



# Staying WELL-AHEAD with High Blood Pressure

When you have high blood pressure, also known as hypertension, it's important to pay close attention to your diet. Staying aware of portion size, eating a variety of foods and getting the right amount of nutrients can help lower your blood pressure.

## Eating Tips

The trick to staying healthy with high blood pressure is monitoring your salt intake. Always choose low-sodium or no salt added options. Limit salt to 2,300mg or less per day.<sup>1</sup> Most of the sodium in our diets come from pre-packaged, processed, restaurant and fast foods. Try to limit these types of food:

### Pre-Packaged Foods

- “instant” or “just add water” items
- chips, crackers & cereal
- canned soups, sauces & broths
- frozen dinners & pizzas
- baking mixes

### Processed Foods

- white bread & pasta
- deli meats
- sausage, bacon & boudin
- pickled items

### Condiments Count, Too!

- soy sauce & worcestershire sauce
- ketchup & bbq sauce
- Tony Chachere's seasoning
- gravy
- salad dressings

## So, what's on my menu?

Breakfast	Lunch	Snack	Dinner	Snack
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 cup cooked oatmeal</li> <li>• 1 banana</li> <li>• ½ oz. unsalted nuts</li> <li>• 1 cup skim or 1% milk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 cup salad greens</li> <li>• ½ cup chopped raw veggies</li> <li>• ½ cup chickpeas</li> <li>• 1 boiled egg</li> <li>• 1 wheat dinner roll</li> <li>• 1 Tbsp. vinegar based dressing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 medium apple</li> <li>• 2 Tbsp. peanut butter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 cup cooked whole wheat pasta</li> <li>• ½ cup low sodium marinara</li> <li>• 4 oz. of chicken</li> <li>• 1.5 oz. shredded parmesan cheese</li> <li>• 1 cup broccoli, cooked</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 cup fresh fruit</li> <li>• 1 cup low-fat yogurt</li> </ul>

## Shopping Tips

- Buy foods in their most natural form.
  - » whole fruits and veggies (frozen works!)
  - » lean meats and fish, dried beans and peas, eggs
  - » non-fat or low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese
  - » whole grains—whole wheat bread and pasta, rolled oats and brown rice
  - » low-sodium snacks—unsalted nuts, rice cakes, dried fruit, protein bars
- Plan to go to the grocery store once a week.
- Aim for frozen fruits and veggies over canned.
  - » When buying frozen veggies, avoid those that are pre-seasoned or come with sauce. If buying canned produce, look for low-sodium or no salt added options.
- Find a local farmer's market to take advantage of in-season, local produce.
  - » Many farmer's markets accept SNAP benefits (food stamps) and participate in the Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). Use your SNAP benefits to buy and plant seeds for growing your own vegetable garden!

### Ways to Save



- ✓ Buy frozen veggies and beans.
- ✓ If you chose fresh fruits/vegetables, buy those in season.
- ✓ Instead of buying pre-packaged veggies, choose whole veggies and cut them yourself.
- ✓ Buy generic brands.
- ✓ Buy meats with the skin on them and remove before cooking.

## Cooking Tips

- Cook most of your meals at home. Freeze in small containers and save for later.
- Avoid bringing salt shaker to table at meal times.
- While cooking, get creative and season foods with herbs and spices. Instead of salt, try using:
  - » lemon or lime juice; vinegar
  - » fresh or dried herbs
  - » simple dressings such as oil & vinegar
  - » frozen chopped vegetables like garlic, onions, or peppers
- Even when a recipe calls for salt, replace it with a better option (except for in baking.) Try:
  - » soaking chicken breast in lemon juice or orange juice
  - » roasting potatoes with dill and parsley
  - » tossing carrots in cinnamon and nutmeg
  - » sprinkling a pinch of chili powder onto corn
  - » tossing pasta with fresh minced garlic



## Self-Monitoring Tips

Self-monitoring your blood pressure means checking your pressure on a regular basis and tracking it over time. Self-monitoring and regularly visiting your healthcare provider can improve your blood pressure outcomes.<sup>2</sup> Know the signs and symptoms of high and low blood pressure:

### Generally, high blood pressure is 130/80 and above.<sup>3</sup> This can cause:

- headaches
- stress
- shortness of breath
- nosebleeds

### Low blood pressure is less than 90/60.<sup>3</sup> This can cause:

- dizziness, fainting or fatigue
- dehydration—feeling very thirsty
- nausea
- cold, clammy, pale skin
- rapid, shallow breathing

### For most individuals, ideal blood pressure is less than 120/80.<sup>3</sup>

- If your blood pressure reading is higher than 180/110, you may need to seek immediate medical attention.

Use these tips when measuring your blood pressure at home.<sup>3</sup>

- 1** Before your reading, make sure you have been resting for about 30 minutes. Also, avoid drinking coffee and caffeinated beverages or smoking cigarettes for 30 minutes before reading your pressure.
- 2** Make sure the cuff fits. Choose a monitor with a cuff big enough to go around your upper arm, right above your elbow. To be sure your cuff is working properly, bring it to your provider visits.
- 3** Sit up straight with your feet flat on the floor. Support your arm on a flat surface with your upper arm at heart level.
- 4** If possible, take your blood pressure twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon. Record all of your blood pressure readings and share your records with your healthcare team. Your provider will recommend ways to manage your blood pressure, which may include modifications to your diet, exercise and/or medication.

### To learn more, check out these additional resources:

<sup>1</sup>[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

<sup>2</sup>Improving Health Outcomes: Blood Pressure. Murakami L and Rakotz M.

Self-measured Blood Pressure Monitoring Program: Engaging Patients in Self-measurement. 1st ed. Daniel D and Prall M, eds. American Medical Association and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; February 2015.

<sup>3</sup>American Heart Association. [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org).