

PRESSURE POINTS



June 2014

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE NEWS YOU CAN USE

Stroke and Heart Disease



Every part of your body, including your heart and your brain, needs oxygen to work. Oxygen is carried in the blood. Blood vessels called arteries carry oxygen-rich blood throughout the body. Both heart attack and stroke are due to problems in the arteries. The same factors that cause heart disease can make you more likely to have a stroke.

The risk of stroke is increased by high blood pressure, older age, smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease, atherosclerosis (a build-up of fatty material and plaque inside the coronary arteries), and a family history of stroke.

If an artery supplying the brain is blocked, a stroke may result. This is called an ischemic stroke. It is caused by a piece of plaque breaking loose from an artery (such as a carotid artery in the neck) or from the heart and lodging in the brain. A stroke caused by the rupture of a weakened blood vessel is called a hemorrhagic stroke.

Both heart attack and stroke are medical emergencies that can lead to serious health problems. They can even be fatal.

Reducing your risk

Making changes will help lower your risk for both heart attack and stroke. If you have high blood pressure, you may need to work on a few aspects of your lifestyle to improve it.

Factors you may need to work on include:

- Diet. Your health care provider will give you information on dietary changes that you may need to make based on your situation. Changes may include:
 - Reducing fat and cholesterol intake
 - Reducing sodium (salt) intake, especially if you have high blood pressure
 - Increasing your intake of fresh vegetables and fruits
 - Eating lean proteins, such as fish, poultry, and legumes (beans and peas) and eating less red meat and processed meats
 - Using low- or no-fat dairy products
 - Using vegetable and nut oils in limited amounts
 - Limiting sweets and processed foods such as chips, cookies, and baked goods
- Physical activity. Your health care provider may recommend that you increase your physical activity if you have not been as active as possible. Depending on your situation, your provider may advise you to include moderate to vigorous intensity activity for at least 40 minutes each day for at least 3 to 4 days per week.
- Weight management. If you are overweight or obese, your health care provider will work with you to lose weight and lower your BMI (body mass index) to a normal or near-normal level.
- Smoking. If you smoke, break the smoking habit. Enroll in a stop-smoking program to improve your chance of success.
- Stress. Learn stress management techniques to help you deal with stress in your home and work life.

Questions for Your Health Care Team

- Am I at an increased risk for stroke?
- What can I do to reduce my risk?

How to Design an Exercise Program

Exercise is essential to maintaining your health and can also improve your overall sense of well-being. Even low-to-moderate intensity activities, for as little as 30 minutes a day, can be beneficial. These activities may include:

- Walking
- Climbing stairs
- Gardening
- Yard work
- Moderate-to-heavy housework
- Dancing
- Home exercise



However, more vigorous aerobic activities, that you do three or four times a week for 30 to 60 minutes, are best for improving the fitness of your heart and lungs. Regular, aerobic activity increases your capacity for exercise and helps prevent cardiovascular diseases and even certain cancers. Aerobic exercise may also help to lower blood pressure.

These activities may include:

- Brisk walking
- Running
- Swimming
- Playing tennis
- Cycling
- Roller skating
- Jumping rope

A daily exercise program can provide a way for you to share an activity with your family and friends, while helping you establish good heart-healthy habits.

Recipe for Heart Health: *Roasted Garlic Chicken Avocado Pasta*

Courtesy of Calorieking.com

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| 3 medium zucchini, cut in half lengthwise and sliced | 1/2 teaspoon black pepper |
| 1 leek, thinly sliced, separated | 1/2 cup low-sodium chicken stock |
| 1 eggplant, cut in half lengthwise and sliced | 8 1/2 oz skinless chicken breast, cooked and cut into cubes |
| 1 each medium red and yellow bell pepper, cut into 1 inch pieces | 1 tablespoon fresh basil, chopped (optional) |
| 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar | 8 1/2 oz cooked penne pasta, whole grain or vegetable |
| 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar, extra | 1 ripe avocado, seeded, peeled, cut into 16 slices |
| 1 tablespoon olive oil | 8 fresh basil leaves (for garnish) |
| 5 medium cloves garlic, minced | |

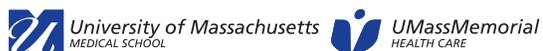


Preheat oven to 375°F. In a large roasting pan sprayed with non-stick cooking spray, combine all vegetables. In a small bowl, blend 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, oil, garlic and black pepper. Pour over vegetables and toss to coat. Roast in preheated oven for 45 minutes, stirring twice.

Remove vegetables from oven and pour on extra tablespoon balsamic vinegar. In a large bowl, toss together roasted vegetables, chicken, chicken stock, chopped fresh basil (optional), and cooked pasta. Serve into 8 pasta bowls. Garnish with two slices avocado and a fresh basil leaf on each.

Nutritional information (per serving): Per serving 198 calories, 6g fat, 0.5g trans fat, 21g carbohydrates, 15g protein, 150mg sodium.

Center for the Advancement of Primary Care



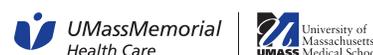
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