

# What is High Blood Pressure?

High blood pressure is when the blood in your body is moving with too much force. Blood is carried from your heart to the rest of your body in tubes called arteries. You can think about these tubes like the pipes in a building, bringing water to each of the rooms. If the force in these tubes is too high this is called high blood pressure, or hypertension.



## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Many people have high blood pressure and do not know that they do. You can have high blood pressure and feel totally healthy. Over the years though, this can lead to serious health problems such as heart attacks or strokes. The good news is there are many ways to make it better.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

There are many ways you can lower your blood pressure in addition to using medications. Changes to what you eat or the amount you exercise you do can make a big difference. Meditation, slow breathing or acupuncture can also be helpful.

- DASH diet
- Fish oils
- Coenzyme Q10
- Slow breathing
- Meditation

## DASH DIET

Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) is a healthy way to eat that will help you to lower your blood pressure. Make one good change each week. This could be adding some vegetables to your lunch, switching from white rice to brown rice, or cutting down on soda.

- ✓ Fruits and vegetables
- ✓ Nuts, seeds and beans
- ✓ Low-fat dairy
- ✗ White bread, fatty meats
- ✗ Snacks, sweets, salt

## KEEP A HEALTHY BODY WEIGHT

Keeping a healthy weight is the best way you can lower your blood pressure. Use the DASH diet for tips on healthy eating. Avoid “quick-fix” diets—weight loss takes time so be patient!

## EXERCISE

- Be active most days: climbing the stairs, taking a walk or doing housework all help.
- Find what works for you: a class at the gym, 7-minute workout, or a brisk walk.
- Don't push yourself too hard: If you are too tired or out of breath to talk, slow down!
- Try to work up to a total of 150 minutes of physical activity every week

## SUPER FOODS!

- Olive oil
- Dark chocolate (70% cocoa)
- Garlic
- Green tea, hibiscus
- Low-fat yogurt
- Nuts, seeds, beans
- Blueberries, kiwis, avocado
- Broccoli, kale, arugula
- Salmon, sardines, herring

## MIND-BODY



### MEDITATION

Meditation teaches you to relax your mind and body. The body's relaxation response helps to decrease blood pressure. There are many different techniques so try a few to see what works best for you.

### SLOW BREATHING

Deep breaths slow your heart, which is good for your blood pressure. You can do breathing exercises on your own or with the help of a bio-feedback machine.

### ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture is a Traditional Chinese treatment using very thin needles in the skin. It can be uncomfortable but it is not usually painful. You may find it very relaxing!

For more information, scan the QR code below, or visit [nciph.org/high\\_blood\\_pressure](http://nciph.org/high_blood_pressure)



