

**BLOCK & NATION, P.A.
FAMILY PRACTICE**

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Recommendations for HYPERTENSION

People with high blood pressure should make sincere efforts to lose weight and reduce their salt intake, whether or not they are on medication to control their hypertension. This firm position issued by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, places a significantly greater emphasis on the importance of diet than did either of two earlier reports on hypertension put forth by the NHLBI.

Hypertension joins cigarette smoking and high blood cholesterol as major risk factors for heart disease. Normal blood pressure is about 120/70; high blood pressure is consistently 140/90 or above. When such high readings are brought back to normal, the risk of developing a heart attack or stroke decreases markedly.

For people with hypertension, the NHLBI details the following dietary guidelines:

- **LOSE WEIGHT** if you are overweight. If you cannot get all the way down to the ideal body weight for your size, even moderate weight loss can often have a significant effect. People on blood pressure drugs who are also in the process of losing weight should have their blood pressure checked regularly, because their need for continued medication may decrease or disappear.
- **LOWER SODIUM INTAKE** to about 2,000 milligrams (two grams) a day. This will help some but not all hypertensive people, and it certainly won't harm anyone else. Cutting back on salt may also preclude the loss of some potassium - of particular importance for people on certain blood pressure drugs.
- **MINIMIZE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.** Liquor, wine and beer can all increase blood pressure significantly.

Additionally, **LIMIT CAFFEINE INTAKE.** Caffeinated colas, coffee, tea, etc., can raise blood pressure in some individuals.

You also should **AVOID SMOKING AND PARTICIPATE IN MEDICALLY SUPERVISED EXERCISE** such as walking, jogging, or swimming. Exercise not only helps control weight but also lowers blood pressure in hypertensive individuals.

The expert committee of physicians and nurses responsible for the National Institute report believes that the same recommendations may help prevent the development of hypertension, particularly in people who are considered at high risk. Children of parents who have high blood pressure, for example, might decrease their chances of developing hypertension if they control their weight and limit their use of salt.

Peter Libby, MD, a heart specialist at Tufts-USDA Nutrition Research Center on Aging and at Boston's New England Medical Center Hospital, adds to the committee's suggestions by noting that besides preventing the need for medications in some people, these measures may make medications work more effectively in others and simplify drug treatment. Indeed, all medications can have side effects, even those that are as well tolerated as the drugs for controlling blood pressure. People with high blood pressure who continue to need drugs should not be scared away from taking their medications, however, because research has clearly shown that drug treatment of hypertension decreases the chance of further illness and death.

Remember that once you have high blood pressure, it can only be controlled. It does not go away. As the Institute report states, "lack of long-term adherence to therapy is the major problem in controlling hypertension."

Maximizing a healthy lifestyle, such as following the dietary and exercise recommendations above, will help anyone with hypertension to minimize their medications.

LOW SALT DIET TIPS:

1. Salt may be used sparingly in cooking. As a general rule, use one half the usual amount called for in the recipe.
2. **DO NOT USE SALT AT THE TABLE.**
3. Use the powdered version of seasonings, such as garlic powder instead of garlic salt.
4. Do not use salt substitute without your doctor's permission.

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2000 mg. (88 mEq) SODIUM DIET

FOOD GROUP	SERVINGS DAILY	FOODS TO INCLUDE	FOODS TO AVOID
Milk	2 Cups	Skim, low fat, whole milk, evaporated non-fat dry milk solids (reconstituted); yogurt	Buttermilk*, eggnog, milkshakes
Meat, Fish Poultry, Cheese Meat alternate	6 ounces	Fresh meat and poultry; fresh or unsalted frozen fish; unsalted canned meat or fish; low-sodium cheese; unsalted cottage cheese, dried beans and peas, low sodium peanut butter.	Salted, smoked or canned meats, fish or fowl; sausage, bacon, fat-back; luncheon meats and any meats with sodium additives; turkey or chicken franks or bologna; soy bean meat analogs, shellfish, corned beef, frankfurters, Kosher meats and all other cheese.
Egg	One	Prepared any style without salt	All in excess of allowed amounts; raw.
Bread and cereal	3 servings	Regular bread and cereals; unsalted crackers.	Salted crackers, pretzels, other crackers; hominy.
Potato and alternate	(1/2 cup servings) - 1 to 2 daily	Mashed, boiled, baked white or sweet potato (limit sweet potato to 1/4 cup); rice, spaghetti, noodles, macaroni and pasta prepared without salt.	Any prepared with salt or salted meat, hominy; potato chips; dehydrated potato flakes; packaged mixes containing milk, cheese, salt or eggs; mashed potatoes with extra milk; candied sweet potatoes; frozen products.
Vegetable	(1/2 cup servings) - 4 daily	All fresh, frozen (except those on avoid list) or canned prepared without salt; low sodium tomato juice; 1 cup per week ONLY of artichokes, beets, carrots or celery. Include at least 1 Vitamin A vegetable every other day.	Frozen green peas, lima beans or mixed vegetables; sauerkraut, any prepared with salt or salted meat; any canned or frozen with salt or any additive containing sodium. READ ALL LABELS FOR SALT OR SODIUM CONTENT.
Fruit	(1/2 cup servings) - 3 or more daily	All fresh, frozen or canned fruits and fruit juices without salt or sodium added; dried apples, apricots, peaches, pears, prunes, raisins. Include vitamin C fruit daily.	All fruits dried with sodium sulfate; any processed with salt or sodium added; crystallized fruit.
Fat	3 tsp 1 1/2 Tbs. 2 Tbs. (once daily) As desired	Regular margarine or butter Regular salad dressing Cream, sour cream or cream cheese Oil; cooking spray; unsalted margarine or butter.	Bacon, sausage, salted nuts, peanut butter
Sweets and deserts	As desired	Sugar, honey, syrup, jams and jelly; hard candy, jelly beans, gumdrops, marshmallows; bakery items made WITHOUT salt, unflavored gelatin; sherbet, limit ice cream to 1/2 c. daily.	More than 1 regular dessert daily.
Beverage	As desired	Coffee, tea; decaffeinated coffee, tea; lemonade, (freshly prepared) kool aid; carbonated beverages with less than 20 mg. Sodium per serving*.	Low calorie carbonated beverages containing salt or sodium additives.
*Consult food composition table for sodium content of various brands and flavor of carbonated beverages.			
Soup	As desired	Unsalted homemade soups using allowed foods; low sodium bouillon or low sodium commercial soups using allowed ingredients not in excessive amounts	Regular commercially canned soups and bouillon cubes; dehydrated soups
Miscellaneous	As desired	Herbs, spices, vinegar, garlic, pepper, unsalted nuts, unsalted popcorn; dried mustard powder, butter-flavor extract and all other extracts	SALT, lemon pepper, celery salt, onion salt, monosodium glutamate (msg), meat tenderizers, prepared mustard, catsup, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, meat sauces, olives, pickles, Tabasco sauce, salted popcorn; any product with salt or sodium additives.