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The Low-Down on High Blood Pressure

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1. High Blood Pressure Explained

Another name for high blood pressure is hypertension. It is often referred to as the silent killer because there are few symptoms and those few can often be mistaken for symptoms of something else. Very often people who do not know they have high blood pressure can die suddenly and unexpectedly, leaving their family in trauma for many months.

The blood in the human body travels towards the different organs through blood vessels. The little tubes (blood vessels) happen to be very important, as they virtually form the freeway for blood. When they become less elastic or damaged, you'll start having all sorts of problems. It's like the situation when you drive down a 3-lane expressway only to find that 2 of those lanes are shut down because of construction work. The blood vessels turn stiff and become narrower. This means the blood in your body goes through a very difficult time finding its way through the super-tight space. It keeps putting additional pressure onto the vessel walls. If left untreated, this pressure can cause problems like unnaturally enlarged heart, mild / major stroke, heart attack, diabetes or severe kidney problems.

The American Heart Association has suggested what normal levels of blood pressure are, so you can readily find out if you are at risk of hypertension. Your blood pressure is measured using the Systolic and Diastolic figures. If you are at risk of high blood pressure, you should take remedial actions fast. There are different types of risk factors for high levels of blood pressure. Good examples are obesity, exhaustion, unhealthy diet and stress. Some people get high blood pressure because they're addicted to smoking or using other kinds of tobacco products. Ethnicity has a lot to do with high blood pressure. Did you know that the African Americans have a very high risk of getting high blood pressure?

People who are 55 or over are also at greater risk of high blood pressure. The same can be said about people with family history of hypertension. There are different kinds of polycystic kidney diseases which, in addition to other kinds of kidney disorders, can cause high blood pressure. In the same way, Cushing's disease is also among the major culprits. Clinical researchers have found that Coarctation of the aorta is also a risk factor. Some people get caught in high blood pressure disorders due to the side effects of medications such as antidepressants, cold medicines and oral contraceptives. In the same way, some special types of drugs like cocaine can also cause this type of problem.

High levels of blood pressure have to be handled early and effectively as they could lead to numerous other problems like heart attack, mild or severe stroke and diabetes. As already mentioned, some people end up with heart diseases, kidney disease or even blindness. Among the most critical problems are reduced brain functions. A lot of people manage to keep going with high blood pressure, without even knowing that they're at a high risk of heart disease. We hope that you now understand why high blood pressure has been named the "silent killer."

If you are looking for a feasible way to shun those risks, fortunately there are many. The first task at hand would be to measure your blood pressure. Have a veteran healthcare professional who's got the essential equipment and skill test your current risk levels. Besides using medications you also need to adopt some healthy habits like healthy diet, exercise, quitting smoking, managing your stress, avoiding alcohol and cutting sodium (e.g. salt) intake. Above all, you need to take medications in line with the prescriptions of the doctor. High levels of blood pressure (hypertension) are oftentimes known as the silent killer due to the lack of vivid symptoms.

There are many ways to get your blood pressure checked. You can go to the doctor; the only problems with this being the possibility of having 'white coat syndrome –the tension of being in the doctor's surgery can elevate your BP. You can have your blood pressure checked at a pharmacy or health clinic, or you can buy a monitor and check your BP at home.

2. Blood Pressure Readings Explained

Blood pressure readings have two numbers that look rather like a fraction when read. The top reading is called the systolic reading and refers to the pressure in the arteries when the blood is pumping. The bottom number is called the diastolic reading and refers to the pressure when the heart is resting between beats. Blood pressure should be measured after the patient has rested for at least ten minutes.

As the blood pressure changes too often throughout the day, it's better if you make use of multiple readings to figure out your average blood pressure. This is because your blood pressure will tend to fluctuate within a particular range. There are many things which can cause your blood pressure to change in a matter of few minutes or so. Good examples are posture, exercise, tension and the use of tobacco. So what reading is considered too high?

If you want to find out the average reading of your blood pressure, you'll have to take readings twice a day or more often. In general, anything below 120/80 is regarded as normal blood pressure. Still, enormously low levels of blood pressure could cause a problem as well. Today, most of the healthcare professionals regard average readings of 120/80 to 139/89 as pre-hypertension. And when the average of the blood pressure readings are more than 140 over the 90 mark, this is a clear sign that you've got alarmingly high blood pressure (hypertension).

Just a single reading of 140/90+, however, does not necessarily mean that you've got high blood pressure. Then again, the doctor will want you to watch your blood pressure throughout a particular time period to understand whether it's stable or not. You'll also have alarmingly high blood pressure if only one of these numbers is too high. You may want to make a table with your blood pressure readings so that the doctor can diagnose your condition more easily.

Let's take a recap of what you've learnt so far. There are two kinds of pressures measured to read blood pressure levels. Systolic blood pressure is the total amount of pressure or force

that your blood exerts on your blood vessels' walls as it passes through them. In other words, systolic blood pressure measures the level of blood pressure as your heart beats. On the other hand, diastolic pressure is a measure of your blood pressure when your heart remains relaxed. Systolic blood pressure is measured by a special device called sphygmomanometer. A fabric cuff is wrapped around your arm and then inflated slightly. The blood pressure is measured on a gauge attached to the cuff. The healthcare provider reads the numbers that appear on the gauge as air is released from the cuff. Blood pressure can also be measured with an electronic blood pressure device.

The significance of Systolic Blood Pressure is great. When blood gets pumped out of your heart into the blood vessels, sufficient systolic blood pressure is produced to send the blood to virtually all parts of the body. Since in arteries the blood travels away from your heart, they slowly get tinier. The blood vessel system is comparable to the branches of a tree. A branch might go into the brain whilst another may actually go into the kidneys. That way, the systolic blood pressure will keep your blood easily flowing all the way through these branches to make sure that the cells in the body manage to get the oxygen and nutrients needed. Unnaturally low systolic pressure is known as hypotension. People also call it simply low blood pressure. Problems arise when the blood fails to bring oxygen as well as nutrients into the cells of the body.

It is important to know that if the device you are using at home shows readings of than 120/80 or higher, you should make an appointment to see your doctor. However, when blood pressure readings are 140/90 or more then medical help should be sought as soon as possible.

