

High Blood Pressure

A Real Life Experience





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A real life experience

“Can I get by without medication, or will I have to take pills for the rest of my life?”

This is a typical question of many with high blood pressure. And the answer?

- 1. A mere “you’ll have to take pills” makes the whole process too simple—and too dangerous.***
- 2. “Are you willing to change your lifestyle?” motivates us to reconsider and act accordingly.***

This brochure is a challenge to rethink and take responsibility. High blood pressure is no joke; but it’s not an inescapable fate, either.





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Accelerating and braking—the beta receptors

We can hype up our bodies with adrenaline and many substances which have a similar effect. In the morning we can wake up with one or two cups of coffee. During the day we can speed up with cola, black or green tea, mate, or drinking chocolate. All these beverages contain caffeine, which stimulates the nervous system. They push the accelerator pedal—the beta receptors.

But speeding up also means that the blood pressure increases. Instead of an average pressure of 130 mmHg, caffeine can easily raise it to 150 mmHg.

So how can we brake the beta receptors? This is usually achieved with the help of so-called beta blockers. Such medications hinder the “accelerator” by blocking the gas pedal—the beta receptors.



Some well-known beta blockers are concor, beloc-zok, metoprolol, and dociton.

To accelerate and brake at the same time is simply a waste of energy, and actually increases the wear and tear. Likewise, drinking coffee or cola while taking beta blockers at the same time wastes energy as well as burdening the body with side-effects. A typical, often disregarded, side-effect of beta blockers is an impairment in breathing and an inexplicable cough.

How can we avoid medications, such as beta blockers, that brake the beta receptors? Simply by avoiding the accelerators! Eliminating these stimulants removes the need for beta blockers.

Instead of drinking stimulating beverages, try healthy caffeine-free alternatives such as herb and fruit teas or grain coffee. Rooibos or redbush tea, which is widely available, is flavorsome, and an appetizing alternative for many people.





Africans get cold feet too!

A good friend of mine lives in Zambia, in southern Africa. He was suffering from high blood pressure. He is a very fit and active person who is used to bearing responsibility. His shoulders are broad, but his appearance is calm. His words are well chosen, his actions are purposeful and definite. But he has an unusual problem: his hands and feet are constantly cold.

Instead of prescribing medication, I accompanied him to a small pool and we walked in the cold water for five minutes like storks, lifting our legs up high. After this we ran for a few minutes on the concrete courtyard. Our feet became very warm—and my friend's blood pressure dropped.

This combination of high blood pressure with cold hands and feet is quite widespread. Anything which makes the hands and feet cold (except tiredness) also raises the blood pressure—stress, anxiety, tension, poorly clad legs and feet.



Anything that warms the cold feet also lowers the blood pressure. This includes:

- Warm socks
- A footbath with rising temperature (“until it is no longer bearable”)
- Clothing that protects the legs (long johns or leggings) so that the blood is not congested in the trunk
- Exercise
- Hot and cold footbaths

Do you know this feeling?

Have you ever tried to go to sleep with cold feet? It's not easy! The thoughts go round and round and never come to rest. When the feet are warmed with a warm water bottle, the body relaxes because the blood is no longer centralized in the trunk and head, but circulates throughout the extremities of the body.





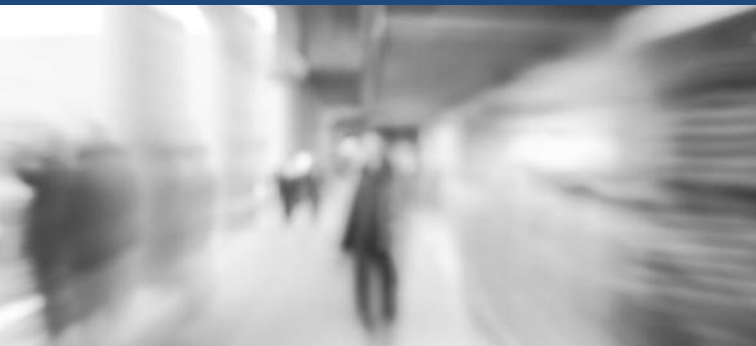
“Sabbath Rest”—a treatment for high blood pressure?

