



The Blood Pressure Down Plan

Tuesday, May 14th, 2013

by Dr. Janet Brill, Registered Dietitian

Tweet 2 Like 3 +1 0 Share 3 Pin it

Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food. – Hippocrates

Reducing your blood pressure without drugs is easier than you think. The Blood Pressure Down plan is a combination approach of losing a little bit of weight, eating six types of foods, and exercising, developed from my extensive research on the best way to naturally reduce blood pressure.

The plan works because it harnesses the specific blood-pressure-lowering potential of several simple diet and lifestyle manipulations. The combination of these is far more effective than a single food or exercise.

Why? Each component has been scientifically proven to lower blood pressure to a different degree. Remember, with abnormal high blood pressure, every millimeter counts - for every 20 mm Hg increase in systolic blood pressure number above normal, there is an approximate doubling of risk for heart attack and stroke.

Each component of the plan tackles your high blood pressure from a different angle; together, this potent natural combination therapy can lower blood pressure as much as most single prescriptions. In the next section, you will learn about the therapeutic blood-pressure-lowering lifestyle strategies, then put them all into action simultaneously, providing you with the safest and most effective natural method to get your blood pressure down.

Combination Lifestyle Therapy for Blood Pressure Management

Treatment for all types of high blood pressure is classified as either lifestyle or pharmacotherapy. My book is about lifestyle therapy, the specific non-drug, natural modifications known to be the cornerstone of treatment for high blood pressure.

As you have learned, lifestyle therapy should always be used first and foremost to prevent and treat high blood pressure. Read on to get a better picture of the lifestyle modifications that you will combine to attain and maintain lifelong blood pressure control.

What Is Combination Lifestyle Therapy?

Combination lifestyle therapy is a hybrid of diet and exercise modifications for lowering blood pressure. There are varying opinions on the best combination. The U.S. government, the American Heart Association, the Canadian government, and the British Hypertension Society each have their own guidelines, as you can see in the table below:

Table 1. A Comparison of Lifestyle Recommendations Proven to Effectively Lower Blood pressure

Recommendation	JNC 7	NHLBI	AHA	CHEP	BHS
Lose weight	Maintain normal body weight (BMI 18.5-24.9)	Maintain normal body weight for adults (BMI 18.5-24.9 kg/m ²)	For overweight and obese individuals, lose weight, aiming for a BMI < 25 kg; for nonoverweight individuals, maintain a desirable body weight	Maintain a healthy body weight (BMI 18.5-24.9) and waist circumference (smaller than 102 cm for men and smaller than 88 cm for women)	Maintain ideal body weight and a BMI of 20-25
Adopt a DASH-type dietary pattern	Consume a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products, with a reduced content of saturated fat and total fat	Consume a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products, with a reduced content of saturated and total fat (DASH eating plan)	Consume a diet rich in fruits, vegetables (8-10 servings per day), low-fat dairy products (2-3 servings per day), and reduced in saturated fat and cholesterol	Follow a diet that is reduced in saturated fat and cholesterol, one that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products, dietary and soluble fiber, whole grains, and protein from plant sources	Consume a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products, with reduced content of saturated and total fat
Reduce sodium intake	Reduce dietary sodium intake to no more than 2.4 g/day	Reduce dietary sodium intake to no more than 2.4 g/day	Lower salt (sodium chloride) intake as much as possible, ideally to 1.5 g/day of sodium	Restrict dietary sodium to less than 2,300 mg/day (1,500 mg to 2,300 mg/day in hypertensive patients)	Reduce dietary sodium intake to < 2.4 g/day
Increase potassium intake	—	Maintain adequate intake of dietary potassium (> 3500 mg/d)	Increase potassium intake to 4.7 g/d, which is also the amount provided in DASH-type diets	—	—
Limit alcohol intake	Limit consumption to no more than 2 drinks per day (1 oz or 30 mL alcohol (e.g., 24 oz beer, 10 oz wine, or 3 oz 80-proof whiskey) in most men and no more than 1 drink per day in women and lighter-weight persons	Limit alcohol consumption to no more than 1 oz (30 mL) alcohol (e.g., 24 oz beer, 10 oz wine, or 2 oz 100-proof whiskey) per day in most men and to no more than 0.5 oz alcohol per day in women and lighter-weight persons	For those who drink, consume ≤ 2 alcoholic drinks per day (men) and ≤ 1 alcoholic drink per day (women)	Limit alcohol consumption to no more than 14 units per week in men or 9 units per week in women	Men ≤ 21 units per week; women ≤ 14 units per week ethanol; in the UK, a unit of alcohol is defined as 10 ml (about 8 g)
Engage in regular aerobic exercise	Regular aerobic physical activity such as brisk walking (at least 30 minutes per day, most days of the week)	Engage in regular aerobic physical activity, such as brisk walking, at least 30 minutes per day, most days of the week	—	Perform 30 to 60 minutes of aerobic exercise 4 to 7 days per week	Engage in regular aerobic physical activity, such as brisk walking, for at least 30 minutes most days

Each of the six modifiable lifestyle factors listed here has been proven to significantly reduce blood pressure. This might seem overwhelming, but don't worry! I just want you to see how much evidence there is for all of these lifestyle modifications. In my plan I've put them all together for you, to multiply the blood-pressure-lowering power of each one.

