narrowing of the eye vessels, and 4) lack of



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blood flow to the brain or damaged brain vessels that lead to poor memory and comprehension difficulties.

If you find yourself starting to panic because you are relating too well with the information here, do resist the urge to crawl back in bed and hide under the covers. Take a deep breath and say “I can and will do something to make this better, starting today!”

There are no fast remedies to this health problem, although when necessary, using the appropriate antihypertensive medication prescribed by your doctor can bring your blood pressure down within days, to relieve some of the symptoms and take you out of a danger zone. However, taking a prescription medication is only a small bandage to a larger problem.



The first and most effective thing to do, if you are carrying around extra weight, make a commitment to lose weight and get help to do so. This is going to require small changes every day that you commit to for life. Taking sugar out of the diet and removing sugary beverages and carbohydrates is a good place to start. Alcohol is almost entirely all sugar, it is rapidly absorbed and having just 1 extra glass of wine a day (100 calories) can lead to 10 pounds of fat gain in one year!

It is not ALL about what you ELIMINATE, but what you include. Repeated studies have shown that vegetarian diets lead to healthy blood pressure. I am not suggesting this is the answer for everyone, but you can make a point to consume 3-4 servings of vegetables per meal. Veggies are low in calories and a serving size is typically close to ½ a cup, so eat up! Replace after dinner sweets with fruit salad. Berries are an excellent source of antioxidants, fiber, potassium and magnesium, as well as low in calories.



Magnesium according to Alan Gaby MD is a cardio-protective nutrient. Not only does magnesium decrease stickiness of blood cells, it dilates the vessels, has an anti-arrhythmic activity, promotes intracellular potassium uptake—and also possibly lowers blood pressure and

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Test Your Knowledge

How many American's suffer with high blood pressure?

- a. 38 million
- b. 66 million
- c. 12 million
- d. 74.5 million

The resistance produced each time the heart beats to send blood coursing through the arteries is the definition of?

- a. digestion
- b. breathing
- c. blood pressure
- d. salivation

Which are known causes of elevated blood pressure?

- a. alcohol intake
- b. low magnesium intake
- c. smoking
- d. all the above

What is NOT a symptom of elevated blood pressure?

- a. dizziness
- b. palpitations
- c. blood in urine
- d. constipation
- e. headaches
- f. blurred vision

What is a risk of untreated High blood pressure?

- a. vision loss
- b. stroke
- c. memory loss
- d. all the above

What are the 4 most important things to do to reduce blood pressure?

- a. lose weight
- b. increase vegetable intake
- c. start exercising
- d. take nutrients to support vessel dilation
- e. crawl back in bed and ignore the problem

*Looking here for the answers?
No shortcuts – you'll find them
only in the article!*

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increases HDL cholesterol. Jay S. Cohen, M.D. reports magnesium promotes relaxation of the blood vessels and tones down the sympathetic nervous system. There is a limit to the amount of magnesium you can take, due to laxative effect in large doses. For that, it is usually paired with calcium, which tends to have a constipating effect. Always start with low doses and work up from there. For best results work with your doctor, make small changes daily, and use this new awareness to become proactive in your health care!



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Blood Pressure Nutrient Support Daily Dose Given

Magnesium Chelate: 300-500 mg

Calcium Chelate: 800-1200 mg, especially if you are sensitive to salt

Vitamin B6: 30-50 mg. Calms the nervous system, therefore lowers blood pressure

Coenzyme Q10: 150 mg. Effects are seen after 4 to 12 weeks of use; assists in lowering cholesterol and stabilizes the vascular system with its antioxidant properties.

Omega-3 Oils: Flaxseed oil 1 tablespoon works well with a diet of reduced saturated fats.

Garlic: 2-3 fresh cloves garlic or 4000 mg.

Hawthorn: 250 mg. Effects seen after 2-4 weeks; best used under care of a clinician if on blood pressure medications.



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