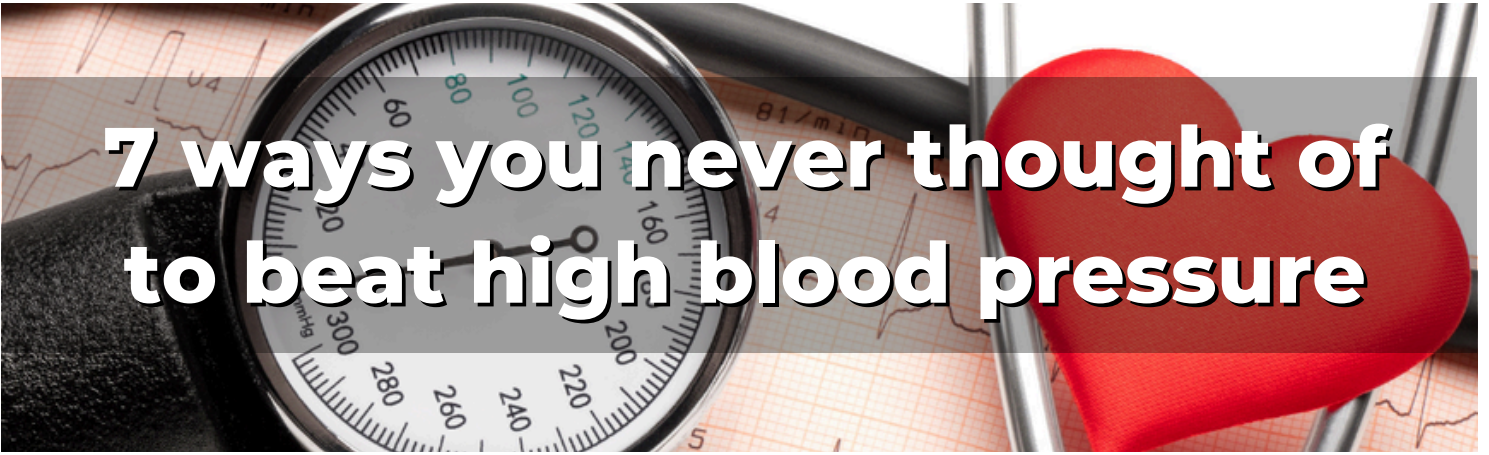




7 ways you never thought of to beat high blood pressure

Are you ready to tackle blood pressure in ways you might not have thought of before? We all know the usual advice (hello fruits and veggies!), but here are some less conventional strategies that can help keep your blood pressure under control.

1. Dance It Out!

Put on your favorite tunes and dance around your living room. Not only is it a great cardiovascular workout, but it also reduces stress – a double win for lowering blood pressure.

2. Become a Salt Detective

Sodium is a BP booster, but it's not just about ditching the salt shaker. Read the labels of all of the ingredients and foods you consume – especially the serving size (sodium numbers that seem low might be for a tiny serving!). Hidden sodium lurks in frozen foods, soups, breads, sauces, dressings, and even your breakfast cereal. Aim to choose products with less than 150 mg of sodium per serving.

3. Master the Art of Deep Breathing

Stress is a silent BP raiser. Incorporate 5-10 minutes of deep breathing or meditation into your daily routine. Apps like Headspace or Calm can be great guides for beginners.

4. Go Nuts for Potassium

Potassium helps balance out sodium's effects. Instead of just bananas, think outside the box with avocado toast, spinach salad, kiwis, or a handful of raw nuts or seeds.

5. Laugh More

Yes, laughing is good for your blood pressure! Comedy movies, funny podcasts, or a joke-filled coffee break with a friend are perfect for this.

6. Hydrate Creatively

Drinking water is key, but let's face it, water can be boring. Add slices of lemon, lime, cucumber, or mint for a refreshing twist. Herbal teas are also a great option (especially if you're braving the cold these days!).

7. Make Friends with Herbs and Spices

Instead of salt, flavor your foods with garlic, turmeric, ginger, or fresh herbs like cilantro or basil. They add a flavor punch without the BP spike, and they also have health benefits like cancer prevention and decreased inflammation.

Remember, small and enjoyable changes can make a big difference to your blood pressure. It's easier to stick to healthy habits if you make it fun!

Fresh Herb Garden Pesto



Pesto, known for its vibrant herbs and rich flavor, doesn't require the excess sodium often found in jarred varieties. Not to mention, many store-bought pestos are high in saturated fats. Luckily, homemade pesto harnesses the natural, robust flavors of fresh herbs, making it deliciously flavorful without needing extra salt. Most pestos rely on pine nuts, but walnuts are more affordable, delicious, and are a great source of heart-healthy omega-3 fats.

You will need:

- 1 cup raw walnuts
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 cups fresh basil, packed
- 2 tbsp fresh mint leaves
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, or more to taste
- Pinch of salt
- 2 tbsp olive oil (you can omit if you're following a no-oil plan, or substitute 2 large green olives if you like them)
- 1/4 cup water, plus more as needed

Place walnuts, garlic, basil, mint, lemon juice, salt, olive oil or olives (if using), and 1/4 cup water. Process until smooth, adding more water as needed for a thinner consistency. If you're not using oil, you will likely need a little extra water.

This versatile pesto can be a delightful addition to various dishes. It's perfect for adding a punch of flavor to grain-based meals, elevating scrambled eggs or tofu, drizzling on roasted veggies, or even serving as the foundation for a zesty salad dressing. To keep it fresh, store your pesto in an airtight container or a glass jar and refrigerate, or freeze in ice cube trays and store in a bag or container in the freezer.