

## TAKING THE PRESSURE OFF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE



### THE PRESSURE'S ON:

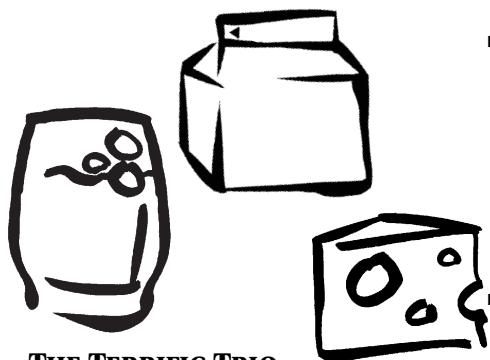
Your blood pressure reading is made up of two numbers. The top one measures systolic pressure, or how forcefully your heart is pumping blood. When it's too high, your heart is working harder than it should. The bottom number measures diastolic pressure, and it measures the force of blood flowing through your fully relaxed arteries. A high number could indicate clogged or constricted vessels. A reading of 120/80 is considered normal. Repeated readings of 140/90 or greater indicate high blood pressure.

### Facts About High Blood Pressure

- One in four Americans — about 50 million adults — has high blood pressure, also called hypertension.
- How well you eat, how physically active you are, how you handle stress, and whether or not you smoke can all affect your blood pressure.
- Some risk factors you can't change. Sometimes it's in your genes. Also, your risk goes up as you age and is greater for African Americans. Men are more likely than women to have high blood pressure during the early and middle years. In later years, more women than men have high blood pressure.
- High blood pressure is serious because it increases your risk of heart disease and stroke, possibly leading to premature death.
- There are often no warning signs or symptoms. That's why it's so important to have your blood pressure checked regularly.

## THE CALCIUM CONNECTION

Some studies suggest that cutting back on salt lowers your risk of high blood pressure. However, new research shows that increasing your calcium consumption to at least recommended levels (1,000 mg/day for adults 19-50 and 1,200 mg/day for adults 51 and older) is associated with a small, but important, reduction in blood pressure. This effect is expected to be even greater in people at high risk for both hypertension and low calcium intakes including African Americans and mature adults (ages 51+). (*Journal of the American Medical Association*, April 3, 1996). A National Institutes of Health-sponsored study called DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) found that a diet rich in lowfat (1% lowfat or 2% reduced fat) or fat free dairy foods (almost 3 servings/day) and fruits and vegetables (8 to 10 servings/day) lowered blood pressure in adults with mild hypertension (*N. Engl. J. Med.*, April 17, 1997).



### THE TERRIFIC TRIO — CALCIUM, POTASSIUM, MAGNESIUM

Calcium has two partners that help curb high blood pressure — potassium and magnesium. They pitch in to help keep blood pressure levels in check. Luckily, milk and milk products contain ample amounts of all three. Are you getting your fair share? Most adults need

at least 1,000 mg of calcium per day. Choosing 3 or more servings of milk or milk products a day helps you meet your calcium needs and supplies potassium and magnesium, too. What counts as a serving:

- 1 cup of yogurt or milk
- 1½ ounces of natural cheese
- 2 ounces of process cheese
- ½ cup cottage cheese
- ½ cup of frozen yogurt or ice cream
- ½ cup pudding

### GIVE YOUR HEART A BREAK — YOU CAN:

- **Fill up on the terrific trio.** Make sure you get the recommended amounts of calcium, magnesium, and potassium. Milk and milk products contain all three of these nutrients. Health experts urge most adults to consume at least 3-4 servings from the Milk Group each day.
- **Lose excess weight.** Losing just 10 pounds can lower your blood pressure if you are overweight. It may even eliminate the need for hypertension medication.
- **Go easy on alcohol.** For general health, experts say men should have no more than 2 drinks a day and women no more than 1 drink a day. One drink equals 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of hard liquor.
- **Get moving.** Some aerobic physical activity is better than none! Even brisk walking for 30 to 45 minutes, 2 to 3 times a week can help regulate blood pressure.
- **Shake the salt.** Reduce the sodium in your diet to less than 2,400 mg each day. That's the amount found in 1 teaspoon of salt. NOTE: cutting back on sodium does not reduce everyone's blood pressure, but adequate intakes of calcium,

magnesium, and potassium may help reduce salt's effect on blood pressure. It's easier to consume more calcium-rich foods than to maintain a sodium-restricted diet.

- **Keep it in check.** Have your blood pressure checked regularly.

### MAKE WAY FOR DAIRY

Finding ways to add milk and milk products to your day is just a serving away. Below are quick tips to enjoy dairy from dawn until dusk.

#### For Breakfast:

- Make oatmeal with milk instead of water
- Spread ricotta cheese and honey or fruit preserves on toast
- Put a crunch in yogurt — wheat germ, granola, or crunchy cereal

#### For Lunch:

- Top sandwiches with a slice of cheese
- Finish lunch with a glass of ice-cold milk
- Make soup with milk

#### For Snack:

- Sip on hot cocoa made with milk instead of coffee or tea
- Munch on fresh vegetables with a yogurt dip
- Munch on popcorn sprinkled with Parmesan cheese
- Try a smoothie made with yogurt and your favorite fruit
- Try a coffee drink like café latte

#### For Dinner:

- Make scalloped potatoes with milk and cheese
- Add cheese to casseroles or meat loaf
- Top vegetables with melted cheese

#### For Dessert:

- Spoon into pudding made with milk
- Enjoy yogurt or cottage cheese mixed with fresh fruit
- Top apple pie with a slice of cheese