

## How to control High Blood Pressure LIFESTYLE CHANGES AND BLOOD PRESSURE

Dr. Abhay Nigam, M.B.B.S., M.D. (Medicine), F.A.C.P. (U.S.A.)

Specialist - Internal Medicine

Al Zahrawi Hospital, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE

[www.abhaynigam.com](http://www.abhaynigam.com)

- 1. Smoking cessation:** The nicotine in cigarette **smoke** is a big part of the problem. It raises your **blood pressure** and heart rate, narrows your arteries and hardens their walls, and makes your blood more likely to clot. It stresses your heart and sets you up for a heart attack or stroke. All forms of smoking (Shisha, Pipe, Cigar, e-cigarettes etc.) must be stopped completely, if you are smoker or tobacco chewer.  
Research suggests that the second-hand smoke from a cigarette or cigar or exhaled by smoker is equally harmful as active smoking. Protect yourself from Second-hand smoke as well.
- 2. Exercise:** Regular exercise (walking, running) for at least 150 minutes per week can lower your blood pressure, even if you don't lose weight. To maintain this benefit, you must continue to exercise; stopping exercise will allow your blood pressure to become high again.
- 3. Reduce sodium (salt)** — The main source of sodium in the diet is the salt contained in packaged and processed foods and in foods from restaurants. The body requires a small amount of sodium in the diet. However, most people consume more sodium than they need. A low-sodium diet contains fewer than 1.5 grams (1500 milligrams) of sodium each day.
- 4. Reduce alcohol** — Drinking an excessive amount of alcohol increases your risk of developing high blood pressure. Limit alcohol to  $\leq 1$  drink daily for women and  $\leq 2$  drinks for men
- 5. DASH Diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)** - Eat more fruits and vegetables heart-healthy diet that facilitates achieving a desirable weight is recommended for adults with elevated BP or hypertension. Patients who strictly follow the DASH eating plan can also have fairly significant reductions in weight, particularly when combined with a low-sodium diet  
**Eat more fiber** — eating an increased amount of fiber may decrease blood pressure. The recommended amount of dietary fiber is 20 to 35 grams of fiber per day. Many breakfast cereals are excellent sources of dietary fiber.
- 6. Reduction of weight** to BMI of 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup> (Less than 23 BMI for Asians) and of waist circumference to <102 cm in men and <88 cm in women is recommended.
- 7. Avoid taking medications and supplements that increase blood pressure-** In susceptible individuals, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications, otherwise known as pain killers or NSAIDs (ibuprofen, Diclofenac etc.), can increase blood pressure. Oral contraceptive pills (OCPs) may increase blood pressure in some women. Additionally, any stimulant, including those found in some decongestants, weight loss products, and illicit drugs, can increase blood pressure. If you are regularly consuming any of these substances, you can talk to your health care provider about potential substitutions.
- 8. Anti-hypertensive medications:** If you have been prescribed medicines to control hypertension, you must take your medicines regularly. The medications are required in addition to lifestyle changes. If you face any difficulty do not make changes in your treatment on your own. Discuss with your doctor.
- 9. Goal of treatment:** To always maintain blood pressure less than 130/80 mm of Hg.