



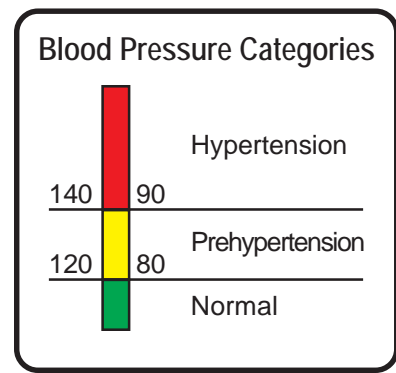
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Contact: Barbara Bradbury
800.897.8440 • bobbie@indata.com

Hypertension

The Preventable Epidemic Threatening 90% of American Adults

If you think hypertension, or high blood pressure, is of no concern to you, think again. Nearly one-fourth of all adults – 50 million – have hypertension and another 45 million are considered prehypertensive (at risk of developing high blood pressure). Even more alarming, at the rate we're going, 9 out of 10 middle-aged Americans face the threat of hypertension later in life, greatly increasing their risk of stroke, heart and kidney disease.



But there is good news, you can control and possibly prevent high blood pressure by maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active, following a healthy eating plan and reducing sodium consumption.

“Sodium is of great concern,” said Bobbie Mostyn, author of *Pocket Guide to Low Sodium Foods*. “We’re eating out more, we have less time to plan meals and rely more on convenience and processed foods which are loaded with salt.” The end result, Americans consume 4,000-6,000mg sodium per day – 2 to 3 times the recommended level of 2,400mg.

Although experts have been warning us for years to cut back on salt, most consumers are not listening. “The problem,” Mostyn explains, “is most of us are unaware of how much salt we actually take in. Consequently, we mistakenly think the amount we consume is okay and are oblivious to the harm we’re doing to our bodies.”

The American Public Health Association (APHA) agrees. Placing the onus on the food industry, APHA is pressuring manufacturers and restaurants to reduce the sodium content of foods by 50% over the next decade. They are also urging consumers to choose products with less salt.

While sodium is essential to the body by regulating fluids, too much salt can cause fluid build up (or water retention), which puts added pressure on the heart and kidneys to work harder. Over time, this can lead to elevated blood pressure.

“Sodium sensitivity is very prevalent in hypertensive individuals,” said Mostyn, “so it becomes even more important to watch your salt intake.” Most people with high blood pressure should

Amount of Sodium in Typical Meals:

Breakfast:

Eggs w/hash browns, bacon & toast – 1,453mg
2 pancakes w/butter & syrup – 1,104mg
Bagel w/cream cheese – 784mg

Lunch:

Roast beef on rye w/cheese & chips – 2,981mg
Cheeseburger w/condiments & fries – 1,854mg
Soup & salad w/LF Italian dressing – 1,339mg

Dinner:

Pizza w/meat & veggies, 2 slices – 6,108mg
Fried chicken, 2 piece dinner – 2,049mg
Spaghetti w/meat sauce, bread & salad – 1,853mg
Sweet/sour pork w/egg rolls & fried rice – 1,848mg
Tamale & beef enchilada w/rice & beans – 1,812mg

Compiled from *Pocket Guide to Low Sodium Foods* by
Bobbie Mostyn

consume less than 1500mg sodium a day.

In addition to putting less stress on the heart and kidneys, she said a low-salt diet helps your medication work more effectively.

Mostyn should know. Diagnosed with hypertension and told to cut back on salt, she quickly found how difficult staying on a low-sodium diet can be. As a result she doesn't eat out as much as she used to and avoids processed and convenience foods. She suggests staying away from the center

aisles of the supermarket, filled with salty snacks and packaged products. Instead focus on fresh fruits and vegetables which have very little sodium. “And read the label,” urged Mostyn. “If you don't know how much salt is in a product, you can't take control of your diet.” Experts advise choosing brands with less than 140mg sodium per serving.

In addition to her book, Mostyn has launched a new website, www.lowsaltfoods.com, to help raise sodium awareness. “Perhaps one day, with enough public demand, not only will the foods we purchase have less salt,” she added, “they won't be a detriment to our health.”

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