

## High Blood Pressure Causes You Need to Know

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, can be as dangerous as any other chronic disease. It's also called the "silent killer" because people suffering from high blood pressure can usually not detect it early on, unless it's diagnosed during a routine checkup. In our extremely hectic lives we sometimes neglect our blood pressure and stress levels. As such, it is important for us to recognize some of the causes of high blood pressure so that we are able to minimize or modify certain activities and practices and so avoid developing this condition.

There are many causes of high blood pressure but one important factor that seems to be involved in almost all cases is stress. For a very long time, doctors considered stress to be a contributing factor only and not a cause. But new evidence reveals that chronic stress is indeed a major cause of hypertension.

Everyone gets stressed out at times. The difference is that some can manage their stress well and take measures to relieve it while others ignore it, letting it build up until it explodes or results in other negative consequences or even illness. No matter what the circumstances, stress can be easily managed when one knows the right techniques and makes the effort to use them when needed.

There are countless ways to relieve stress. The simple pleasure of listening to music, for instance, can be very calming. The next time you feel like tearing your hair out put on your favorite music and it will work every time. This tried and tested method will certainly put your mind at ease.

Breathing in a certain way is also well known to relieve stress and has recently proved to work directly on blood pressure as well. A new method called "slow breathing with music" combines a breathing technique proven to lower blood pressure with relaxing music. This great new method offers numerous health benefits and takes only a few minutes a day.

High blood pressure can also be caused by a poor diet. You are what you eat, as they say, and our diet plays a very important role in regulating our blood pressure. For example, many people are now aware that excess sodium can make blood pressure shoot sky high. So it's important to avoid salty foods and snacks and to not add table salt to your meals. A normal, balanced diet offers plenty of natural sodium without the need for added salt.

Another element of a poor diet is eating too much fatty food, which usually has a high amount of the wrong type of cholesterol. This is the so-called "bad" cholesterol that forms plaque in arteries that can build up into blockages with dire health consequences.

The answer to avoiding excess sodium, fat and cholesterol is simply to eat a balanced and varied diet of whole, natural and unprocessed foods. Natural foods contain a healthy balance of nutrients that become degraded through processing. For example, a fresh fish, fried or baked simply, is healthier than a pack of "fish sticks" which have been chopped, blended with starches and preservatives, dipped in salty batter and frozen.

Closely related to diet is our weight and activity level. A poor diet combined with lack of exercise will quickly lead to being overweight. Excess weight makes the heart work harder and increases blood pressure. At the same time, inactivity weakens the heart because, as a muscle, the heart needs exercise to be strong and healthy. Poor diet, excess weight and inactivity are a recipe for disaster.

Smoking and drinking too much alcohol are popular vices but they are both major causes of high blood pressure. The answer to smoking is simply to stop, one way or another. There is no safe level of smoking. Alcohol is more complicated because in the right amount it can even be healthy. It's a tricky balance because even a small amount of excess alcohol on a regular basis can easily raise your blood pressure. How much is too much? That's often difficult to say because different people handle it differently, but if you have regular hangovers and/or difficulty sleeping you are definitely drinking too much and this is surely having an impact on your blood pressure.

These are some of the major lifestyle factors that can be causes of high blood pressure. Doctors estimate that up to 95% of hypertension cases are the result of lifestyle. The good news is that changes in lifestyle, such as eating better and drinking less, are often the most effective way of treating your high blood pressure.

At the same time, it's important to note that high blood pressure can also depend on genetic factors. In fact, there are many cases of the condition with no other possible explanation. If high blood pressure runs in your family the chances are high that you will develop it too. If this is the case, treatment with medications may offer the only solution. Having said this, maintaining a healthy lifestyle will always influence your blood pressure and reduce the severity of your hypertension.

## About the Author

Jan Oliver is an academic, writer and researcher in natural health. See more of her work at <http://www.control-your-blood-pressure.com/>. Discover

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