

PRESSURE POINTS



April 2012

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE NEWS YOU CAN USE

How Does Stress Affect My Blood Pressure?

Stress or anxiety can cause a temporary increase in blood pressure. We all encounter stress in our daily lives from work, family, finances or illness. How we handle our stress is important for our long-term health.

Here are 10 simple ways to help reduce stress:

1. Prepare for your day the night before. Make lunches, put out the kids clothes, schedule your time, and prepare for meetings and appointments. Understand that the best laid plans don't always work out that way.
2. Be prepared to wait. A paperback, smart phone, tablet or music player can make waiting much more pleasant.
3. Get enough sleep. Buy a comfortable mattress or a cozy comforter.
4. Write your thoughts and feelings down in a journal or keep in touch with a friend through texting, email, telephone, Facebook, Skype or Twitter.
5. Try this breathing technique – Inhale deeply through your nose while thinking “I am here” (present, in the moment) and exhale through your mouth while thinking, “I am calm.” Repeat as necessary.
6. Plan ahead when possible (e.g., meals, after-school or work activities, sporting events, social calendars, car pools, laundry)
7. Create a task list for the day or week and take satisfaction from crossing things off the list.
8. Share chores equally in your household with roommates, spouses and/or children; reduce clutter.
9. Appreciate what you have. Feeling real gratitude for the good things that you have in your life is a great way to tap into the “secrets” of happiness.
10. Each day do something you really enjoy.



Questions for Your Health Care Team

- Is decaffeinated coffee a better choice than regular?
- Will exercise help reduce stress?

Will Caffeine Raise My Blood Pressure?

Caffeine, found in coffee, tea, sodas and energy drinks, can affect your body in many ways, including:

- Raising blood pressure temporarily
- Increasing your pulse (heart rate)
- Affecting your body in a way similar to stress
- Increasing the need for urination which can lead to dehydration

You should be able to continue to consume drinks that contain caffeine, unless you are sensitive to it or your doctor tells you not to have any. Check labels on foods that you suspect may have caffeine in them to keep track of how much you have. Energy drinks, in particular, can contain large amounts of caffeine.

The American Heart Association states there is no harm in the daily consumption of one to two cups of coffee or its equivalent. If most of the drinks you have contain caffeine, you might want to consider switching to water or non-caffeinated drinks instead. People who are used to having caffeine regularly (caffeine-habituated) can experience caffeine withdrawal 12 to 24 hours after the last caffeinated drink. Symptoms of caffeine withdrawal can include headache, feeling nervous or anxious, being tired and sleepy or feeling depressed. There are currently studies underway to see whether high daily caffeine intake increases the risk of heart disease.



Spring Yard Work and Gardening Counts as Exercise



How many calories are used up by doing yard work? Thirty minutes of raking, gardening or light gardening burns about 165 calories for a 150 pound person. Gardening and yard work are considered moderate physical activities and count toward the exercise you need each day to help control your blood pressure. See how many calories you can burn in the table below.

Activity	Calories Burned in 30 Minutes	Calories Burned in 1 Hour
Weeding	160	320
Mowing the Lawn	162	324
Watering Lawn	61	122
Planting Seedlings	162	324

Before you lift your rake or shovel:

- Warm up for five minutes before starting. This helps to prevent injuries and muscle strain.
- Practice good posture and stance. Pay close attention to your back when lifting heavy objects, and lift with your legs.
- Alternate which side of the body you use. Pull with your right hand and then with your left.
- Protect hands by wearing gloves and protect feet by wearing closed-toe shoes such as sneakers or boots.
- Work at a steady, constant speed and change positions about every 10 minutes to avoid overuse of a muscle group.
- When you are finished, take time to stretch your tired muscles. This improves flexibility and helps prevent aches.

Recipes for Heart Health: *Lime Chicken Fajitas*

Courtesy of thediabeticskillet.com

Serves: 8. Prep Time: 15 minutes. Cooking Time: 8 minutes

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| 1 ½ pounds chicken breast, boneless and skinless | 3 tablespoon(s) cilantro, fresh, chopped |
| 2 peppers, bell, red, or yellow or green (medium), sliced | 1 teaspoon honey |
| 1 onion, red, sliced | 1 teaspoon cumin, ground |
| 2 tomatoes, medium, sliced | ½ teaspoon garlic, bottled minced |
| 8 tortillas, whole wheat 7 inch | ½ teaspoon chili powder |
| 3 tablespoons olive oil | ¼ teaspoon salt |
| 4 tablespoons lime juice | ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper to taste |



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. For marinade, combine olive oil, garlic, honey, lime juice, cumin, chili powder and cilantro in a large ziplock bag. Clean, seed and slice the peppers and onions and add to the bag. Slice chicken breasts long ways in about ½-inch wide strips, add to the bag and mix well.

Wrap tortillas in foil and bake until warm for about 12 minutes.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Sauté chicken mixture for about seven minutes, stirring often until done.

Serve on warm tortillas. Add optional sliced tomatoes.

Nutritional information: Per serving 310 calories, 10g fat, 45mg cholesterol, 22g protein, 29g carbohydrates, **360mg sodium**

Exchanges: 1.5 starch, 1 vegetable, 2 lean meat, 1 fat , carb choices: 2

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