

## *Staying Healthy with Diabetes: Strategies to Lower Blood Pressure*

Spring has sprung! Yet amidst our fun in the sun stalks a silent killer that affects 1 of every 3 adults around the world, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). High blood pressure (hypertension) is “silent” because we may not “feel” it until we are faced with a heart attack or stroke.

High blood pressure is especially menacing for people with diabetes. But there is good news---powerful strategies that can prevent or control high blood pressure. Which of these do YOU choose?

1. **I rarely add salt to my food.** People with diabetes are advised to limit sodium (salt) intake to less than 1500 milligram a day. One teaspoon of salt contains 2300 milligrams of sodium!
2. **I eat at least 3 to 4 cups of fresh or “no salt added” frozen vegetables and fruit every day.** Vegetables and fruit contain important nutrients such as potassium that help balance blood pressure.
3. **I do not drink alcohol or I drink no more than 1 drink a day (women) or 2 drinks a day (men).** “One drink” is defined as 4 to 5-ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer, or about 1 ounce of distilled liquor. Excess alcohol constricts arteries which puts pressure on the heart and blood vessels.
4. **Every week, I get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity (such as Dance Out Diabetes!).** And I spread my exercise over at least 3 days each week. Regular physical activity is a key to blood pressure control.
5. **I am not overweight, or I am actively working on getting my weight into a healthy range.** Even modest weight loss (5 to 10%) can bring down blood pressure significantly.
6. **I do not smoke.** Smoking narrows and hardens blood vessels...a major risk for heart disease and stroke.
7. **I include at least 2 servings of low fat milk, yogurt, cheese or a calcium-enriched milk substitute in my daily diet.** Calcium-rich foods can be highly effective to help keep blood pressure normal.
8. **I have my blood pressure measured at every medical visit.** This is recommended for all people with diabetes. It pays to know!



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