

*Living with high*  
**BLOOD PRESSURE**

With the right medication, as well as diet and lifestyle adjustments, high blood pressure should be easy to manage



# What you need to know

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, ALSO KNOWN AS HYPERTENSION, NEEDS TO BE MONITORED.



This condition happens when blood moves through your arteries at a higher pressure than normal. It is dangerous because it makes the heart work harder than usual. If left uncontrolled, high blood pressure is a risk factor for heart disease, kidney disease, stroke and blindness. High blood pressure often has no warning signs and once it occurs, it can last a lifetime. The effects of having high blood pressure over a long period of time on the body include:

- stroke → heart failure → vision loss → heart attack
- kidney disease/failure → sexual dysfunction

## DID YOU KNOW?

Your risk of high blood pressure increases if:

- ☺ You have a family history of hypertension
- ☺ You suffer from chronic stress
  - ☺ You smoke
- ☺ You drink alcohol excessively
- ☺ You do not exercise regularly
  - ☺ You are overweight
- ☺ Your diet is high in salt





## HOW TO BRING DOWN HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

### → Lose weight

Reducing your weight by just 5–10% can significantly reduce your blood pressure if you are overweight.

### → Restrict alcohol intake

Regular intake of alcohol can lead to weight gain and can increase your blood pressure and blood fats, so be careful. For healthy adults, that means a maximum of one drink a day for women of all ages and men older than 65, and up to two drinks a day for men aged 65 and younger.

### → Reduce salt intake

To lower blood pressure, your intake of salt (sodium) should be severely reduced. Use as little salt in cooking as possible and avoid salty foods such as biltong, processed meat, savoury snacks, stock cubes, gravy powders, soy sauce and fast-food takeaways.

### → Quit smoking

The heart-disease risk associated with smoking begins to decrease as soon as you quit. For most people, this risk continues to decrease significantly over time.

### → Be more active

In addition to helping you lose weight, being more active can lower blood pressure. Five sessions of aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, per week for an average of 30 minutes is recommended.

### → Take blood pressure medicines as directed

Remember, you may appear to have no symptoms, but hypertension is known as the “silent killer”. The higher the blood pressure, the greater the risk of having a stroke or heart attack in the future. Always take your medication.



## *Eat to beat hypertension*

### **LIMIT THESE HIGHLY SALTED ITEMS**

- All types of salt
- Seasoning salt, such as barbeque and chicken spices
- Stock cubes, gravy and soup powders
- Burgers and pies
- Convenience meals
- Salted nuts
- Takeaway meals
- Pizzas
- Crisps
- Savoury spreads
- Butter and margarine
- Processed meat

### **LOW-SODIUM FOODS TO HAVE MORE OFTEN**

- Food prepared at home from fresh ingredients
- Vegetables and fruit (fresh, frozen and dried)
- Unsalted nuts and seeds
- Beans, lentils and peas
- Mealie meal
- Pasta and rice
- Plain popcorn
- Oats
- Fresh fish, red meat and chicken
- Eggs
- Yoghurt and maas
- Plain cottage cheese



## SALT AND YOUR HEALTH

We all need some salt, but most of us eat far more than is necessary. If you have or are at risk of high blood pressure, you should limit the sodium in your diet to 1500mg per day, which is approximately 3g of salt (less than a teaspoon). Over half of the salt we eat is from salt added to processed foods such as bread, breakfast cereals, cheese, cold meat and sauces. Salt intake adds up quickly, as a lot of food has salt hidden in it.



**REMEMBER,** a bowl of cereal for breakfast, a ham sandwich for lunch, a packet of chips for a snack and a pizza for dinner will give you well over 5g of salt.

### TRY THIS

PnP DRY ROASTED UNSALTED COCKTAIL PEANUTS (30g)



### HOW IS HYPERTENSION DIAGNOSED?

Blood pressure is measured with a pressure cuff using two measurements: systolic blood pressure, which

shows the pressure when the heart contracts, and diastolic blood pressure, which indicates pressure when the heart is between beats. A measurement shows systolic

“over” diastolic, for example, 140/90mm Hg. High blood pressure is diagnosed when one or both of these numbers are persistently raised over time.

## HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Table salt is sodium chloride, and it's 40% sodium. Here are the approximate amounts of sodium, in milligrams, in a given amount of table salt:

½ tsp (2.5g) = 1000mg sodium

1 tsp (5g) salt = 2000mg sodium

## Some practical swaps

### INSTEAD OF THESE SALTY ITEMS:

Chips, pretzels, biltong and salted nuts

Instant cereals

Sandwiches made with cold meats, cheese or tinned tuna in brine

Instant pasta sauce

### USE THESE ALTERNATIVES:

Vegetable crudité's with hummus or tzatziki; unsalted nuts

Oat porridge made with milk; Swiss muesli

Sandwiches made with leftover roasted meat, chicken or tinned tuna in water or oil

Home-made sauce with canned or fresh tomatoes and herbs

## ADJUST YOUR SALT INTAKE

### → Cook at home

You can better control how much salt you use.

### → Eat more fresh, whole food.

Vegetables, fruit and other fresh, unprocessed foods will provide more nutrients, such as potassium, and less salt.

### → Limit the use of sodium-laden condiments.

These include soy sauce, salad dressings, sauces, dips, tomato sauce, mustard and relish.

### → Use "light" or "health" salts

wisely. Some "light" or "health" salts contain a mixture of table salt and other compounds.

### → Explore other seasonings.

Brighten flavours with freshly squeezed lemon and lime juice, and balsamic or wine vinegars, or add some heat with fresh chilli peppers, spices or piquant peppers.

## TRY THIS

### PnP BEETROOT HUMMUS (120g)





### DID YOU KNOW?

High blood pressure is responsible for 13% of all deaths globally, according to The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa. One in three adults in South Africa lives with high blood

pressure, which is the cause of half the strokes and two-fifths of the heart attacks.

High blood pressure is known as a “silent killer” because there are rarely any symptoms or

visible signs that warn that blood pressure is high. That is why more than 50% of people with high blood pressure are unaware of their condition, according to the foundation.

### READ FOOD LABELS

Check for the amount of salt in a product by reading the ingredients list on the label. If salt is one of the ingredients listed first, the product is likely to be high in salt. The nutrition information table on labels tells us how much salt or sodium is in the food. Use the “per 100g” column to compare the salt or sodium content of different products.

### TRY THIS

PNP PEANUT BUTTER WITH NO ADDED SALT AND SUGAR (400g)



## FRIED LENTIL AND BEETROOT SALAD

This perfectly balanced meal combines crispy, tangy and creamy ingredients. Adding steak is optional.

### SERVES 4

#### Dressing:

Juice (30ml) of ½ lemon  
¾ cup (60ml) olive oil  
1 Tbsp (15ml) wholegrain mustard  
1 Tbsp (15ml) honey

2 (about 650g each) sirloin steaks, at room temperature  
Salt and milled pepper  
Olive oil

#### Salad:

2 cans (400g) brown lentils, rinsed, drained and patted dry  
1 tsp (5ml) ground cumin  
1 cup (250ml) PnP Live Well low-fat plain yoghurt  
½ tub (125g) ricotta cheese  
1 packet (500g) pickled beetroot, thinly sliced

1 packet (80g) watercress  
1 packet (80g) rocket

#### Method:

**Whisk** dressing ingredients together and set aside.  
**Season** steak and set aside.  
**Heat** a glug of oil in a pan over high heat and fry steaks for 4 minutes per side (medium-rare).

**Rest** meat for 10 minutes.  
**Heat** about 2 Tbsp oil over high heat in a separate nonstick pan.  
**Fry** lentils in batches for 3–5 minutes, or until crispy, sprinkling with cumin as you fry.  
**Drain** on kitchen paper.  
**Spread** yoghurt on a serving platter and crumble over ricotta.

**Top** with beetroot slices, crispy lentils, watercress, rocket and sliced steak.  
**Drizzle** over dressing just before serving.



### TRY THIS

LIVE WELL LENTILS IN BRINE (400g)

