

PRESSURE POINTS



June 2013

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE NEWS YOU CAN USE

Using Medications to Lower Blood Pressure



Medications to lower blood pressure are recommended when lifestyle changes (such as diet and exercise) are not enough to control high blood pressure (BP). Together however, these can lower your BP and reduce your risk for heart attack and stroke.

How do blood pressure medicines work?

There are a number of ways that medicine can lower your blood pressure. The three most common ways are by: slowing your heart rate; opening up (dilating) your blood vessels; and getting rid of extra salt and water by making you go to the bathroom more often (increasing urination).

For each of these types of BP medicines, the most common names, important or common side effects and things your health care team may check are listed below. Be sure to ask your doctor for more information about your medicines.*

Medicines that slow your heart rate (pulse): These medicines also reduce the heart's workload. Common categories and names of these medicines include:

- Beta blockers - such as metoprolol or atenolol. Beta-blockers reduce the heart rate, the heart's workload and the heart's output of blood, which lowers blood pressure.
- Some calcium channel blockers - such as diltiazem or verapamil

Side effects: slow pulse (heart rate), dizziness and tiredness. *Things health care team may check:* your pulse (heart rate)

Medicines that open (dilate) your blood vessels: Common categories and names of these medicines include:

- ACE Inhibitors – such as lisinopril, captopril or enalapril. These help the blood vessels relax and open up, which, in turn, lowers blood pressure.
- Angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) – such as valsartan or losartan. ARBs help the blood vessels stay open thereby reducing blood pressure.
- Calcium channel blockers – such as amlodipine or nifedipine. Calcium channel blockers relax and open up narrowed blood vessels, reduce heart rate and lower blood pressure.

Side effects: fast pulse (heart rate), dizziness, cough, swelling of the face and/or hands, high potassium levels.

Things your health care team may check: kidney function and potassium level (blood tests)

Medicines that help remove extra salt and water: These are known as diuretics. Examples include:

- Hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ), Chlorthalidone, furosemide, and spironolactone. Diuretics help the body get rid of excess sodium (salt) and water.

Side effects: increased or frequent urination (especially when you first start the medicine), dizziness, changes in potassium levels.

Things your health care team may check: kidney function and potassium level (blood tests)

Feeling Dizzy? Many medicines used to treat high BP can make you feel dizzy when you stand up from sitting or lying down. The best way to manage this is to sit up slowly and pause before standing. If you do feel dizzy when you stand, sit down until it passes. This can happen when you start a new medicine or the dose of your BP medicine is increased. Tell your doctor if it continues.

* It's important to discuss all of the drugs you take with your doctor, and understand the desired effects and possible side effects. Never stop taking a medication and never change your dose or frequency without first consulting your doctor.

Always follow your doctor's instructions when taking your BP medicine and don't forget to call your doctor's office when your supply is running low.



Take the plunge to better health

Swimming is a great exercise for your heart, lungs and muscles. It's also easy on your joints. Summer is a great time of year to dive in at your local gym or take a few laps at a nearby pond.

You can contact a local gym or community center to see if they have swim programs available. Listed below are just a few neighborhood gyms/pools you might consider:

Paxton Sports Centre

603 Pleasant St., Paxton, MA 01612

508-755-8223

www.paxtonsportscentre.com

YWCA Worcester

One Salem Square, Worcester, MA 01608

508-791-3181

www.ywcacentralmass.org/wellness

YMCA – Central Community Branch

766 Main St., Worcester, MA 01610

508-755-6101

www.ymcaofcm.org/pages/25_aquatics.cfm

Stay Safe While Having Summer Fun

The arrival of summer means days at the pool, family picnics, baseball and other outdoor activities. Here are some tips to keep your family physically active in the warmer months:



- **Hydrate!** Drink plenty of water before, during and after physical activity to avoid dehydration. For low-calorie flavor, add slices of your favorite fruits such as melon, oranges, berries or even cucumber or mint to a pitcher of water and refrigerate for two hours.
- **Protect your family from the sun:** wear wide-brimmed hats, always apply water-resistant sunscreen with at least SPF 15 and reapply sunscreen every two hours.
- **Heat safety:** avoid intense activities between noon and 3 pm when the sun is at its strongest.
- **Dress for the heat:** wear lightweight, light colored clothing, choose light, breathable fabrics such as cotton, and wear sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- **Head indoors:** when the heat gets unbearable, try indoor activities at your local YMCA or rec center like basketball, swimming, yoga or racquetball.

Learn more about keeping your heart safe in the summer by visiting the American Heart Association website at www.heart.org.



Recipe for Heart Health: Honey Mustard Chicken Sandwich

Courtesy of eatbetteramerica.com

Serves 4

1/4 cup Dijon mustard

2 tablespoons honey

1 teaspoon dried oregano leaves

1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon ground red pepper (cayenne)

4 boneless skinless chicken breasts (about 1 1/4 lb)

4 whole-grain sandwich buns, split

4 slices tomato

Leaf lettuce

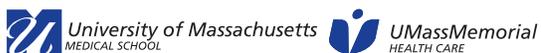
Heat gas or charcoal grill. In small bowl, mix mustard, honey, oregano and red pepper. Brush on chicken.

Place chicken on grill over medium heat. Cover grill; cook 15 to 20 minutes, brushing frequently with mustard mixture and turning occasionally, until juice of chicken is clear when center of thickest part is cut (170°F). Discard any remaining mustard mixture.

Serve chicken in buns with tomato and lettuce.

Nutritional information: 290 calories, 7g fat, 1 1/2 g saturated fat, 85mg cholesterol, 24g carbohydrates, 36g protein, 3g fiber, 400mg sodium

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