

SENIORS & HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE – UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is an increased level of pressure or force against the artery walls.¹ High blood pressure can happen to anyone; however people age 55 and older are 90% more likely to develop high blood pressure than those under the age of 55.²

At CareFocus Companion Services, we care about the health and safety of you and your loved ones. Those with high blood pressure may benefit from reducing their sodium intake. While there is often confusion and concerns that can come along with beginning a new diet, using this list of frequently asked questions can help assist in the everyday management of a low salt diet.



1. What are the dangers associated with high blood pressure?

High blood pressure directly increases the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke³ as well as the risk of kidney failure, aneurysms, and other life-threatening diseases.⁴

2. How can you prevent high blood pressure?

High blood pressure can be prevented by a variety of lifestyle changes including, but not limited to:

- ▶ Losing weight if you're overweight
- ▶ Regular physical activity
- ▶ Avoiding excessive alcohol intake
- ▶ Quitting smoking
- ▶ Managing stress
- ▶ Decreasing sodium intake
- ▶ Eating heart healthy foods
- ▶ Regular discussions with your Physician.³

3. What is the DASH diet?

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) is an eating plan that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, and fat-free/low fat dairy products to reduce sodium intake and reduce the risk of developing high blood pressure.² Visit www.dashdiet.org for more information on this diet.

4. What is the SALT diet?

The SALT diet stands for *selecting* the right food, *adding* taste, not sodium, *learning* to read labels, and *tips* and tricks. This diet is designed to reduce salt and sodium intake to prevent high blood pressure from developing.⁵ Contact a clinical CareFocus Companion Services representative to learn more about this diet.

5. What is the recommended daily sodium intake?

The American Heart Association recommends a daily intake of salt or sodium, the equivalent of one teaspoon a day.⁶

6. How do you know if a food is low in salt?

Food is low in salt if it contains less than 140 mg of salt per serving.³

This information is not meant as a substitute for professional medical or nutritional advice and consultation. When differences exist between the information here and information given to you by your healthcare provider(s), you should follow the advice of your healthcare provider(s). Any additional information or clarification needed should be sought from the Physician, Practitioner, Speech Pathologist, or Nutritionist who is familiar with the individual's health and medical conditions.



SENIORS & HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE – HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

As we age, changes in our environment and physical abilities can contribute to unique blood pressure management issues. Without proper nutrition, the risk of serious health problems increases. Use the list below to find examples of foods to eat and foods to avoid when on a low salt diet.



Foods to Eat

- ▶ **6-8 servings a day of grains**
Whole grain bread, dry cereals, cooked rice, pasta¹
- ▶ **4-5 servings a day of fresh vegetables or vegetable juice**
 - ▶ Leafy greens
 - ▶ Raw or cooked vegetables including cauliflower, potatoes, asparagus, broccoli, peppers, peas, corn¹
- ▶ **4-5 servings a day of fresh fruit or fruit juice**
Apples, avocado, cantaloupe, bananas, watermelon, prunes, grapefruit¹
- ▶ **2-3 servings a day of fat-free or low-fat milk products**
Yogurt, milk, cheese²
- ▶ **Lean meats, poultry, fish, and eggs**
- ▶ **Limited peanut butter, nuts, and seeds**
- ▶ **Low-fat salad dressings and toppings**
- ▶ **Food that is rich in magnesium, potassium, and calcium¹**

Foods to Avoid

- ▶ **Foods high in saturated fats, cholesterol, calories, and added sugars**
- ▶ **Sweets, lean red meats, and sugar-containing beverages.²**
- ▶ **Canned or processed foods, especially fruits and vegetables that are prepared with high levels of salt.³**
- ▶ **Salted snack foods.⁶**
- ▶ **Salted or preserved meats.⁶**
- ▶ **Quit smoking and reduce alcohol intake.³**

¹ “DASH Eating Plan”. National Heart Lung and Blood Institute. 18 Feb. 2009. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new_dash.pdf>

² “Prevent and Control High Blood Pressure: Mission Possible”. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. 18 Feb. 2009 <<http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/mission/partner/midlife.pdf>>

³ Heart.org. What is Blood Pressure? American Heart Association. 11 Feb. 2009. <<http://www.heart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=2112>>

⁴ “High Blood Pressure: Signs and Symptoms”. National Heart Lung and Blood Institute: Diseases and Conditions Index. 18 Feb. 2009. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/Hbp/HBP_SignsAndSymptoms.html>

⁵ Maxim Healthcare Services. Nutrition and Dietary Guide for Supporting Individuals with Nutritional & Mealtime Challenges. February 2008

⁶ “High Blood Pressure: Make Healthy Food Choices” American Heart Association. 11 March 2009. <<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=570>>

For more information or to discuss recommendations on healthy eating and necessary care for your loved one, contact CareFocus Companion Services today!

