

8 Natural Ways to Lower Blood Pressure

By Lynn Allison

More than 70 million Americans suffer from high blood pressure and millions more have prehypertension, making this condition extremely crucial to control — even in your 20s and 30s. The vast majority of sufferers take medication to keep their blood pressure in check.

But experts say a range of natural remedies can be as effective as blood pressure medicines.

“While health is important at any age, chronic insults to the arteries, such as elevated blood pressure, can certainly take their toll over time, leading to increased risk for heart disease even in the younger population,” says Dr. Felicia Stoler, an expert consultant on healthy living.

Stoler, who specializes in integrating behavior and nutritional modification to boost health, notes that a recent 25-year cardiology study (the Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults) linked prehypertension in young adults with heart problems later in life.

“This study addresses the need for regular doctor visits and knowing your genetic predisposition for high blood pressure so you can treat it early,” she tells *Health Radar*.

Stoler warns that high blood pressure is often called “the silent killer” because it rarely shows symptoms, so monitoring your numbers regularly can

be lifesaving. According to the American Heart Association, healthy blood pressure should be less than 120/80.

She adds that while many physicians are quick to prescribe medication to lower blood pressure, such drugs can have serious side effects.

“Some people taking ACE inhibitors, for example, can have a dry cough while others suffer from dizziness and have an upset stomach,” Stoler explains. “It’s important to try natural remedies first before diving into drugs.”

Here are some suggestions for how you can lower or stabilize hypertension naturally:

Eat right. Choose foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, fiber-rich grains, oily fish, nuts, legumes, and seeds.

Exercise. Daily activity is important, says Stoler. “You don’t have to sweat or get out of breath in order to reap the benefits. Take a five minute walk every hour at work which can add up to 40 minutes of activity during an eight-hour day,” she advises.

Supplement with omega-3s. Fish oil supplements that contain omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to lower cardiovascular risk by reducing inflammation in the body and also reducing clotting time.

Manage stress. Meditation, yoga, and other de-stressing strategies have been shown to boost heart health. The American Heart Association released a recent

scientific statement endorsing the practice of transcendental meditation as a valid technique to lower blood pressure. The report also said that the method was safe and had no side effects.

Try herbal remedies. Hawthorn, an herb commonly used in Europe to lower blood pressure, is a great natural remedy to combat hypertension, says Ellen Kamhi, Ph.D., author of “The Natural Medicine Chest.” She tells *Health Radar*: “It improves blood flow and strengthens the contractions of the heart muscle.” In a British trial, this herb showed significant health benefits with a 1,200 milligram daily dose.

Take CoQ10. Coenzyme Q10 is a crucial enzyme that keeps the heart healthy. It lowers both the systolic pressure, when the heart is beating, and the diastolic pressure, when the heart is relaxed, says Kamhi. University of Western Australia research shows that taking 60-100 milligrams daily lowers blood pressure by up to 17 points.

Consider garlic. A Brown University study showed that taking daily capsules of aged garlic extract lowers high blood pressure by 6 percent.

Drink beet juice. Scientists at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center found that a daily dose of beetroot juice significantly improved blood pressure in elderly patients with heart failure. It also boosted their exercise endurance levels by 24 percent after one week. □