

# VITALITY NEWS BULLETIN

## Lower Blood Pressure with Vitamin C



Uncontrolled high blood pressure (hypertension) is a serious health concern that can cause heart disease and increase your risk of having a stroke. It is especially dangerous because hypertension often has no warning signs or symptoms. Amazingly, the risk of becoming hypertensive is greater than 90 percent for individuals in developed countries, according to research published in the Lancet two years ago.

But the really great news is that over 85 percent of those who have hypertension can normalize their blood pressure through lifestyle modifications, whereas statistics show over half of people taking multiple medications for high blood pressure are still not able to manage their condition.

So if you have hypertension, or hope to avoid it, know that there are simple steps you can take to balance your blood pressure without harmful and/or ineffective medications!

### Vitamin C and Your Blood Pressure

Several studies have examined the impact of vitamin C on blood pressure. Vitamin C is an antioxidant, which helps neutralize cell-damaging free radicals. Research has shown that antioxidants can help to reduce high blood pressure, possibly by protecting your body's supply of nitric oxide, a molecule that relaxes blood vessels.

The current study, published in the Nutrition Journal, found that both the systolic and diastolic (top and bottom) readings were inversely associated with ascorbic acid levels.

Specifically, women with the highest levels of ascorbic acid had a decline of about 4.6 mm Hg in systolic and just over 6 mm Hg in diastolic blood pressure, compared with women with the lowest ascorbic acid levels.

Previous research has also confirmed that adding vitamin C to your diet can help to reverse the degenerative process caused by free radicals, resulting in lower blood pressure levels.

**Green tea** has been linked to heart and cardiovascular health as it improves both blood flow and the ability of your arteries to relax. One 2007 study discovered that complementing green tea with either citrus juices or vitamin C increases the amount of catechins available for your body to absorb.

The possibility of a natural agent being able to lower blood pressure and help prevent heart disease is certainly worth noting, especially when you consider the damage that many, if not most, drugs can do.

For example, beta-blockers -- a class of drugs frequently prescribed to manage high blood pressure have been found to increase the risk of type 2 diabetes by decreasing your insulin sensitivity.

Your best bet is to focus on getting plenty of fruits and vegetables in your diet.

But if you decide to supplement with vitamin C, it is important to remember that it is a water-soluble vitamin and ideally should be taken at least three times a day. It is also best taken with bioflavonoids, which further enhance its benefits.

Please note that if you are highly sensitive to vitamin C, you may experience diarrhea. This is an indication that you need to lower your dosage.

Vitamin C and antioxidants, although they may help alleviate high blood pressure to a certain degree, should not be used to replace prescribed medication without the consultation of a doctor.

It should be perfectly clear to everyone that these nutrients are not the cure for high blood pressure, but they can provide some protection while you address the main causes of your problem.

### A Natural Approach to Lower Blood Pressure Values:

- \* Eliminate or limit grains and sugars from your diet – This alone will lower insulin levels and normalize blood pressure in about 75 percent of people
- \* Eliminate or limit caffeine
- \* Consume healthy omega-3 fats, such as krill- or fish oil
- \* Get a daily dose of sunshine to optimize your vitamin D levels - Sun exposure causes your body to produce vitamin D. Lack of sunlight reduces your vitamin D stores and increases parathyroid hormone production, which increases blood pressure.
- \* Vitamin D deficiency has also been linked to insulin resistance, which can raise your blood pressure
- \* Get a good night's sleep
- \* Get plenty of exercise

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