3. What Causes High Blood Pressure?

There are many reasons for a person to get high blood pressure. Stress is a common factor, but high blood pressure from stress is usually just temporary. Your blood pressure will fall when the stress is relieved. However there are many other reasons, including hardening of the arteries due to plaque build-up.

Today, a great majority of high blood pressure problems are attributed to a few typical underlying factors. As the veins and arteries end up losing their normal elasticity (ability to expand in line with the pulse of your beating heart) they will cause much more resistance to the blood flow, when blood is pumped from the heart. There are some common factors which contribute a lot to the loss of elasticity. Stiffening of the arteries is sometimes caused by gradual buildup of plaque onto the walls of the artery. Many scientists have blamed high cholesterol levels, as this substance blocks the arteries. The stiffening of the arteries is mainly due to aging. Then again, it can also happen if there's a lack of essential nutrients in your diet.

Believe it or not, high blood pressure can occur in young women too and be utterly dangerous. So what would be some of the causes for this condition in females? The hazard could be Essential HBP type, if there isn't any identifiable cause. It could also be Secondary

HBP type, where high blood pressure comes as a result of precise underlying causes (e.g. kidney complications).

Take the Essential HBP type, for instance. Although there isn't any identifiable cause, chances are high that there are some risk factors causing it. The most common factors are age, family history, and absence of exercise, too much salt in the diet or a diet too rich in fats. Any of these factors could trigger your pressure to rise. When it comes to Secondary HBP, the pressure has hiked because of an underlying cause like kidney infection or narrowed arteries or medicines like contraceptive pills. Illegal drugs can be harmful too.

A great majority of people with hypertension won't feel any symptoms at all. This is why you must a blood pressure check at the doctor's regularly. Everyone's pressure goes up or down for one reason or another during the day or night. You might get anxiety when you're stressed out and this could hike the blood pressure levels significantly. It is also important to cut down on salty foods and on salt. For instance, bacon, pickles or processed cheeses usually come with too much salt.

Hypertension can severely add to your heart's workload. The same can be said about the arteries. In other words, the heart has to work and pump harder. As your arteries are vested with the job of carrying blood under great pressure, your health is in deep trouble. When the heart and the arteries keep working under such high pressure for a long time, the heart and arteries might stop working effectively. This will affect the other organs in the body. Patients may end up with obesity, smoking, alcoholism, poor diet and drug addiction that can further increase the risk of stroke.

Rare kinds of diseases like coarctation of the aorta (an illness of large artery that carries blood off the heart in an unhealthy way) can cause high blood pressure. The aorta happens to be tightly constricted a couple of inches away from the heart. It'll then expand right into its normal diameter. And there is no doubt that blood pressure rises as the blood goes through the constriction to subsequently fall below afterwards, just in the way water does as you compress your garden's hosepipe.

Then again, when such constriction is fixed surgically and when the usual continuity of your aorta gets restored, the level of blood pressure will generally take a couple of years to return to normal levels. The primary cause of extremely high blood pressure happens to be the constriction. On the other hand, the long-lasting cause is perhaps the intricate changes pertaining to the circulating hormones that are responsible for maintaining the blood flow throughout the kidneys.

No matter what the cause is, once you find out what is causing your high blood pressure you can take steps to prevent and treat it.

4. Why High Blood Pressure is so Dangerous

Unfortunately, high blood pressure is one of the most common health problems in the US today. It is not only having high blood pressure that is the problem, but all the problems that it can lead to. Hardening of the arteries is the first hazard. It's among the key problems. Hardening of the arteries can be caused by hypertension or high blood pressure.

As this condition can really cause your blood vessels to constrict, it'll boost the risk of heart attack and stroke. There are other reasons that may cause your arteries to be hardened and thus cause heart disease, but uncontrolled hypertension can surely increase the risk of heart disease.

Kidney failure can occur when hypertension goes untreated for a long time. Some key symptoms of kidney failure can worsen most of the heart conditions. A person suffering from different kinds of kidney problems might undergo tremendous shortness of breath. This means that they might not be capable of working out at all. And there are high chances that the person will also face difficulties while walking a few yards or so.

Another key hazard of high blood pressure is stroke. It's among the key consequences of blood pressure hikes and must be controlled well when it occurs. Stroke is unfortunately a highly dangerous matter. Fortunately, it's possible that you survive a hard stroke and still manage to return to your lifestyle and general daily routines. But on the other hand, there are some people who do not manage to recover from stroke entirely. Some people die due to strokes.

Aneurysm is another problem that may be caused by hypertension. Aneurysms happen to be the weak spots developed within the veins. Such weak spots have small bubbles on the vein walls. There are different ways in which these aneurysms could be discovered before you end up with any kind of disease. It is really fortunate that with modern day technologies when these sorts of problems are discovered, they can be safely fixed and you, the patient, may go back quickly to your normal activities.

Nevertheless, there are some instances when aneurysms go unnoticed. They can break. When this occurs inside the brain, people die before they can even call an ambulance. Sounds pretty scary, huh? But, high levels of blood pressure are really very scary. You want to lower the risk of heart attack, stroke, aneurysms and other dangers pertaining to high blood pressure.

Everybody knows that high levels of blood pressure are regarded as a serious problem by the doctor. If high levels of blood pressure are left unchecked, you can end up with serious diseases.

The higher the blood pressure, the higher the risks of a massive heart disease or stroke is. Some guy with a blood pressure reading of 120/80 mmHg remains in a much greater risk

compared to one who has a blood pressure levels of 110/70 mmHg. It's as simple as it sounds.

How does this condition impact the heart? As the heart gets forced to work too hard for too long, it'll enlarge gradually. And just a small enlargement of the heart could cause different types of malfunctions.

The fact is that high blood pressure happens to be the top risk factor when it comes to congestive heart failure, which is a serious condition. The heart cannot easily pump sufficient blood so that enough is supplied to the cells of the body. And the consequence of the inability of your heart to pump sufficient blood could be many. This could damage your kidneys or cause a stroke.

