

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“The heart that truly loves never forgets.”

- PROVERB



Healthy Heart

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FEATURED ARTICLE

Eight Ways to Lower Blood Pressure

Learn simple habits beyond cutting sodium that can help improve your numbers.

[Learn more on page 2](#)



FEATURED ACTIVITY

Compliment Someone

Take a moment to give someone a simple, sincere compliment. Log this activity 12 times this month.

[Read more on page 4](#)



FEATURED ARTICLE

Eight Ways to Lower Blood Pressure Besides Cutting Sodium

1. **Nosh on plenty of produce.** Fruits and vegetables are low in sodium and rich in potassium, which offsets sodium's effect on blood pressure. Potassium-packed picks include baked potatoes, baked sweet potatoes, spinach, winter squash, bananas, oranges, cantaloupe, beans, and tomatoes.



2. **Enhance meals with healthy fats.** Substituting sources of healthy fats for some of the carbohydrates in your diet may help control blood pressure, according to a recent study. Remember to swap, and not add, them in. Think: sliced avocado instead of croutons—not both—on your salad or a handful of nuts instead of chips for a snack.
3. **Go for whole grains over refined starches.** Some studies suggest that whole grains help the body hang on to potassium. You can't go wrong with whole grains either way—you get more beneficial vitamins and nutrients when you swap white for whole grains, and you'll also feel full longer after eating them, thanks to their fiber content.

4. **Include low-fat dairy in your diet.** Calcium plays a key role in regulating blood pressure. Low-fat dairy products offer all the nutrients of full-fat varieties, but without the saturated fat and cholesterol that raise heart-disease risk. Have low-fat milk with your cereal or oatmeal in the morning, add a cup of plain low-fat yogurt to your lunch, or have some low-fat cheese as a midafternoon snack.

5. **Learn to love legumes.** Beans, nuts and seeds are rich in magnesium, which contributes to maintaining healthy blood pressure. Aim to get four to five servings (1/2 cup of beans or 1 ounce of nuts/seeds) a week. Stir a handful of nuts or seeds into yogurt for breakfast, or cook a pot of beans at the start of the week and have a half cup as a side dish with your lunch every day.

6. **Savor small amounts of dark chocolate.** Studies attest to the blood-pressure benefits of products made with cocoa, which contains antioxidants that activate a substance called nitric oxide that relaxes

blood vessels and makes it easier for blood to flow throughout your body.

7. **Move more.** Moderate exercise has been shown to improve blood pressure. National guidelines advise 30 minutes of daily moderate activity, such as brisk walking, jogging or cycling. If you don't have 30 minutes to exercise, break your daily exercise sessions up into three 10-minute mini-workouts. That could mean a quick walk with the dog in the morning, a quick stroll at lunchtime, and a short 10-minute exercise video before dinner.

8. **Cultivate inner calm.** Studies show that meditation can bring blood pressure down—probably by modulating physiological stress responses. You don't have to sit in the lotus position, say “om” or think spiritual thoughts. Simply tuning in to your breathing—for even 10 minutes—may do the trick. Close your eyes (and the door), turn off the cell phone. Now ... breathe. 🧘

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FEATURED ACTIVITY

Compliment Someone: Log 12 Times this Month

Giving someone a simple, sincere compliment takes just a moment; makes you both feel happy and proud; and gives you a healthy boost of positive energy in the process.

So go ahead. Say something nice to someone each day. You'll be glad you did!

Giving compliments to someone not only makes the recipient feel good, but it can be good for you as well. Studies indicate that showing kindness and giving/receiving compliments have some of the following health benefits:

1. Decreased stress levels
2. Lower pain levels
3. Increased immunity
4. Increased productivity
5. Increased happiness

Since compliments (and smiles) are free, take just a moment, and can have such a positive impact, why wouldn't you make this a daily habit? To successfully complete this challenge, log 12 compliments this month. But to reap the real rewards, you may want to give many more! 🌟