

OCTOBER WELLNESS:

LIFESTYLE HABITS TO LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE



Modifying lifestyle habits can be an effective way to lower blood pressure. Dr. Howard LeWine, editor in chief of *Harvard's Men's Health Watch*, explains that, except in cases of very high readings, looking at lifestyle habits is a great place to start in managing blood pressure before starting medication for high blood pressure.

He also explains that healthy lifestyle habits are important for managing blood pressure if you are taking blood pressure medication; as well. Implementing healthy lifestyle habits for those on blood pressure medication may help prevent dosage increases or the need for an additional drug.

Whether you are taking blood pressure medication or not, there are habits that can play a significant role in managing blood pressure. The six lifestyle habits that Dr. LeWine recommends are*:

1. **Diet.** A recent study indicates that the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet has a significant impact in lowering blood pressure. For information, click here: [DASH Diet](#)
2. **Exercise.** The general recommendation of exercise is a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week.
3. **Weight.** Talk with your doctor to determine your target weight, which will be based on your age and body type. This is important because even five to ten pounds over target weight has been shown to raise blood pressure in men.
4. **Sodium.** Dr. LeWine has found that those with high blood pressure can sometimes see great improvement by avoiding sodium. Recommendations including cutting back on processed foods or choosing low-sodium options.
5. **Alcohol.** It is recommended to cut back on alcohol consumption as much as possible. Blood pressure can be raised by drinking more than moderate amounts of alcohol.
6. **Stress.** Stress has been linked to high blood pressure because it can cause chronic inflammation, which damages artery walls. It can also trigger hormones to be released which raise blood pressure. Implement stress management techniques to relax and help manage blood pressure.

*Please note: This Harvard Medical School article was written by Matthew Solan, Executive Editor, *Harvard Men's Health Watch*. However, the lifestyle tips listed are overall healthy habits that can be implemented by women, too.

For additional information from the article in Harvard Health Publishing, click here:

[**6 Natural Ways to Lower Blood Pressure**](#)