About the kidneys, when left unchecked, high blood pressure could narrow and thicken the blood vessels that feed your kidneys. The preliminary function of your kidneys is to work as the body's filter. They have to effectively dispose of the waste that has piled up. If there is no sufficient flow of blood for the proper functioning of the body, your kidneys start to filter much lesser fluid than before.

Once this happens, the excessive waste will start to build up into your body. If it is not treated, the kidneys will eventually fail altogether. That means the sufferer will be reduced to a life on dialysis – they will have to stay near to their dialysis machine all the time.

5. The Symptoms of High Blood Pressure

Hypertension is not called The Silent Killer for no reason. The biggest danger with high blood pressure is that the symptoms are almost nonexistent. Many people do not know they have hypertension until it is too late – they have a major stroke or heart attack that is fatal.

Unless you get checkups on a regular basis, there is virtually no way in which you can know it's there. Actually, in accordance with the AHA, some 60 million people in the US live with the disease without even knowing it!

The only good news about high blood pressure is that it's controllable and reversible if you bring some simple changes in your lifestyle. True! Millions out there are adopting OTC hypertension medication. Still, a great majority of them can deal with the condition successfully in a natural way without any drugs. Fortunately, even the ones who are in the advanced stages of hypertension can benefit from bringing some positive changes in their way of life.

There are some common hypertension symptoms. They become obvious when the systolic and / or diastolic blood pressure level climbs 20 points over the normal level. The most common symptoms are blurry vision, headache, dizziness and throbbing in the nape area, especially if the pain isn't attributable to the muscular / skeletal conditions. Such symptoms

might not turn out to be very grave. Still, they are signs of a terrible medical condition, which calls for immediate attention. Such kinds of high blood pressure symptoms won't impair your day to day activities. However, this does not mean that you should ignore them.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are other symptoms of high blood pressure which are pretty alarming and call for instant action. Such symptoms are present when you have 140+ mm Hg diastolic blood pressure reading. Nevertheless, things depend a lot on the existence of many other risk factors. Some important and severe hypertension symptoms are very painful headache inducing vomiting, deafness, and blurry vision. As said earlier, dizziness or lightheadedness can cause disorientation too.

Proper education on how to treat hypertension when such symptoms manifest themselves is critical for curing the condition. When the blood pressure reaches very alarming levels, certain remedies must be taken to stabilize the patient's readings. Medication, naturally, is the top option for a great majority of people. However, if a medical expert is unfamiliar with the medical background of a patient, the resorting to medication could turn out to be as unsafe as letting the hypertension go untreated.

Physical signs of symptoms associated with extremely high blood pressure could oftentimes leave you confused. Even the attending physician could miss these symptoms. So it's crucial that if you experience any kind of illness, immediately have your blood pressure checked. There are some instances when the doctors discover high blood pressure when they are trying to diagnose an entirely different illness.

As high blood pressure can cause damage to virtually all the crucial parts and organs of your body, you would not want to end up missing the vivid signs. The biggest mistake could be to leave your blood pressure unchecked for too long. If the silent killer is approaching, you can find different kinds of cardiac problems like liver / kidney disease and possibly vision problems or even stroke. Still, the most common symptoms include headache, ataxia (problems with walking), convulsions, blurred vision, internal / external tremors and giddiness.

Some of the signs could easily be mistaken for something else. Besides, high blood pressure could turn out to be a symptom of yet another problem. Some of the most noticeable signs of high blood pressure are related to diabetes. Unfortunately, these symptoms are similar to the signs of somebody who gets drunk. When there are cardiac damages that occur because of high blood pressure, the patient might complain of exhaustion even in the case of minor exertion. Some people feel breathless and sweaty. In most cases, this happens when substantial damages of the heart have occurred. This calls for further investigation and treatment.

No one should wait until they think they may have high blood pressure before going to the doctor. Rather, have your BP checked on a regular basis and get treatment immediately if it goes over what is considered normal.

6. What Can be Done about High Blood Pressure

It is a well-known fact that people in some countries have a low incidence of hypertension. In the Mediterranean regions people have a low occurrence of heart disease. Due to their diet which comprises fish, lots of fresh vegetables and low-fat meats with a handsome amount of garlic. But anyone can take up this kind of diet to control their blood pressure. Garlic particularly, if eaten on a regular basis is one of the best foods to lower blood pressure.

The results from these studies indicate that people who use garlic get more health benefits compared to the ones coming from typical pharmaceutical medications. If you hate garlic or having a garlic breath, try and use Kyolic. This is a special garlic supplement, which comes in the form of capsules. These types of capsules provide all the benefits of garlic while the negative effects are vastly eliminated. Some of these garlic products come with 700% greater benefits than those of raw garlic.

Garlic can kill 27 pathogens. It can also eliminate 70+ types of fungi, including foot fungus and candida albicans that cause yeast infections in women. And let us also not forget that garlic has been proven to be an effective home remedy for prevention of respiratory, ear and eye infections.

In most cases, herbalists will agree on the fact that Hawthorne berry happens to be among the top heart tonics. It's a little red berry growing on the Hawthorne shrub. This berry comes with ultra strong antioxidant properties. It has been extensively used as a useful herbal remedy ever since ancient times.

If your blood pressure is not that high, you should consider using Siberian ginseng or Eleuthero. This could prove highly effective if you wish to lower your blood pressure. Lots of research is being done on this particular herb. It is always a great idea to consult a doctor before you add this to your diet.

A traditional natural sweetener can help. Try blackstrap molasses is another one of the natural products that you can use to cut high blood pressure levels. It's a remedy proven that works for circulatory system complications as well. It's rich in copper. It's also rich in manganese. It is an ideal source of potassium and magnesium. It comes with almost all vitamins from the vitamin B group. Actually, blackstrap molasses has the potential to prevent the formation of and even dissolve existing blood clots. It can also prevent fat from sticking to the walls of the arteries. It's a great remedy for varicose veins. It's been found to significantly strengthen the heart muscle. It can considerably improve the overall blood circulation. Consume only a teaspoon every day. That's all it takes! Because of the high amount of sugar in this remedy, people who are diabetics must stay away from using blackstrap molasses.