High blood pressure is a reaction of the body to the constant signal: Faster! More! Longer! Everything is done under pressure.

“Sabbath Rest” sets a limit to this hectic treadmill.

A friend of mine was employed by a large software company. After several years of intensive work he asked for a year’s break in order to take account of, and realign, his life. He asked for a “sabbatical year,” which he was granted.

In Old Testament times Israel was instructed to leave the fields fallow during the Sabbath year. They were not to be worked during this time. That gave the people more time for other tasks, their families, and religious reflection. After this year they were able to return to their work with renewed strength. A limit was set to the endless pressure.



In the Ten Commandments we read, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” A rest day is given to counteract the daily hustle and bustle. This weekly Sabbath not only serves the physical and mental recuperation, God also wants to come especially close to people on this day. Time for the family, and time for communion with God in worship and in nature, preserves the vitality and is an antidote for continual stress. Each week, a time of rest is set to relieve the pressure.

And a limit has also been set for every day—the night. By going to bed early and sleeping sufficiently we contribute substantially towards a well-balanced metabolism and good blood pressure. An empty stomach when going to bed, a restful mind, and an open window in the bedroom all contribute to a beneficial and refreshing sleep.

“Sabbath Rest” simply means to trust in God—that He cares for me and that I do not need to do everything alone. I can rest and do not need to feel under pressure.



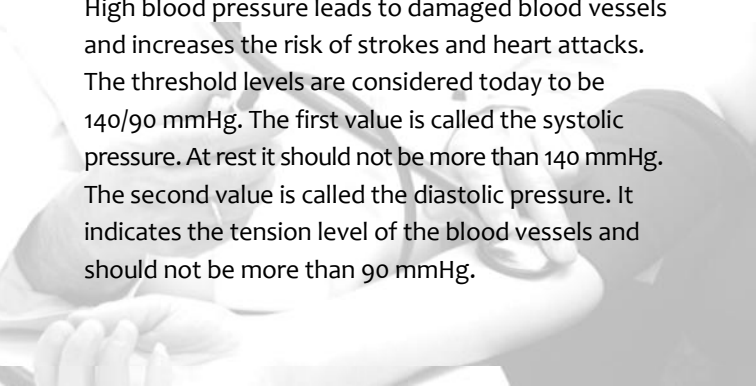


Questions and facts

What are the typical risk factors for high blood pressure?

- Excess weight
- Alcohol
- Salty diet
- Not enough exercise
- Stress
- Regular consumption of coffee
- High meat consumption

The first and second measurements



High blood pressure leads to damaged blood vessels and increases the risk of strokes and heart attacks. The threshold levels are considered today to be 140/90 mmHg. The first value is called the systolic pressure. At rest it should not be more than 140 mmHg. The second value is called the diastolic pressure. It indicates the tension level of the blood vessels and should not be more than 90 mmHg.

The first value, the systolic pressure, quickly adapts to different situations and can change rapidly in a short time through physical exertion or excitement. The second value, the diastolic pressure, adapts slowly. For this reason a change of 5 mmHg in the diastolic pressure is more meaningful in the evaluation of the blood pressure than a change in the systolic pressure.

How can I reduce my raised blood pressure?

- Lose weight until I reach my normal weight
- Eat a vegetarian diet as often as possible
- Get used to eating less salt
- Don't smoke
- Avoid alcohol
- Abstain from coffee, black and green tea, mate, and chocolate. Caffeine and similar substances excite the nervous system and raise the blood pressure.
- Do not allow conflict situations to continue and don't try to suppress a bad conscience—clarify matters instead and seek for peace as far as lies in your power.



A vegetarian diet means an easier life

People who live on a meatless diet generally have fewer problems with weight and have lower blood pressure. These two things are closely connected. The greater the body weight, the more the heart has to pump—it has to work under pressure. If the weight is reduced, the heart is relieved and the blood pressure drops.

