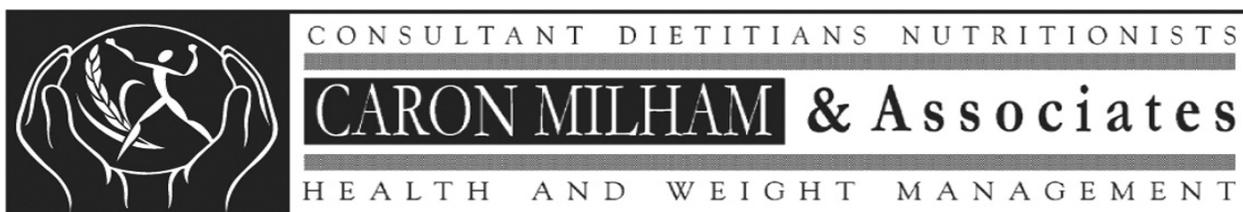


MANAGING HYPERTENSION



INTRODUCTION

Having high blood pressure (hypertension) greatly increases your risk of heart disease stroke and renal disease. It is very important to modify factors in your lifestyle that can help to reduce your blood pressure, therefore decreasing your risk of the above diseases.

STEPS TO REDUCE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

(I) Achieve and maintain a healthy body weight

Achieving a healthy weight is extremely important. Some individuals can achieve normal blood pressure with weight loss alone. Even if you are on medication for your blood pressure, by reducing your weight it may reduce the dose of medication required to control blood pressure.

(II) Participate in regular physical activity

Less active individuals are 30 – 50 % more likely to develop hypertension than their active counterparts. Aim for 30 minutes of activity most days. This can be achieved over three 10 minute sessions if you find this easier to fit in.

Try walking, bike riding or swimming as good forms of aerobic exercise. Focus on trying to increase your incidental exercise also – use the stairs in place of lifts or escalators, try to park further away from shops and get off the bus one stop earlier.

(III) Reduce your intake of sodium

Many Australians consume far more sodium in their diet than they need (5 – 15 times more). Daily sodium needs are only about 200mg/day or 1/10 teaspoon.

It is very important to limit the amount of sodium in your diet as it is a key risk factor for salt sensitive people in high blood pressure and fluid retention. Excess salt intake can also increase the excretion of essential vitamins and minerals in our body, including calcium. In addition, high sodium levels can increase blood volume due to the chemical forces of dilution and retention and this places pressure on vessels and organs that often stretches and damages vessel linings.

Salt is the main source of sodium in our diet, it contains 40% sodium. Sodium bicarbonate and baking powder also contain significant levels of sodium.

How do I reduce sodium in my diet?

- Only 10 % of sodium in our diet comes from sources naturally present in food
- 15 % comes from salt that we add when cooking and at the table
- 75% comes from processed and commercially prepared foods

FRESH IS BEST!

1. Reduce added salt

The first step in reducing sodium in your diet is removing the salt shaker from your house. Let your taste buds adapt to a lower salt diet, but be patient, as it may take two – six weeks to adjust.

Learn to flavour your food with herbs, spices, wine, lemon, mustard, curry powder, onions, garlic, ginger and chilli, instead of salt.

2. Cut back high salt foods

The second step is to restrict the foods that are higher in salt, and choose more often, lower salt options, whilst aiming to maintain a nutritionally balanced diet (see *Food Choices Chart* – below).

Food choices Chart

Foods to Choose	Foods to Restrict
<p>Breads and cereals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pasta, noodles (fresh and dried), rice, couscous.• Flour, tapioca.• Unsalted crackers, crisp bread, rice cakes water crackers• Ready to eat cereals• Most breads – (check label advice) <p>Vegetables/Salads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fresh and frozen vegetables• Canned vegetables with no added salt• Vegetable juice with no added salt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salted crackers, chips and salted snack foods.• Quick cook and flavoured pasta, rice and potato dishes, for example 2 minute noodles• Spaghetti in sauce• Garlic and herb breads, cheese and bacon bread. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vegetables canned with salt Pickled olives/onions/cucumbers, sauerkraut, dried tomatos.• Salted vegetable juices and salted tomato paste

<p>Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fresh/frozen/canned/cooked fruit • Fruit juice <p>Milk and Milk Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low fat and reduced fat milk and calcium fortified soy drinks. • Yoghurt – flavoured and unflavoured • Fruche • Salt reduced soft cheeses eg ricotta, cottage and mozzarella <p>Meat and Meat Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean meat, chicken, fish and eggs No added salt canned fish such as salmon or tuna in springwater • Dried or salt reduced canned legumes, lentils, kidney beans and tofu <p>Fats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate amounts of salt reduced mono and polyunsaturated margarine/oil/mayonnaise. • Home-made salad dressing, avocado, olive and canola oils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard cheese, including blue vein, parmesan, camembert and fetta. • Cheese spread, feta cheese, processed sliced cheese. • Commercial dips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salted meats eg bacon, ham, corned beef, fritz, salami's and smoked or pickled meats. • Fish in brine • Fish pastes, anchovies, smoked fish • Dehydrated/frozen or commercially prepared meats • Takeaway meals eg Pizza, Chinese • Pies, pasties and Chicko rolls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular margarine or butter. • Commercial mayonnaise and salad dressings, including low oil types.
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<p>Miscellaneous</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbs, spices, wine, lemon juice • Pepper, garlic, onion and ginger • Vinegar, apple sauce, vanilla essence • Homemade sauces with no added salt • Homemade soups with minimal added salt. • Unsalted nuts • Salt reduced gravox • Unsalted peanut butter <p>Beverages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water, coffee, tea, herbal tea • Low fat milk • Diluted fruit juice • Unsalted vegetable juices • Low salt mineral waters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table salt, sea salt and rock salt • Vegetable salts, vegemite, marmite and promite. • Commercial sauces, soups and soup cubes • Bonox, Bovril, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, chutney, pickles, MSG • Packet seasoning mixes • Salted potato chips, salted nuts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports drinks • Salted vegetable juices • Bonox and Bovril • Limit intake of low kilojoule soft drinks and cordials.
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** If you are also requiring weight loss your Dietitian will advise you on appropriate portion sizes.*

(IV) Reduce your intake of Alcohol

Approximately 5 – 7 % of hypertension in the population is due to alcohol consumption. It is important to limit your alcohol intake, so try to include at least two alcohol free days per week and have no more than 1-2 drinks per day.

(V) Increase your intake of fruit and vegetables

It is important to increase your intake of fruit and vegetables to increase your intake of potassium. Potassium is an important mineral that can help to reduce your blood pressure. Either eat your fruit and vegetables raw or try steaming or micro waving vegetables. This will retain maximum levels of potassium in foods, because as it is ‘water soluble’, potassium can ‘leach’ out of the vegetables into the water, that may end up being poured down your sink!