If you combine a regular exercise program with an herbal remedy, you can get great results. Take a thirty-minute walk and couple this with a healthy diet. Choose a Mediterranean diet, which could leave you feeling fit and enjoying normal blood pressure.

If you're a smoker, quit right this moment. Do not even bother using anything else till you've accomplished this goal. Take whatever actions are needed to quit.

Do not even think of picking up a salt shaker again Most of the hypertension sufferers happen to be salt-sensitive. You are probably ingesting three to five times more than the normal amount of sodium every day. Like we said before, don't forget to take a long walk every day. Moderate exercise is excellent for any illness. Don't do too much of it. Just get yourself moving.

If you can perform a deep breathing routine once or twice each day for 15 minutes this can turn out to be really useful. Pick a serene and quiet place for this and try to inhale and exhale ten or fewer times every minute for 15 minutes. Scientific research shows that this will effectively lower blood pressure.

You could also learn to meditate. This is a scientifically proven technique to reduce blood pressure. What else can you do?

- Avoid eating too much meat.
- Avoid burgers and hot dogs.
- Substitute vegetables for meat frequently.

All these things are simple and easy to do and are far better than trying to cope after having a stroke.

7. The Nasty Side Effects of Blood Pressure Medication

There are many different medications that are prescribed to reduce high blood pressure. Unfortunately many of them have unpleasant side-effects. However, if they are too unpleasant to tolerate other medications can be tried that may work better, so there is no reason not to take something. And many people do not even experience any side effects.

Some drugs can decrease the supply of essential minerals to the body especially potassium. There are some symptoms associated with this deficiency like weakness and leg cramps. At times, you will feel tired as a side effect of the medication. Consuming foods rich in potassium might also help prevent potassium deficiency. To prevent potassium deficiency, you can take a liquid supplement. Still, it is good to ask for the doctor's approval first. Diuretics like amiloride (Midamar) and spironolactone (Aldactone) or even triamterene (Dyrenium) usually are known as "potassium sparing" agents. They won't cause potassium deficiency.

These side effects occur when you use medications like diuretics, along with other ones like Aldactazide, Dyazide, Maxzide and Moduretic. Some people end up suffering from gout when they are following prolonged diuretics treatment. Such side effects aren't common,

however. They could be managed with additional treatment. Gout is due to the hyperuricemia, which is caused by diuretics.

In people who are diabetic, diuretic drugs might increase the level of blood sugar. Then again, a change in drug, diet or insulin intake can get this corrected in most cases. The doctor can alter the treatment. In the majority of cases, the rise in your blood sugar level will be insignificant.

Insomnia might be caused by beta-blockers. Good examples are Acebutolol, atenolol, metoprolol, Mepressor, nadolol, pindolol, propranolol and timolol. These drugs may also cause cold hands / feet, tiredness and even depression. These could be coupled with problems like slowed down heartbeat and asthma symptoms. Sometimes patients become impotent as well. When you're diabetic and taking insulin, make sure that you are extra cautious about this. The same goes for ACE inhibitors. These drugs, such as captopril, enalapril, lisinopril, might cause skin rash and loss of taste. You may also end up with dehydration, hacking cough and rarely with kidney damages.

Angiotensin 2 receptor blockers are the drugs that might cause dizziness occasionally. On the other hand, calcium channel blockers like Diltiazem, nicardipine, Nifedipine and verapamil, might cause palpitations, swollen ankles and edema. These can be coupled with constipation, headache and dizziness. The bottom line is that side effects could differ from one patient to another.

Let us now take a good look at alpha blockers. These drugs might cause way too fast heart rate and dizziness. Sometimes, the level of blood pressure can drop much more than you can imagine. This can happen as you stand up. This is called postural hypotension. When alpha and beta blockers are combined, people might experience a dramatic fall in their blood pressure as they stand up or start walking. You also need to know the side effects of central agonists, such as alpha methyl dopa, might produce a drop in your blood pressure as you remain in an upright position (standing / walking). Moreover, this might make you to feel weak and you can faint when the medication has gone too far with lowering your blood pressure. Such drugs might also cause sleepiness or lethargy. These can be coupled with dryness in the mouth and fever or even anemia. Some male patients end up experiencing sexual and reproductive problems.

Clonidine, guanabenz or guanfacine might produce harsh dryness in the mouth. This can be coupled with constipation and drowsiness. When you are taking any of these drugs, you should not quit suddenly, as the blood pressure might end up rising too fast to alarmingly high levels.

There are various kinds of side effects that can be experienced with peripheral adrenergic inhibitors. The most common ones are stuffy nose, diarrhea and heartburn. If these are not too severe then there will be no need to change the medication. If they are you should talk to your doctor.

8. Alternative Treatment for High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is like a silent killer inside your body,; before you know it, considerable damage can be done to your organs – some causing fatal consequences. Some scientific studies show that OTC medications can come with significant side effects, which is why many people like to try alternative way of controlling their BP.

One good method could be to bring some positive changes in your life and lifestyle. In some instances, healthy changes in your lifestyle can help you lower your blood pressure. If you just follow a few helpful tips, chances are high that you'll have a great opportunity to lower your blood pressure and avoid heart complications.

Don't rely solely on the blood pressure readings taken at the doctor's, as these might be less than accurate. Did you know that some people actually undergo a problem called the "white coat syndrome" where the readings might differ a lot because of high levels of stress? So it is better to have the blood pressure checked once more when you get back home. Use a home version of sphygmomanometer for this. There are many blood pressure cuff and gauge gadgets that you can rely on. Get the readings at a fixed time every day. Taking multiple readings at different times of the day can also help as the blood pressure can fluctuate throughout the day.

Losing extra pounds can always have a helpful effect on your blood pressure. Get used to eating healthy food items. Also work out on a regular basis. Aerobic workouts can help. Try walking, running and swimming. Any workout that raises your pulse will work. Try something that sustains the hyped rate for 20 minutes at least. This can help. Stay away from non-aerobic workouts (e.g. weight lifting and push-ups). They harm those with high blood pressure.

Stress reduction has always been the key if you wish to lower your high blood pressure. Just relax using meditation, yoga and biofeedback treatments. Nice and gentle massage can also help. In the same way, you could also take some rest if you want to lower your blood pressure. There are chronically stressed people whose adrenaline glands release abnormally high quantity of adrenaline. This could cause the tiny blood vessels to significantly constrict. This could also make it really hard for your heart to pump enough blood to them.

