



7 Ways to Lower Blood Pressure and Drive Good Nutrition Habits



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Good news!
You can steer your blood pressure in a healthier direction.

Your heart is the size of your fist, and pumps around 2,000 gallons of blood each day.

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is known as the “Silent Killer” because this condition typically does not have any symptoms.

Think of a garden hose trying to pump water with the same force as a fire hose. Over time, the garden hose will wear out and weaken. A person living with untreated high blood pressure causes a similar force on their arteries, straining and damaging the artery wall.

I’m Lynda Maschek and I drove trucks for a living.

Today, I am a Registered Dietitian and lover of all things related to nutrition, fitness, and healthy, happy living.

I help my clients realize the best version of themselves when they develop the nutrition knowledge and skills that will support the life they dream about.

I work with adults who are overworked, in demand, and are seeking a roadmap to manage their eating patterns, weight and diabetes.



Keep reading and discover the 7 things that are in your control to reduce your blood pressure and drive good nutrition habits.



1 *Avoid Salty Foods*

Better diet = better blood pressure.

A key factor to lowering your blood pressure is to reduce the sodium in your diet. Your doctor may even tell you to cut back on the salt, but how much is too much?

Here's the deal. If you have high blood pressure, are African American, Mexican American, or Asian American, the daily sodium allowance is approximately 1,800 mg. per day.

Let's look at an example of a box of macaroni and cheese as an example of how much sodium is actually in our food.

Sample Label for Macaroni and Cheese

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)
Servings Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving

Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 1.5g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Start Here

Limit these Nutrients

Get Enough of these Nutrients

Footnote

Quick Guide to % DV

5% or less is low
20% or more is high

When you read a nutrition label, always start at the top.

Identify the serving size, then scroll down to sodium content for that amount. The label here tells us that one cup of this macaroni and cheese contains 470 mg of sodium. If the sodium content is greater than 300mg., for that serving size, it is a red flag. You may want to think about purchasing another item or be careful how much sodium is on the rest of your plate.

Remember, the goal is to stay at less than 1,800 mg., per day.








2 *Choose More Fruits and Vegetables*

Choosing foods that are high in potassium is essential to lowering blood pressure. Fruits and vegetables are your friends because most of them are high in potassium.

Have you heard of the DASH diet? DASH is an acronym for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. It was developed by the American Heart Association to lower blood pressure and recommends 4-5 servings of fruit and 4-5 servings of vegetables per day, adding loads more potassium to your diet. If this feels like too many fruits and vegetables- then focus on consuming at least 2 fruits and 3 vegetables per day to start.

Here are just a few easy access potassium foods you can include in your diet regularly.

-  Grape tomatoes
-  Single serving avocado cups
-  Oranges
-  Bananas
-  Carrots

3 *Join the Movement Movement!*

The heart is a muscle, and like all muscles, it gets stronger with exercise. A strong heart will pump blood easier, with less force and pressure. This means less damage to your blood vessels.

Even if your blood pressure is normal now, inactivity increases your chance of developing high blood pressure later in life. Be sure to check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Get Off Your Seat and Make an Effort to Move!



With a demanding work life and busy family life, you may not have hours to spend at the gym, but the good news is that 30 minutes of daily moderate exercise, like walking intently, is enough to make a significant change to your blood pressure. The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes per week of moving with purpose.





That's 30 minutes x 5 days= 150 minutes.

The life you dream about, that one in retirement playing catch with your grandchildren, may depend on how much physical exercise you get today.

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Sleep is Not a Luxury

There is no Olympic medal for pushing yourself to get through the day with no sleep. Humans should not “run on Dunkin,” as the commercials would have you believe.





-  Over time, poor sleep habits cause high blood pressure.
-  Sleep is a biological requirement for human life.
-  Sleep is for building and repairing tissue cells, muscle cells and brain cells.
-  Sleep apnea is associated with high blood pressure, stroke, and heart failure.

Your heart is working hard for you all day. Overworking the heart by not sleeping can cause damage to blood vessels and lead to heart attack and stroke. Sleep allows your heart and your brain to rest and renew for the next day to avoid brain fog.



5





Don't Let Stress Manage YOU!

-  Anxiety and stress increase heart rate and blood pressure in the moment. So, the more moments or hours and days of stress we have, the more damaging it is to our heart and blood vessels.
-  We are less likely to make healthy decisions under stress- that promise you made to avoid donuts or chips becomes more difficult.
-  Healthy behaviors are the first to go during stressful times because it is easy to say, "I'm too stressed to go to work out today," when exercise is the perfect solution to blow off steam and let go of the pressures of the day.
-  Deep breathing works in the moment to lower blood pressure, and you can do this while anytime of day, in a meeting, stuck in traffic or during stressful family conversations. Try a few inhale/exhale breaths. Count 1,2,3,4 on the inhale, count 4,3,2,1 on the exhale. Think of smelling a rose on the inhale and blowing out a candle as you exhale. Do it all 3 or 4 times in a row.

