

Blood pressure options



Option area	Options	Benefits	Serious Harms and Side Effects
<p>Measure your blood pressure with a 24 hour machine or take the average of several readings over a week to find out what your average blood pressure is. Above 130 (top or systolic blood pressure) counts as higher than ideal. If your blood pressure is high, and you reduce your blood pressure by 10, you will reduce your risk of having a heart attack, angina or a stroke by 20-30%. This is a relative risk reduction. You will reduce your risk more if your risk is high e.g. If your risk is 20% in the next 10 years you will reduce your risk to 15%.</p>			
Lifestyle	Reduce your salt intake (and replacing it with healthy lo salt) avoid processed food	23% of people with high blood pressure reduced their blood pressure by 10	None Food tastes the same with lo salt
	Change to a healthier diet	40% of people with high blood pressure reduced their blood pressure by 10 each 7g of fibre reduces your risk of cardiovascular disease by 7%	None
	Take regular exercise.	31% of people with high blood pressure reduced their blood pressure by 10	None
	Reduce your alcohol intake	30% of people with high blood pressure reduced their blood pressure by 10	Withdrawal symptoms or DTs (Delirium tremens)
	Take 30g of flaxseed (linseed) daily e.g. on morning cereal	Reduces blood pressure by 15 on average.	None
Weight loss	Losing as little as 5kg (if you are overweight)	Can make a big difference to your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, arthritis, gallstones, sleep apnoea and colon and breast cancers. Sleep apnoea is a common cause of high blood pressure in people who are overweight. Bariatric surgery resolves: 62% high blood pressure For every 20 pounds you lose, you can drop systolic pressure 5-20 points.	Unlikely
Medications for blood pressure	<p>But if despite lifestyle measures, your blood pressure stays high, your GP may recommend a blood pressure tablet or two. Usually it is more effective for you to use low doses (at night) of more than one medication. 1 in 10 have to stop a medicine because of side effects. This is less common with low doses.</p>		
	Amlodipine 5mg daily (or lower)	<p>NNT over 5 years: 200 for blood pressure of 170. The numbers are more impressive over longer periods. There is little evidence of much benefit for using blood pressure tablets if your blood pressure is less than 150, unless you have diabetes or kidney problems.</p>	Higher doses may cause ankle swelling
	ACE inhibitors (not with A2) e.g. Lisinopril 5-20mg daily		10% get an irritating dry cough - if this happens use an A2 drug
	A2 drugs (not with ACE inhibitor) e.g. Losartan 50mg daily		Blood test with each dose change and annually
	Thiazide diuretics e.g. bendroflumethiazide 2.5mg daily		Not suitable in gout and may trigger gout
	Aldosterone antagonists e.g. Spironolactone 12.5-25mg daily		Blood test with each dose change and annually Breast tenderness