Stay away from alcohol, caffeine and tobacco. A balanced diet can also help in reducing hypertension. You should try to steer clear of animal fats. Rather, you should try and add as much fruits and fresh veggies as you can to your regular diet. Good proteins happen to come from fish, chicken, turkey and legumes. The bottom line is that you can try to keep a diet that is low-fat and rich in fiber.

There are some special food items that are helpful. Good examples are bananas (rich in potassium), celery (rich in photochemical 3-N-butylphthalide that can help reduce BP), leafy green veggies and milk (rich in calcium). Some clinical research has found that food items rich in different types of folate (e.g. beans, cereals, Brussels sprouts, asparagus) can also help.

Same goes for cayenne pepper and foods rich in vitamin C, which may prevent artery wall damage. Make sure to get essential fatty acids in your diet from fish like salmon and sardines. Enjoy season foods with plenty of garlic, which is effective in lowering blood pressure.

You should try and follow a strictly salt-free diet. You should also stay away from food items containing salt, soda, sodium. You need to try and avoid foods with malicious preservatives like MSG, sugar substitutes and meat tenderizers. Same goes for soy sauce as it comes with high amount of salt content.

You can also consult homoeopathy, reflexology, acupuncture or herbal treatment experts to treat your high blood pressure. Try to use herbs to treat your problem. A good example could be Noni juice, which has been used as a substitute to high blood pressure medications. You should try to drink up Noni juice before your meals and during your relaxation time, as this can lower your blood pressure more effectively. Other good remedies are Coleus plants, the Asian mushroom Reishi, Vitamins like Coenzyme Q10 and Omega-3 fish oils. If you don't have gastric problems, you can take lots of Vitamin C.

Don't just stop at trying one remedy, but add several to your regime for the best effect. It could be that you will not need to have any prescribed medication at all, but if you do, please do not hesitate to have it as well.

9. Does Stress Cause High Blood Pressure?

Most people have heard that there is a connection between high blood pressure and stress. When anyone lives a lifestyle that brings a great deal of stress it is quite likely that they will sooner or later have high blood pressure – and it will probably be sooner.

Actually, people are oftentimes not too surprised as they come to learn that somebody in a high-profile, high-stress job or business is suffering from extremely high blood pressure. Stress-induced hypertension could lead to different kinds of cardiac problems that might compromise the patient's health and well being through the rest of her life.

When excessive stress is present, you'll have an ideal recipe for multiple health problems. High levels of blood pressure can affect all vital organs. The kidneys or the heart might end up with overloaded work pressure which they may not be able to withstand. As there are no exact indicators of hypertension, you should watch out for some general symptoms like fatigue and low energy levels. These could be coupled with urination problems, harsh headaches, dizziness or even nausea.

If you work in a stressful environment this might be the primary cause of the stress. If you are under constant stress that work won't get done and/or if you directly supervise or direct others at work, stress and hypertension are your faith. This kind of environment can generate lots of stress, making the blood pressure levels hazardously high. Acknowledge that nobody is indispensable and life/business keeps going no matter what.

Stressful situations could cause the blood pressure to hike temporarily. Still, you should know that the human body is programmed to produce a flow of hormones in the cases when you are stressed out. Such hormones increase the blood pressure as they cause the heart to beat very fast. That way, the blood vessels get narrowed down.

There is hardly any proof showing that stress alone can cause long term HBP (high blood pressure). Rather, there are many other factors which are linked directly or indirectly to stress which may cause this condition. Good examples are overeating, consuming alcohol and sleep deprivation. All these things can cause alarmingly high blood pressure.

Short stress-laden situations or activities can spike the blood pressure and might actually increase the risk of long-term high blood pressure. It is absolutely possible that different kinds of health conditions tied to stress, like anxiety, depression or isolation from close friends / family, might also be linked to different types of heart disease.

Then again, there isn't any clear evidence that these are tied to high levels of blood pressure. Rather, the inbound hormones that are produced in situations when you get emotionally stressed might damage the arteries. This leads to severe heart diseases. Getting depressed may get you into self-destructive behavior like neglecting the need of medications for controlling your high blood pressure and possibly other types of heart conditions.

Boosts in your blood pressure can be linked to stress. As the stressor goes away, the blood pressure comes back to normal. Nevertheless, even occasional spikes in your blood pressure, especially if they occur too often, could substantially damage the blood vessels, heart or kidneys. This is very similar to the long-term impacts of high blood pressure. In addition, when someone reacts to stress through smoking, drinking alcohol or consuming unhealthy foods, this could trigger high blood pressure or even a heart attack and stroke. Stress-reducing actions could substantially lower the blood pressure.

As stress is reduced, this might not lower your blood pressure in the long run. Still, using different kinds of strategies for stress management could improve your health and well being in many other ways.

Stress can be relieved in many different ways. It could help to just simplify your schedule. When you're consistently feeling rushed, just take some minutes to carefully review the calendar and your to-do lists. Then look up activities and tasks that reduce your recreation time. You need to shun the trivial things that keep you busy but which are not that important. Try and set smaller periods of time for such activities. You could also try to eliminate these entirely.

Even though stress may not always be a direct cause of high blood pressure it is certainly usually a contributing factor. Stress reduction will nearly always see a corresponding reduction in high blood pressure. Even if prescription medication is still needed, it may not need to be such a large dose and that can only be a good thing.

10. Some Statistics of High Blood Pressure

There are many frightening statistics for high blood pressure in the US. In 2006, hypertension killed over 56,560 people in the US alone. Around 74 million people who are 20 years of age or older have alarmingly high levels of blood pressure. The reasons for the problem are many and varied, but experts consider that a sedentary lifestyle and obesity are high on the list of causes.

Among those who suffer from high blood pressure, over 77% are well aware of the critical condition that they are in. Among all people suffering from high blood pressure, almost 68% are undergoing treatment. Over 44% have it well under control, whilst almost 56% do not have the situation under control.