Learning how to use positive affirmations during stressful times can affect your brain and change your thoughts. Affirmations create a focal point that allow you to change your thinking. Scientific research shows that the power of boiling down positive thoughts to simple, repeated phrases rewires the brain and resets you into a better frame of mind.

This simple tool of repeating positive statements can change your outlook and your life.

Here are some examples of positive affirmations or positive thoughts to repeat to yourself. Write these on a post-It note and place them on the dashboard of your car or your computer monitor.

-  "I believe in and have confidence in myself."
-  "I know I can accomplish anything I set my mind to."
-  "There is a way, and I know I will find it."
-  "Good things are happening for me."








6

Live at a Healthy Weight

Just as an overloaded trailer causes wear and tear on a truck engine, an overweight body strains the heart and blood vessels.

Together, obesity and hypertension combine to create heart disease, one of the leading causes of death in the U.S. You are especially at high risk if you tend to carry your weight around your waist. Losing as little as 5% of your current body weight may be enough to prevent or reduce high blood pressure and diabetes.

Here are some steps you can take right now to make the numbers on the scale move downward!

-  Choose a smaller plate to reduce your portion sizes.
-  Drink a glass of water before you sit down to the table.
-  Get enough sleep to avoid mindless munching the next day.
-  Have 2 fruits and 3 servings of vegetables per day.
-  You really do have to 'move it to lose it,' so move more during the week and on weekends.

For more ideas on what you can do to live at a healthier weight, check out these two blog articles:

Steps to Lose Weight Around Your Middle

<https://www.welldrivennutrition.com/post/5-steps-to-lose-weight-around-your-middle>

Stop Drinking Sugary Drinks

<https://www.welldrivennutrition.com/post/here-are-5-steps-to-stop-drinking-sugary-drinks>



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Partner with Your Doctor and Your Dietitian

Ask about your blood pressure at your annual checkup and at each visit to a doctor's office. When your blood pressure is taken, ask what the result is and ask what the number means for you and your health.

Clinic staff are often in a hurry and will remove the blood pressure cuff and say, "Everything is good," when you should be told what the number is so you can keep track and compare it to other blood pressure readings you have had. Is it better or worse than at the previous visit? Get the number and keep track of blood pressure readings between doctor appointments.

Be flexible. It may take a while to meet a blood pressure goal. It may also take more than one type of medication in addition to lifestyle changes to meet your goal.

Doctors and medical staff are busy, and may not have the time to give you specific direction on what it takes to lower blood pressure. That is why people choose to work with a Dietitian, someone who can spend time with them, listen, and provide feedback that will result in nutrition and behavior changes that matter.

All of This Will Protect Your Big Beautiful Heart

Controlling your blood pressure protects your heart, kidneys, eyes, and other organs. Take action to manage blood pressure and enjoy a high quality of life for what means the most to you: your family, your career, and your passions.

Well Driven Nutrition can help you make practical changes to your diet and lifestyle so you can live your life to the fullest for the long haul.

All it takes is the right roadmap and the support of a nutrition expert to guide you to living the life of your dreams without the stress that poor health will cause it to all fall out from under you!

Book a complimentary consult with me and I'll give you next steps you can put into action immediately. If you feel we are a good fit, we will work together to find practical solutions that become sustainable healthy habits to thrive with even after you stop working with me.



Here's my story... My name is Lynda Mascheck and I'm a Former Truck Driver Turned Dietitian

My big rig career lasted for 12 years, and I enjoyed every minute of it!

Driving gave me freedom and confidence, and made me an essential part of America's economy.

When that company closed and I learned Uncle Sam offered college funding for displaced workers, it was time to pivot and do something new.

I went back to school and got a degree in Food and Nutrition from Youngstown State University which led to certifications in Weight Management and Diabetes Education.



Nevertheless, my enthusiasm for sharing the benefits of optimal nutrition never left me and I am dedicated to serving our South Carolina communities. I deeply understand lifestyle challenges whether your workplace is in an office, on a plane or working the night shift, all the while knowing your family is waiting for you to return home.

My mission is to help my clients be the hero for their own health and happiness, living the life they desire.

As we work together you will gain the knowledge and confidence to manage your health, weight, and diabetes along with the energy and drive to balance it all and family too.

Take the wheel today and start living a life free of worry about how your health could affect your career, your family, and your dreams for your future self. Book a Discovery call with me and put yourself in the driver's seat!
<https://www.welldrivennutrition.com/clean-eating-for-women>

In grace and gumption,

Lynda Mascheck
RDN, LD, CDCES, ACSM, CHWC