But it is not only less body weight that helps lower the blood pressure. The reduced intake of salt that comes with a vegetarian diet also lowers it. Fruits, vegetables, and grains contain comparatively less sodium (salt) but more potassium. Sodium increases the excitability of the muscles surrounding the blood vessels, for example through adrenaline. This, in turn, can lead to an increase in blood pressure.



In countries where there is high salt consumption, high blood pressure is much more prevalent, for example in Japan (27 g of salt per person per day), USA and Europe (10–15 g salt per person per day). However, among primitive tribes and people who use very little salt (0.6–2 g per day) the problem of high blood pressure is almost unknown.

Population	Salt consumption (per day)
Northern Japan	27 g
USA & Europe	10-15 g
Primitive tribes	0.6-2 g





A simple remedy... and it only requires a little effort

A summary of an article in the *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* (journal of the German Medical Association) from October 10, 2009, reads as follows:

“In the industrial nations a stroke is the third most common cause of death (more than 10 % of all deaths of those over 65 years). The major cause is arteriosclerosis. Regular physical exercise reduces arterial blood pressure, as well as body weight, and improves the glucose and lipid metabolism. ”

After the age of 55, the risk of suffering a stroke doubles every ten years. Regular, aerobic exercise reduces this risk by 27 %—something not easy to achieve with medication. And exercise has many beneficial “side effects” as well. For example, the even flow of blood throughout the body is



regulated, the mind becomes more balanced and happier, the digestion is easier—and much more.

With increasing age, a frequent, light load on one's stamina is ideal—for example gardening, walking, or cycling.

Every Tuesday we meet together in a cardiac exercise group. We begin by taking our blood pressure and pulse. The participants repeatedly notice that their blood pressure is too high. We then begin the warm-up exercises—fast walking, or a gentle jog. 15 minutes later the blood pressure is usually lower. Through these light, non-strenuous exercises, the blood has been distributed in the muscles and skin, and the blood pressure has returned to normal.

The biggest problem seems to be overcoming oneself: It does take a little effort to change and go for a run, or to go swimming. But it's worth it!





Blood pressure in old age

With increasing age comes a corresponding increase in blood pressure. How great this increase is depends largely on the habits of the previous years. Vegetarians usually have a “vegetarian blood pressure.” This is considerably lower than that of meat eaters. The blood vessels retain more of their elasticity for longer, and they are able to absorb high pressure peaks and level them out.

When blood pressure rises to more than 140/90 mmHg at rest, then there is a statistical increase in the risk of cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks and strokes.



Prescription

(for counteracting high blood pressure
in later years)

- Regular aerobic exercise
several times a week,
- caution in using salt,
- abstinence from alcohol,
- maintaining a healthy body
weight,
- a predominantly vegetarian
diet,
- and a balanced temperament
throughout life

promote a normal blood pressure
in later years.



A five-week experiment

There is a simple way of helping the body adapt to a change of diet. Try the following procedure for five weeks while you are at home, at work, in daily life.

For the first week eat a vegetarian diet—no meat or fish.

In the second week eat a vegan diet—this means not using any milk products or eggs, in other words, without any animal products at all.

Consider these weeks as an adventure. You will get to know new things. Visit a natural food store and try different products.

In the third week eat only raw vegetables and fruit—this is the turning point.



Now you will feel tired. If it is possible, rest more often. The raw vegetables and fruit days will be like a fast for you. No cooking or baking. You can eat fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and sprouts. Arrange your plate to look appetizing. Enjoy your food.

In the fourth week eat a vegan diet again.

You will have lost weight by now. Any allergies you may have will be reduced and your blood pressure will be lower. Enjoy this week and continue discovering new things.

In the fifth week eat a vegetarian diet again.

The ideal way to begin this week is with only fresh dairy products such as yogurt, quark, and cream cheese.

The experiment is now complete. Has your blood pressure changed? If there has been a drop in the systolic pressure of 10 mmHg, or 5 mmHg in the diastolic pressure, the effort has been worthwhile. Many people have made long-term changes to their dietary habits after following this procedure.

You can find more information about this and about a further healthy lifestyle at

www.sag-gesundkost.de





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