The main reason for the 90% to 95% of these HBP cases isn't known. But, high blood pressure can easily be detected and is usually controllable. Between 1996 and 2006, the gross death rate due to high blood pressure raised by over 19 percent. Then again, the real number of deaths was actually 48%. In general, African Americans are more likely to develop high blood pressure symptoms compared to Caucasians and Hispanics. Within today's African-American community, the ones with the topmost rates of HBP are older, mid-aged, less educated, obese, and physically stationary and have diabetes.

In the year 2006 the surveyed death rate due to HBP in 100,000 people was over 15 for the Caucasian males and 51 for African American males. When it comes to females, it comes down to 14 and 37 respectively.

Needless to say, high blood pressure (hypertension) remains a highly serious health hazard and shouldn't be taken carelessly. On an average, 50,000 US people die every year due to high blood pressure. Over 60 million US people who are 20 or older suffer from high blood pressure. Over 90% of all HBP cases do not have any known cause. Still, the condition is easily detectable and treatable. The African American males remain at much higher risk of HBP, as mentioned before. High blood pressure could lead to kidney and/or heart failure.

High blood pressure or hypertension killed almost 50,000 Americans in the year 2002. This was listed as the primary cause of death in around 260,000 cases that year. Another study has found that around 65 million US people at the age of 6 and over suffer from high blood pressure. High blood pressure happens to be the single chief risk factor causing stroke. Around 700,000 US adults are likely to have a new or repeated stroke in the year 2011. Over 162,500 of them are likely to die. Stroke happens to be the third major cause of death amongst Americans. It is also one of the leading causes of grave and long-term disability. There are many out there who are under the wrong assumption that stroke happens to be an "old guy's disease." Still, that is not the case, as strokes can occur in people who are under the age of 65.

The great news is that you'll be able to protect yourself from stroke. For this, you have to know the risk factors. Then you need to reduce the underlying risk factors. Take the steps to

learn all about the warning signs / symptoms of stroke. Stroke happens to be a special kind of cardiovascular disease. It affects the arteries which go into the brain. The stroke occurs as the blood vessel, which is carrying oxygen and nutrients into the brain, gets damaged. It could be clogged by some sort of clot. As this happens, a part of your brain will fail to get the blood it needs and it will eventually start to malfunction.

Clots blocking the artery can cause different types of ischemic strokes. And this happens to be the most typical kind of stroke. Did you know that Ischemic strokes now account for around 88% of all strokes? There are some ruptured blood vessels causing hemorrhagic strokes. As the part of the brain starts to malfunction due to the absence of proper blood flow, different parts of your body get affected. Then again, strokes might cause paralysis. They can affect the language and speech and vision. This can cause further problems. You can also take note of the TIA (transient ischemic attack). It is a special "warning stroke."

Since these statistics are so shocking and the ways of reducing blood pressure relatively easy, it should be a given for everyone to have the BP checked and do whatever it takes to get it down.

11. Diet and High Blood Pressure

A poor diet is one of the major contributing factors to high blood pressure. While high blood pressure itself is bad enough, the fact that it leads to a wide array of other potentially fatal diseases means that it is a perilous health hazard. Heart attacks and strokes are not to be treated lightly. Most health care professionals suggest that a patient with hypertension starts to help themselves through changing their diet.

It's clinically proven that those who maintain a healthy and balanced diet can effectively control their HBP. Even when healthy eating isn't a remedy for high blood pressure, it really does help a lot when it comes to losing weight. Your physician can suggest foods that you must shun or incorporate into your day to day diet.

Blood pressure calls for healthier meals. The elimination of foods aggravating the disease is required. The bottom line is that a holistic all-round approach regarding diet has to be adopted. You will have to incorporate fruits, veggies and low-fat dairy foods in your diet, while cutting down on saturated fat and total fat.

The ideal diet to cater to the needs of people who have high blood pressure is low in sodium, saturated fats and cholesterol. You need food that is rich in antioxidants and vitamins. You also need foods that are rich in potassium as well as in magnesium. Diets that foster healthy living can help you get rid of high blood pressure. The best solution for a HBP patient is to eat a baked potato instead of French fries. In the same way, a chicken sandwich is better than a hamburger. The big idea here is to check the consumption of the food items that cause high blood pressure.

Firstly, you need to maintain a diet that helps you out with controlling high blood pressure. Eat homemade food. It is good to stick to natural and fresh food items. Virtually all sorts of precooked meals come rich in sodium and saturated fat. Let's not forget cholesterol too. Unfortunately, these prepared foods are really low in many other essential nutrients. True, home cooking takes considerable amount of time, but it is worthwhile. You can prepare healthy and very tasty recipes which take no more than 15 to 20 minutes to cook.

The suggested ideal sodium amount for hypertension patients is 3000 mg or less a day. Unfortunately, an American on an average consumes between 7000 and 9000 mg a day. The best way for you to cut your salt consumption will be to shun packaged foods. Just a single serving of tomato sauce typically contains around 250mg of sodium. The sauce will add an extra 250mg to a meal which already has salt. Sadly, exactly the same could be said about the majority of salad dressings. If you just use one spoon of olive oil in place of salad dressing, it'll really make a great difference.

Eat food items that are rich in minerals like potassium and magnesium. Let's take a look at the food items that are beneficial. Most fruits and vegetables happen to be rich in beneficial nutrients. At the same time, they are really low in fat, cholesterol and sodium. The most beneficial veggies and fruits are the ones which are rich in magnesium or potassium. Both of these minerals are proven to cut down high blood pressure.

If you really want to know which foods are richest in potassium, you should keep in mind that the most useful ones are apricots, sultanas & raisins, all bran, figs, dried mixed fruits, seeds, nuts, potatoes, tomatoes, avocados and bananas. If you want to eat foods containing magnesium, the best choices could be black beans, broccoli, peanuts, oysters, scallops, soy milk, spinach, whole grain cereal, whole wheat bread and so on. No matter what, do not hesitate to consult your physician to choose the best food items for your HBP condition.

While changing your eating habits is never an easy task, the benefits are many. To get high motivation just think what it would be like to be paralysed from a stroke. Doctors and health care professionals can recommend a diet, but in general, too much red meat should be avoided, fatty and salty foods thrown out and junk food shunned. Instead, eat more fruits and vegetables and make sure those veggies are lightly steamed or baked rather than fried or boiled.

