

KESSINGER HEALTH & WELLNESS

Blood Pressure Facts

High blood pressure is called *HYPERTENSION* and is a “silent killer”. It is closely associated with an increased risk of developing heart disease, stroke, poor circulation, and kidney disease.

There is no known cause for 95% of all hypertension. However, years of research have helped prove that hypertension is almost always due to numerous adverse health habits rather than any single cause.

Kidney disease is responsible for almost all the known causes of hypertension. Long term use of many common over-the-counter drugs are known to injure the kidneys. Such drugs include aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Rufen), naproxen (Anaprox, Naprosyn, Aleve), and many others. Also, cold medications and many prescription drugs, such as oral contraceptives, can also increase blood pressure. Of course, adverse lifestyle habits (consumption of alcohol and caffeine, cigarette smoking, etc.) contribute to hypertension. While the potential risks of caffeine pale next to those of cigarette smoke and alcohol, when combined with either tobacco or alcohol the risk is greatly increased.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; Department of Health and Human Services (NIH Publication No. 93-2669) reported that by far the safest and most desirable way to control blood pressure is *lifestyle modification*. In fact, they state that medication for hypertension should only be used when the blood pressure is dangerously high, *and then used only until control can be maintained naturally*.

There are several natural interventions that are recommended as therapies for hypertension.

- ◆ Weight control — Excess weight greatly increases the risk of many serious conditions, including hypertension, and is an increasingly common health problem in the United States.
- ◆ Regular exercise — Exercise has been shown to effectively improve all health complications. To be effective, the exercise program must sustain an increased heart rate for a minimum of 20 minutes daily.
- ◆ Avoidance of tobacco smoke
- ◆ Reduction or elimination of refined sugars, caffeine and alcohol
- ◆ Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables — At least 5 different colors of fruits (not canned) or vegetables should be consumed every day, and 8 of every 10 bites should be from fruits or vegetables. (This is now the basic recommendation of the American Heart Association and the National Cancer Institute.)
- ◆ Reduction of fatty foods — Red meat should be eaten less than once a week. Fried foods should be avoided. Preferred forms of cooked meats are broiled, boiled, baked or stewed.
- ◆ Nutritional supplementation — Several supplements have been proven to help lower blood pressure, including calcium, potassium, fish oil, coenzyme Q-10, germanium, magnesium, and vitamins C and E. Several other nutrients are also often necessary.

Remember, there are no shortcuts to maintaining or regaining good health. No medication or combination of medications will ever be superior to healthy habits in preventing or reversing most diseases.

Blood Pressure _____

NORMAL BLOOD PRESSURE
120/80

Body Mass Index _____

*Divide: Weight by Height Squared and Then Multiply
by 704.5 to Calculate BMI*

BMI 25.9-29.9 = OVERWEIGHT
BMI 30+= OBESE

35 % AMERICANS ARE OVERWEIGHT

