



News Article

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Hypertension



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News

"Normal" blood pressure [Hypertension] was accepted as whatever your age was plus 100. So a twenty-year old was expected to have a BP no higher than 120/80. A forty-year old, 140/90 and if you were 60, a top number of 160 was considered perfectly acceptable. But medicine changes its mind more often than most of us change our socks. If your blood pressure is high and you are on medications, I recommend the following:

- Measure your blood pressure twice a week after taking deep belly breath and record the value in a book.
- Follow the wellness IQ on this website to improve your eating and drinking habits.
- Increase your exercise to improve your cardiovascular function by brisk walking daily.
- If your blood pressure reading is high during your doctor visit, this is due to white coat syndrome.
- Stay taking your medications until your blood pressure becomes stable then you can gradually reduce your medications by working with your health care provider.
- Taking medications indefinitely is not recommended.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in 3 American adults (about 70 million people) have high blood pressure. About half have uncontrolled high blood pressure, which increases your risk for a number of serious health problems, including:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Kidney disease
- Cognitive decline, dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Globally, more than 1 billion people struggle with high blood pressure, and prevalence has nearly doubled in the past four decades. Overall, men tend to have higher blood pressure than women, and while high-income nations have seen a significant decline in hypertension, prevalence in low- and middle-income

countries, such as South Asia and Africa, is spiking. According to researchers, prevalence is "completely inverse" to national income. Worldwide, high blood pressure is thought to cause nearly 13 percent of all deaths, or about 7.5 million deaths annually.

What Causes High Blood Pressure?

According to medical physiology textbooks, as much as 95 percent of hypertension is called essential hypertension, meaning the underlying cause is unknown. From my perspective, this simply isn't true. A number of factors have been identified as contributing to high blood pressure, including but not limited to: Insulin and leptin resistance. As your insulin and leptin levels rise, it causes your blood pressure to increase. Elevated uric acid levels are also significantly associated with hypertension, so any program adopted to address high blood pressure needs to normalize your uric acid level as well. Poor nutrition in childhood has been shown to raise the risk of high blood pressure in adulthood. Lead exposure. Pollution. As your insulin and leptin levels rise, it causes your blood pressure to increase. Insulin and leptin resistance. Air pollution affects blood pressure by causing inflammation while noise pollution asserts an effect via your nervous and hormonal systems.

Air pollution has been shown to increase your risk of high blood pressure to the same degree as having a body mass index (BMI) of 25 to 30. Living in an area plagued by constant noise pollution (busy city streets with night time traffic) has been shown to increase the risk of hypertension by 6 percent, compared to living in an area where noise levels are at least 20 percent lower. The Importance of Diet and Insulin Sensitivity As noted by the lead author Majid Ezzati, Ph.D., a professor of global environmental health at Imperial College London.

"The perception is that people are not getting enough calories, but the reality is, they're not getting healthy calories. Making fresh, healthy food affordable and accessible for everybody should be a priority." One of the most important dietary changes needed to improve high blood pressure is to eliminate or dramatically reduce sugar and processed fructose

from your diet. The easiest way to do that is to replace processed foods with real, whole foods. This will address not only insulin and leptin resistance but also elevated uric acid levels. One 2010 study discovered that those who consumed 74 grams or more per day of fructose (the equivalent of about 2.5 sugary drinks) had a 77 percent greater risk of having blood pressure levels of 160/100 mmHg (stage 2 hypertension).

Consuming 74 grams or more of fructose per day also increased the risk of a 135/85 blood pressure reading by 26 percent, and a reading of 140/90 by 30 percent. To learn more about healthy eating, please see my optimal nutrition plan, which

will guide you through the necessary changes step-by-step. To ascertain whether insulin/leptin resistance is at play, be sure to check your fasting insulin level. If your hypertension is the result of elevated insulin levels, dietary intervention will be key.

Aim for a fasting insulin level of 2 to 3 microU per mL (mcU/mL). If it's 5 mcU/mL or above, you definitely need to lower your insulin level to reduce your risk of high blood pressure and other cardiovascular health problems. Keep in mind that the so-called "normal" fasting insulin level is anywhere from 5 to 25 mcU/mL, but please do not make the mistake of thinking that this "normal" insulin range equates to optimal.



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