12. Checking Your Own Blood Pressure

Many people worldwide suffer from high blood pressure without knowing it. Too often people suffer massive heart attacks or strokes unnecessarily simply because they did not monitor their blood pressure. It does not take long or cost much to get a simple blood pressure check and prevent some awful disease happening to you.

There are automated home blood pressure monitors that you can get for yourself. They happen to be affordable and simple to use. These home monitors aren't available for free at the moment, but it's worth buying one for home use. There are 3 main categories of blood pressure monitors that you can choose from. Take Aneroid Monitors, for instance. Such types of blue-collar monitors are used by professional physicians in medical clinics and all hospitals today. Aneroid monitors come with a special dial gauge. The user's blood pressure will be indicated by the pointer of the gauge.

You can inflate its cuff manually by using a special rubber pump. Aneroid monitors need to rely entirely on the application of the stethoscope. You can listen to your heartbeats through it. In other words, the heartbeats you hear will need to be correlated with the readings of the monitor gauge. A reading actually has an upper number and a lower number. Among the 3 main types of monitors available, this one happens to be the most complex to understand and the most cumbersome to handle, especially if you are a novice.

There are also Digital Monitors. When buying a digital home monitor, you'll be able to select a manual or an automatic cuff. The readings will be displayed onto the screen digitally. In the same way, the digital monitors happen to be much more expensive in general compared to their aneroid counterparts. Fortunately, they've become among the trendiest ones and have been popularized because of their ease of use. Just in case you didn't know, you can buy digital monitors with standard cuffs. These require manual inflating through squeezing the miniature rubber pump. Still, most people don't want to deal with that kind of hassle.

Rather, they want to go for the machines that inflate and deflate the cuff automatically. All you need to do is to push a button. The digital monitor will do the job of taking the reading quickly. It will also display the results on a small screen and there won't be any need for you to use a stethoscope. The results can be stored, conveniently printed out and even downloaded to your pc. Features depend a lot on what model you've chosen. There are some models that let you to easily upload these results onto your consultant's system using the internet.

Compared to digital monitors, the Aneroid types are sometimes more accurate. Still, if you use the digital monitors in line with the instructions from the manufacturer, you will get highly accurate results that you can rely on. Movements and irregular heartbeat could have an effect on the readings, so you need to exercise utmost care as you use the monitor.

The third category includes the Wrist & Finger Monitors. These are highly popular because they are perhaps the simplest ones to use. Still, they could be the least accurate ones if the user fails to use the machine correctly. Many factors like body temperature or body position could decisively affect the underlying results. Despite all this, the Wrist and Finger monitors could prove very effective when it comes to monitoring the blood pressure levels at home on a daily basis. It's just that you need to exercise due caution while using them.

You need to choose a suitable monitor. Make sure that the size of the cuff is right for you. If you're not sure about the cuff size, it's best to consult a doctor. When you're tied with the wrong cuff, the reading could be totally inaccurate.

Your physician or nurse will happily show you how to use the monitor properly. Remember to jot down all the readings you get from the machine and keep them so that there is a record for your doctor to refer to for analysis.

13. What Is a Normal Blood Pressure Reading?

Anyone can buy an automated blood pressure monitor to compare your blood pressure reading to a medical chart, but normal levels of human blood pressure often vary. Just one blood pressure reading should not be relied on. Rather, take BP monitor readings at different times of the day, to get an average BP. This is known as MAP or Mean Arterial Pressure.

Normal BP in general is anything around the 120/80 mark. To some medical practitioners, the exact figure is less relevant though. To them, it's like answering what the length of a piece of cord is. That's because the BP levels aren't one-size-fits-all. Besides that, the concept of what is considered to be normal blood pressure for regular people is now changing!

Not too long ago, the normal blood pressure on average was regarded to be 120/80 to 140/90. It was thought that the top number (i.e. systolic pressure), normally ranged between 120 and 140. Likewise, the base number (i.e. the diastolic pressure) was considered normal if it ranged from 80 to 90. This means that, the 120/80 to 140/90 was considered normal. Among the most important things doctors needed to see was the difference of 40 to 50 points between the top number and base number.

The US Heart Association along with Mayo Clinic now advises that on an average, blood pressure levels should remain under 120/80 around 115/75. You need to understand that these are merely stringent numbers, particularly for those who need to lose some weight and those who need to exercise. So whatever is regarded normal as blood pressure reading might tend to vary from one person to another as it depends on many factors. Then again, these are merely averages. It's the doctor's recommendation which a patient has to be concerned about and carefully follow instead of relying on widely known statistics and generally accepted averages.

If you really want a clear answer to the question of what is normal blood pressure, we can provide some explanation regarding what actually normal levels of blood pressure mean. We can also suggest different ways to ensure you're getting readings which reflect your real blood pressure. Despite the fact that you've been told your current blood pressure is normal, it's really important that you understand how fluctuations in your BP levels can occur and how you can maintain a healthy, safe and normal levels of blood pressure.

For a lot of people, the term "normal" is used to define the BP readings when people are relaxed. And it's not uncommon to have higher BP readings at the doctor's office if you have 'white coat hypertension'. It occurs due to the anxiety of seeing the blood pressure measured in a clinical environment.

If you want to make sure that you overcome such fears, you should use a home blood pressure monitor to take your own measurements. Then again, the readings taken at home should be compared to the normal levels of blood pressure. You will have to pass these reading on to your GP to get accurate diagnosis

As of late, there are many studies showing that people measuring their BP on a regular basis at home will find their levels of blood pressure to be lower. This, according to most health care experts, is the people's normal blood pressure. Perfect blood pressure monitors can be purchased online from various medical supply specialists like Medisave. They offer the most recent machines from some of the leading medical equipment manufacturing brands.

So the normal blood pressure level is around 120/80 or lower – but not too much lower. When the blood pressure remains within that range, people consider their blood pressure to be normal. But even if your reading is normal, it does not mean it will stay that way in the future, especially if you do not have a healthy lifestyle. So maintain a balanced healthy diet, do a lot of exercise and reduce stress as much as you can.

