

What to eat if you have high Blood Pressure?

Hypertension diet



The diet of a patient with hypertension should be rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products. It is advisable to avoid saturated fat and cholesterol. Such a diet can lower the BP by up to 10 mm Hg if you have high blood pressure.

This eating plan is known as the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (**DASH**) diet.

Salt intake:

The total daily intake of salt should be restricted to 6 gms (amounting to 3-4 gms of sodium). Patients are advised to avoid added salt, processed foods and salt-containing foods such as pickles, papads, chips, chutneys and preparations containing baking powder. Most breads, cereals, packaged namkeen, readymade soups, canned food, pizzas and Chinese takeaway are also high in salt content.

Potassium:

Adequate potassium intake from fresh fruits and vegetables may improve blood pressure control. Food items with high potassium content are Amla, Chikoo, Banana, Pineapple, papaya, Oranges, Cabbage, Raddish, Brinjal, Cauliflower etc.



Meat & Fish:

Vegetarians have a lower BP compared to meat eaters. This is due to higher intake of fruit, vegetables & fibers coupled with a low intake of saturated fats and not due to an absence of intake of meat protein. Red meat should be avoided. Regular fish consumption may enhance blood pressure reduction.

Fats:

Intake of saturated fats is to be reduced, since concomitant hyper-lipidemia is often present in hypertensive patients. Trans-fats should be avoided as much as possible.

Carbohydrates:

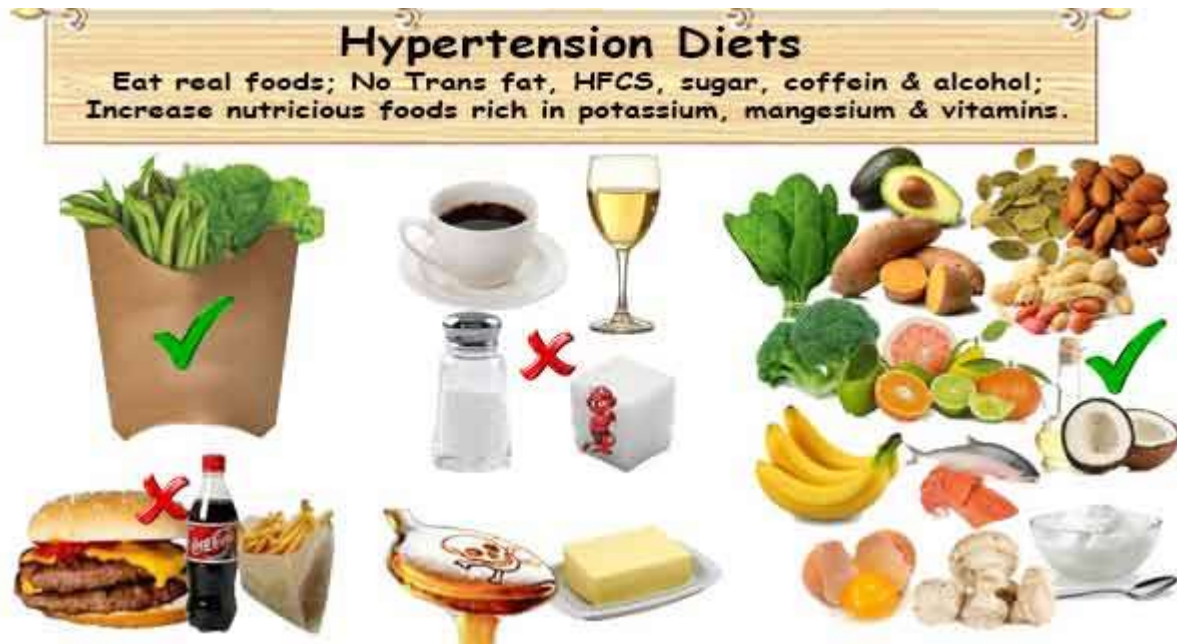
Use of carbohydrates should be reduced in diet (< 60% total calories). Bakery products (Bread, Biscuits, cakes) – They contain baking powder (soda bicarb) which is harmful, hence should be avoided. Instead of bread, sandwiches made with thick crisp chapati or bhakri are also tasty. A thick crisp crust of bhakri also makes a good alternate pizza crust. Instead of cheese, low salt paneer can be used.

Tea / Coffee:

Caffeine intake increases BP acutely but there is rapid development of tolerance to its pressor effect.

Alcohol:

Excess alcohol intake causes a rise in blood pressure, induces resistance to anti-hypertensive therapy and also increases the risk of stroke. Alcohol consumption should be limited to no more than 2 drinks per day (24oz beer, 10oz wine, 3oz 80-proof whiskey) for most men and no more than 1 drink per day for women and lighter weight people.



Dr Vinay Verma, M.D. (Medicine)
Cardiac Care Clinic, Panchkula