There's no shortage of proof that natural combination therapy works. The prestigious groups of doctors and scientists of the government's JNC 7 committee have outlined approximately how many millimeters each of the top lifestyle therapies lowers systolic blood pressure (the top number).

1. Losing weight can lower blood pressure up to 20 millimeters.
2. Adopting a DASH-style diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy can lower blood pressure up to 14 millimeters.
3. Cutting dietary sodium to less than 2,400 mg/day can lower blood pressure up to 8 millimeters.
4. Exercising thirty minutes a day, most days of the week, can lower blood pressure up to 9 millimeters.
5. Limiting alcohol consumption to one drink a day for women and two for men can lower blood pressure up to 4 millimeters.

You can be sure that each of these well-established strategies is included in the Blood Pressure Down plan – along with several additional less well-known but equally effective lifestyle steps. Used together, these strategies form a lifestyle “attack” on different systems related to blood pressure regulation, with a much greater impact than any single therapy.

The Blood Pressure Down Plan

You now know that high blood pressure is usually silent but always treacherous and that you must get it down. If you are not ready to get on the prescription bandwagon – or if you want to get off – you can rest assured that the combination of natural, safe, and highly effective lifestyle methods outlined in these pages will get your blood pressure under control.

Blood Pressure Down takes six individual blood-pressure-lowering foods – all scientifically shown to independently reduce blood pressure – and combines them on a daily basis with a manageable amount of weight loss, salt restriction, exercise, and relaxation. Combining all these proven blood-pressure-lowering strategies is as effective as combining several types of blood-pressure-lowering drugs.

All the ingredients are available at your local supermarket and are no more dangerous, exotic, or expensive than bananas, yogurt, or walking. Each step in the plan lowers your blood pressure several millimeters in a slightly different way, so the combination approach is substantially stronger than a single therapeutic treatment.

Going on the “mineral diet” I prescribe (high amounts of potassium, magnesium, and calcium-rich foods), for example, lowers pressure by balancing the electrolytes in your bloodstream. Getting in daily aerobic exercise such as brisk walking, on the other hand, lowers pressure by boosting internal production of nitric oxide, a natural substance that acts like Valium for endothelial cells, relaxing and widening the arteries.

A daily dose of both the minerals and exercise cuts pressure much more than either in isolation. In this way, all ten steps of the Blood Pressure Down plan work together to pack a very powerful punch in lowering blood pressure.

Ready to Bring Your Blood Pressure Down?

The next ten chapters provide a set of simple, beautiful food and exercise prescriptions that give safe and measurable blood-pressure-lowering results in as little as four weeks. If you're at high risk of developing high blood pressure or already have the disease, these ten lifestyle changes can literally save your life.

Think of all ten steps as the equivalent of a daily prescription pill– it's essential to do your best to get them all in. You'll keep track of your progress using the Ten-Step Daily Checklist located in Appendix 3, the same tool my patients use. Read on to begin with Step 1 of the daily checklist and start now to get your blood pressure down!



Janet Brill, Ph.D., R.D., LDN, is a leading diet, nutrition, and fitness expert specializing in cardiovascular disease prevention. She is the author of Cholesterol Down: 10 Simple Steps to Lower Your Cholesterol in 4 Weeks - Without Prescription Drugs (Three Rivers Press, 2006), Prevent a Second Heart Attack: 8 Foods, 8 Weeks to Reverse Heart Disease (Three Rivers Press, Feb. 2011), and Blood Pressure Down, The 10-Step Plan to Lower Your Blood Pressure in 4 Weeks (Three Rivers Press, April 2011). To learn more about Dr. Janet, get delicious heart-healthy recipes, or buy her books, please visit DrJanet.com or Blood Pressure Down.

Related Content:

- Author Bio: Janet Brill
- Enjoying the Heart Benefits of Red Wine
- Oatmeal: Have a Bowl of Heart Health!
- The Healthy Heart Benefits of a Daily Walk
- Vegetables: More Colors for Better Health!

Tweet 2 Like 3 +1 0 Share 3 Pin it

Today's Top Reader Picks:

1. Get Slim with the Easy 3 Day Diet Plan!
2. TUBA: Breast Augmentation that's Clearly Better!
3. FAQ: How much do Botox Injections cost?
4. Why Drinking Green Tea to Lose Weight Works
5. Tipsheet: Best Places to Find Used Gym Equipment
6. Goal-Setting and Success: The BIG Picture
7. Used Exercise Equipment Buying Guide

Google Custom Search Search

Weight Loss Tip of the Day:

“The Mediterranean diet provides more than just heart-healthy benefits; studies show it also leads to more weight loss than low-fat diets.”

Latest Health News Tweets:

- CNN Health --> Mom's death inspires doctor's life work http://t.co/mEXUTGrb01 ... 13 minutes ago
- Cleveland Clinic --> Brain aging linked to #sleep related memory decline http://t.co/o9Kg3LaY8N (via @nytimes) ... 39 minutes ago
- NYTimes Health --> Op-Ed Contributor: My Medical Choice http://t.co/106FkgWz0r ... about an hour ago
- CNN Health --> The psychology of captivity http://t.co/mGZdB1n8lg ... about an hour ago
- Prevention Magazine --> Cravings hit fast and hard. Be prepared with a good defense. http://t.co/jEx271t07H ... about an hour ago

Share Your Weight Loss Story!



Grab a Weight Loss Badge!