14. Reduce High Blood Pressure by a Change in Lifestyle

Once you learn about the most promising ways to manage high blood pressure and do them, there may not be any need for medication. Firstly, if you are overweight try to lose those extra pounds. Losing weight in one good way to become healthier in many ways, but it will often reduce high BP too.

If you lose just 10 lbs it could help you reduce the level of your blood pressure considerably. Generally, the more weight you lose the lower your level of blood pressure will become. Losing weight will help you keep your blood pressure under control. Make sure that you consult a healthcare expert to determine what your ideal weight level.

Apart from shedding a few extra pounds, you'll also need to keep an eye on your waistline. If you have too much of weight around the waist, this can put you into much greater risk of higher blood pressure. Males are at greater risk if their waist measurement goes over 40 inches (i.e. 102 cm). Women are at risk when their waist measurement goes over 35 inches (i.e. 88 cm). Asian men have been known to be at risk when their waist measurements goes over 36 inches (i.e. 90 cm). And women in Asia are exposed to higher risk of high blood pressure if their waist measurement goes over 32 inches (80 cm).

Work out on a regular basis. Regular physical activities, a minimum of 30 to 60 minutes of exercise 6 days a week, can substantially lower your levels of blood pressure by 4 - 9 mm Hg. You will get to notice the difference soon enough. If you have not been so active so far, boosting your workout level could substantially lower your current blood pressure levels in a matter of a few weeks. If you've got pre-hypertension (systolic pressure that lies in the 120-139 range and diastolic pressure that lies in 80-89 range), working out on a regular basis can

help you a lot in avoiding hypertension. Do you have a hypertension problem already? Then normal physical activities could bring down your blood pressure levels to the safe zone.

It will be worthwhile if you take some time to consult a doctor regarding the development of a suitable exercise program. The doctor can help you decide whether you're in need of any heavy or light exercise or whether any kind of restrictions apply. Even modest levels of activity for 10 minutes can help. Just consider walking or undergoing light strength training. But avoid making a "weekend warrior" out of yourself. Try not to do all the 'pending' exercise during the weekends. Working out cannot be made up for that way. And it's a miserably poor strategy. To be specific, such sudden bursts of activity could in fact turn out to be risky.

And there's nothing like eating a healthy and natural diet. Eating whole grains, fresh fruits and veggies can help. The same goes for low-fat dairy products. The use of this strategy could actually cut down the blood pressure level by as much as 14 mm Hg. And this type of eating plan could be best described as Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet. But it's not easy to alter your current eating habits.

Still, using these tips can be worthwhile. First thing's first, you should maintain a food diary. Write down whatever you're eating for a week. This could help you shed surprising amount of weight as you get to realize where your current eating habits stand. Keep monitoring what you're eating, how much you're eating and when you're eating.

It is a great idea to boost your potassium levels. Potassium could considerably lessen the impacts of the harmful sodium that we consume through salt. The top source of potassium fortunately is foodstuff like fruits and veggies. It will be worthwhile if you take the time to consult a doctor regarding the best level of potassium consumption for you.

Becoming a smart shopper can be a fun challenge. Make up a shopping list before heading for the supermarket and stick to it. This will help you steer clear of junk food. Reading the food labels as you shop is really important too. When you dine out try and stick to a healthy eating plan too.

15. Exercise and High Blood Pressure

Another good method to combat high blood pressure is to stick to a regular exercise routine. Taking up a sport is fun; buying a dog you have to walk is will also give you lots of pleasure. You may end up wondering why you didn't do it before.

Even modern day exercises are really interesting and you won't feel bored at all. There are numerous exercises that are usually recommended by doctors to hypertension patients. The right exercise depends on the degree of hypertension, health, physical stature and medication taken.

Take resistance training, for instance. People taking up walking, cycling, jogging or swimming for losing weight discover that such types of exercise happen to be highly enjoyable and effective. Even before you get started, you need to be well aware of the fact that you'll start to get solid benefits in a matter of 6 to 8 weeks of regular workouts. Working out is also related to high blood pressure monitoring. In the course of your exercise plan, you will see your diastolic and systolic pressure dropping by 5 to 10 mm Hg. But remember that the benefits depend a lot on how capable you are of developing a standard pattern of exercise.

If you suffer from pre-hypertension, you need to work out in a balanced way to keep your blood pressure within the normal range. Avoid losing the momentum! You'll notice that your exercises are getting exceedingly easier to do within 2 to 3 weeks and that you are getting more used to your new routine. At one point, the high levels of blood pressure would hopefully start to drop.

You have achieved results. Great! You can reward yourself with a new tracksuit or anything of that type to keep yourself motivated. No matter what, you would want to make sure that your exercise program will turn into a day to day habit that is pretty tough to break. Some clinical researches have shown that if someone works out with moderate intensity, this can turn out to be highly effective in reducing the systolic and diastolic pressure. But you might be wondering what the term moderate is all about. Well, when you can work out without getting too tired or getting out of breath quickly and when you know that you can strain yourself a bit more if you want to, then your exercise routine could be called moderate. Roughly speaking, the moderate level of exercise is about 60 % of your current maximum capacity.

Aerobic workouts are known to be best when it comes to increasing your breathing frequency. They give your muscles much more oxygen for burning the extra calories. People who are in the habit of attending aerobic classes on a regular basis can benefit a lot from them. Fortunately, you can choose between higher impact aerobics and lower impact ones. According to the majority of health care experts, it is best to go for lower impact aerobics to begin with. They could be much more suited for those who have high levels of blood pressure, as they are gentler and more effective when it comes to raising the body's overall oxygen intake.

You may have the opportunity to do some walking and cycling instead of driving or taking the bus to work. It's much better compared to driving. No matter what, you want to do something that raises your physical activity. You want activity that will translate into lower blood pressure. It's better to leave your car home when you can walk or cycle to the grocery store, to your kids' school or to the park.

If you have the time to walk avoid getting a lift or driving. You may be able to set your schedule to head for the office half an hour earlier or leave the car at a secure spot that is a good walking distance away from your office. There are many ways to incorporate exercise into your day.