

High Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is the force in the arteries when the heart beats (systolic pressure) and when the heart is at rest (diastolic pressure). It is measured in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg) by a medical instrument called a sphygmomanometer. High blood pressure, or hypertension, is defined in an adult as a blood pressure greater than or equal to 140mm Hg systolic pressure or greater than or equal to 90 mm Hg diastolic pressure. Known as the silent killer, high blood pressure is more common in older adults, African Americans, obese people, heavy drinkers, and people with diabetes mellitus, gout, kidney disease or those with a family history of high blood pressure. High blood pressure if untreated puts a person at risk for stroke, heart attack, heart failure, kidney failure, and blindness. The only way to find out if you have hypertension is to get it checked.

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic (mm Hg)		Diastolic (mm Hg)
Normal	Less than 120	And	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129	And	Less than 80
HIGH			
Stage 1	130-139	Or	Between 80-89
Stage 2	At least 140	or	At least 90

Nutrition and High Blood Pressure

Your body needs very little sodium, or salt, each day. Most Americans consume 12-36 times that amount daily. Reducing the amount of sodium you consume may help reduce your blood pressure. The American Heart Association recommends that you consume no more than 2300 milligrams per day or about 1 teaspoon of salt. Sodium is in most foods naturally but food processing and preparation add most of the sodium to foods we consume. It's important to be aware of both natural and added salt when choosing foods to lower your sodium intake. Reading food labels is vital when buying prepackaged and prepared foods.

Look for the Following

- Salt Free or Sodium Free
 - Less than 5 milligrams sodium per serving, and, does not contain sodium chloride (table salt)
- Very Low Sodium
 - 35 milligrams or less sodium per serving
- Low Sodium
 - 140 milligrams or less sodium per serving
- No Salt Added
 - No additional salt was added during processing

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- Lightly Salted
 - 50% less sodium added during processing

Tips for at Home Eating & Preparation

- Drain & rinse canned foods.
- Cook without salt.
- Remove the salt shaker from the table.
- Discussing using salt substitutes with your doctor.
- Avoid processed frozen meals.

Tips for Eating Out

- Request that the restaurant prepare your dish without salt.
- Don't use the salt shaker, season with pepper or lemon.
- Limit condiments such as mustard, ketchup, pickles, and sauce.

Type of Food	Best Choices	Foods to Avoid
Milk and Milk Products	Yogurt Low sodium cheeses like ricotta, cream cheese, and cheese which have “low sodium” on the label. Limit milk to 2 cups each day.	Buttermilk and Chocolate milk Regular and Process Cheese, Cheese spreads and cheese sauces
Bread and Cereals	Any except those under “Foods to Avoid” Unsalted or Reduced-salt crackers, air-popped popcorn Breads and rolls without salted tops Muffins All rice and pasta Most ready-to-eat and cooked cereals	Breads, crackers or rolls with salted tops Salted snack foods such as chips, pretzels, popcorn Baking mixes such as pancake mixes or biscuit mixes Pre-seasoned rice or pasta product mixes Packaged stuffing mixes Instant cooked cereal (the kind to which you just add hot water and stir)
Meat, Fish, Poultry, and Alternatives	Any except those under “Foods to Avoid” Unsalted nuts, seeds and peanut butter Fresh or frozen meat, poultry, fish and shellfish Eggs and egg substitute	Cured, salted, smoked, canned or pickled meat, fish, or poultry, i.e. luncheon meat, deli meat, ham, bacon, sausage, hot dogs, etc. Breaded meats, poultry or fish Convenience foods including

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	Dried peas and beans –if using canned, rinse under running water and drain well to reduce salt	“fast food” Processed cheeses Salted nuts
Fruits and Vegetables	All fresh, frozen, and canned fruit without added salt. All fruit juices All fresh, frozen, or low-sodium canned vegetables Low-sodium or salt-free vegetable juice Low-sodium canned or homemade soups	Canned vegetables with salt Frozen vegetables in sauce Instant potatoes or potato casseroles Tomato sauce or stewed tomatoes French Fries Regular spaghetti sauces Pickled vegetables (such as kimchi, sauerkraut or pickles)
Fats and Oils	Any except those under “Foods to Avoid” Low-sodium or unsalted butter, margarine, salad dressing	Bacon fat, salt pork Packaged gravies, sauces, and salad dressings Packaged chip dips Gravies or sauces made with salt or meat extracts or yeast extracts
Desserts, Sweets, Condiments, Beverages and Others	Unsalted herbs or spices or dry mustard Lemon and lime juice or most vinegar Flavoring extracts such as vanilla Cocoa Salt-free catsup, relishes or other salt-free condiments Salt-free seasonings such as Mrs. Dash Tabasco and most hot sauces (check the label)	Instant pudding mixes Commercial snack pies or cakes Sea salt, salted herbs and spices like garlic salt or celery salt Meat tenderizer Olives, pickles, or pickle relish Seasoned vinegar and bouillons Teriyaki and soy sauces including reduced sodium soy sauce Meat and poultry coatings and breadings