

Hypertension: Complementary/Alternative Medicine

Borderline high blood pressure: 120--160/90-94 Mild high blood pressure: 140--160/95-104 Moderate high blood pressure: 140-180/105-114 Severe high blood pressure: 160+/115+

QUICK REVIEW

- Elevated blood pressure is a major risk factor for a heart attack or stroke.
- Since over eighty percent of patients with high blood pressure are in the borderline-to-moderate range, most cases of high blood pressure can be brought under control through changes in diet and lifestyle.
- Virtually every medical authority (textbook, organization, journal, etc.), including the joint National Committee on Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure, has recommended that non-drug therapies be used in the treatment of borderline to-mild hypertension (high blood pressure).

Vegetarians generally have lower blood pressure levels and a lower incidence of high blood pressure and other cardiovascular diseases than non-vegetarians.

- A high potassium-to-sodium intake is associated with lower blood pressure.

Relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing exercises, biofeedback, transcendental meditation, yoga, progressive muscle relaxation, and hypnosis, have all been shown to have some value in lowering blood pressure. Population-based and clinical studies have shown that the higher the intake of vitamin C the lower the blood pressure.

- Chronic exposure to lead from environmental sources, including drinking water, is associated with high blood pressure and increased cardiovascular mortality.

CoQ₁₀ deficiency has been shown to be present in thirty-nine percent of patients with high blood pressure. Over sixty double blind studies have demonstrated that either fish oil supplements or flaxseed oil are very effective in lowering blood pressure. Hawthorn extracts exert mild blood pressure-lowering effects.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

High blood pressure should not be taken lightly. By keeping your blood pressure in the normal range, you will not only lengthen your life, but you will improve the quality of your life as well. This is especially true if natural measures, rather than drugs, are used to attain proper blood pressure; the drugs carry significant side effects such as fatigue, headaches, and impotence. Here are some concise guidelines for the various classifications of high blood pressure:

For Mild Hypertension (140-160/90-104)

- reduce excess weight
- eliminate salt (sodium chloride) intake follow a healthy lifestyle: avoid alcohol, caffeine, and smoking; exercise and use stress-reduction techniques.

Follow a high-potassium diet rich in fiber and complex carbohydrates increase dietary consumption of celery, garlic, and onions.

Reduce or eliminate the intake of animal fats while increasing the intake of vegetable oils.

Supplement the diet with the following:

High-potency multiple vitamin and mineral formula

Vitamin C: 500-1,000 mg three times per day

Vitamin E: 400-800 IU per day

Magnesium: 800-1,200 mg per day

Garlic: the equivalent of 4,000 mg of fresh garlic per day

Taurine 500 mg 3 times daily

If, after following the above recommendations for a period of three to six months, blood pressure has not returned to normal, please consult a physician for further non-drug recommendations.

For Moderate Hypertension (140-180/105-114)

- employ all the measures listed for Mild Hypertension
- take Coenzyme Q10: 50 mg two to three times per day
- take hawthorn extract (10% procyanidins or 1.8% vitexin-4'-rhamnoside): 100-250 mg three times per day

Follow these guidelines for one to three months. If your blood pressure has not dropped below 140/105, you will need to work with a physician to select the most appropriate medication. If a prescription drug is necessary, calcium channel-blockers or ACE-inhibitors appear to be the safest.

For Severe Hypertension (160+/115+)

Consult a physician immediately. Employ all the measures listed for Mild and Moderate Hypertension. A drug may be necessary to achieve initial control. When satisfactory control over the high blood pressure has been achieved, work with your physician to taper off the medication.