Center for the Advancement of Primary Care

PRESSURE POINTS

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HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE NEWS YOU CAN USE

Answers from the Experts

An Interview with Robert Phillips, MD, PhD, about High Blood Pressure

Dr. Phillips

As a physician, what message do you wish you could share with anyone who has high blood pressure?

The most important message I'd like to get across is it's really essential to treat high blood pressure right away. If it's left uncontrolled it can lead to stroke, heart attack and even kidney failure. Treating high blood pressure can dramatically cut the risk of these serious events in half.

The good news is that today high blood pressure is much easier to treat. By using medications and partnering with your health care provider to ensure you're following your treatment plan you have nearly an 80 percent chance of completely controlling high blood pressure. And you can do even better if medications are combined with a healthier lifestyle.

Things you can do to improve your heart health include walking as much as you can, consuming less salt (maximum intake is 1,500 mg per day), drinking less alcohol, including beer and wine, and eating smaller portions of food to keep your weight down.

Chicken Noodle Soup

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1/2 cup (120 ml) condensed soup
Servings Per Container about 2.5

Amount Per serving	
Calories 60	Calories from Fat 15
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 1.5g	**2%**
Saturated Fat 0.5g	**3%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 15mg	
Sodium 890mg	**37%**
Total Carbohydrate 8g	**3%**
Dietary Fiber 1g	**4%**
Sugars 1g	
Protein 3g	

Vitamin A	4%	**Calcium**	0%
Vitamin C	0%	**Iron**	2%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories	2000	2500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400m	2400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

In addition, it's important to learn to read the nutrition facts on food labels when you shop. Here's an example of a food label for a can of chicken soup. On the label, you see that just **one serving** of this soup has 37 percent of your daily limit for sodium. **If you eat the whole can of soup**, you'd be getting 92 percent of the recommended amount of sodium you should consume for the entire day.

What are the biggest challenges that people face related to high blood pressure?

Many patients don't like taking medications for a condition that doesn't usually have any symptoms. High blood pressure is called the silent killer because you may not know you have it until it causes a stroke or heart attack. Because of this, many patients think, "If I can't feel the symptoms I don't need to continue taking medication." But this isn't the case. In most instances, people with high blood pressure, including those who are able to improve their lifestyle, still need to be on some type of medication to lower blood pressure.

What are ways to take better control of high blood pressure?

The best way to control high blood pressure is to always remember to take your medication. It's easy to forget when you aren't experiencing physical symptoms of high blood pressure. Here are two ways to help you to remember to take your medications:

- Buy a pill box. You can get one at any pharmacy. It allows you to fill your medications for at least a week at a time. Some pill boxes are big enough for two weeks, and I encourage patients to get two of these so they can fill their medication for a month at a time.

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Questions for Your Health Care Team

- Do I need to take my medications at the same time every day?
- Is mowing my lawn considered exercise?

- Develop a routine around taking the medication every day. It's best to pair taking medication with something else that you have to do daily. For example: Since I shave every day, I put my pill box next to my razor. When I see the razor, I see the pill box. The trick is then to take the medication before I shave, so I don't forget. Some people put the pill box next to their toothbrush so they'll remember. If all else fails, consider a medication management program to help remind you. Some are reimbursable through your insurance plan. See box below:

Medication reminder technologies fall into three basic categories:

1. Telephone-based medication reminders
2. Reminders as part of home monitoring or safety devices
3. Electronic pill-dispensing systems

Talk with your doctor for more information.

Dr. Phillips is the director of the Heart and Vascular Center of Excellence at UMass Memorial Health Care. He is a senior editor of the *Journal of Clinical Hypertension* and serves on the board of directors of the American Society of Hypertension where he is the national chairman of continuing medical education. He is a fellow of the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association's Council on High Blood Pressure Research, and also serves on the board of directors of the Founders Chapter of the American Heart Association.

Exercise Can Be Fun!

Sometimes it's hard to get motivated to exercise, or find time after work and before dinner. Maybe your exercise bike has lost its appeal. So why not get everyone involved in a backyard game? The choices are endless, from tag to hopscotch. Grab a jump rope or soccer ball and get out to your local park for some fresh air. Make up some of your own games – you'd be surprised at how fun exercise can be again.

To see how many calories you can burn through a particular activity – from badminton to household chores – check out this link: www.nutristrategy.com/caloriesburned.htm.

Recipes for Heart Health: *Garlic Lime Chicken*

Courtesy of Mrs. Dash (www.mrsdash.com)

1-½ cups Mrs. Dash Garlic Lime Marinade, divided
4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves, each about 6 ounces
2 medium yellow squash, thickly sliced
2 medium zucchini, thickly sliced
1 medium red onion, thickly sliced

Servings 4.

Marinate chicken in 3/4 cup Mrs. Dash Garlic Lime Marinade for at least 10 minutes. Separately, marinate vegetables in ½ cup Mrs. Dash Garlic Lime Marinade, for at least 10 minutes. Preheat barbeque grill to medium-high heat.

Remove chicken breasts from marinade, discarding marinade. Grill chicken 5 to 6 minutes per side or until chicken is cooked through, brushing with remaining ¼ cup fresh marinade.

Remove squash and onion from marinade; discarding marinade. Grill vegetables 4 to 5 minutes per side. Serve each chicken breast with sliced vegetables.

Nutritional information: Per serving about 410 calories, 11g fat, 0g trans fat, 55g protein, 21g carbohydrates, 140mg sodium, 1090mg potassium

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