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Can-Do Nutrition Choices as Effective as Blood Pressure Medications

By Mary Bamford, Registered Dietitian

There are 3 choices you can make with your eating to reduce blood pressure that are as effective as taking a blood pressure medication. Each choice is effective on its own, while choosing 2 or 3 is even more effective. Lowering your blood pressure is easier than you may think. Consider these choices:

1. Consume adequate Vitamin D and Calcium
2. Enjoy 10 servings of vegetables and fruits

(combined, not each) every day

3. Follow the “DASH” Diet

Step 1: Consume adequate Vitamin D and Calcium

- Getting a daily dose of sunshine while living south of Atlanta, Georgia is the most natural way to get enough Vitamin D. Otherwise, supplementation is usually needed.

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What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood against artery walls. It is measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg) and recorded as two numbers:

1. Systolic pressure—the pressure on arteries as the heart beats
2. Diastolic pressure—the pressure on arteries as the heart relaxes between beats

Optimal blood pressure for adults is <120 mmHg Systolic and <80 mmHg Diastolic.

High blood pressure has serious ill-health consequences even though most people feel no symptoms. Nutrition is a comfortable and proven way to lower blood pressure.

AN INTRODUCTION TO OSTEOPATHY: Manual Therapy and its Role in Preventative Health Care

By Regan Walker RMT and Osteopathic student

What is Osteopathy and what exactly is it used for? This is a question I am asked time and again. Osteopathy is a manual medicine developed in 1874 by Dr. Andrew Taylor Still. It emphasizes the treatment of medical disorders through the manipulation and massage of the bones, joints, and muscles. Dr. Still believed that structural misalignment of the body would eventually lead to disease.

The foundation of Osteopathy is based on the following tenants:

- The body is a functional unit.

Although there are many parts to a body all are directly related to and influence each other.

- It has its own self protecting and regulating mechanisms such as the immune system.
- The structures of the body such as the bones and muscles have a direct influence on systems in the body such as cardiovascular or digestive functions.

Manipulation is the tool used by the Osteopath to influence the patients’ body function.

Osteopaths take their understanding and knowledge of the joints, fascias, lymphatics, autonomies, physiology, etc. and consider how these factors can be affected through the musculoskeletal system.

What does all of this mean? Well, take blood pressure for example. There are many causes for high or low blood pressure such as genetics,

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Can-Do Nutrition Choices as Effective as Blood Pressure Medications

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- How much Vitamin D you need to supplement is highly individual, so adjust with your doctor using your own blood levels. Current research suggests that most people need approximately 5000 IU per day to sustain an optimal blood level of 100 nmol/L.
 - o In the strongest randomized control trial just 8 weeks of Vitamin D supplementation in combination with adequate calcium intake reduced systolic blood pressure by 13mmHg (from 144.1 to 131.0mmHg) and reduced systolic pressure by 7 mm Hg (from 84.7 mmHg to 77.5 mmHg).
- Refer to Adelaide Clinic's August newsletter on Calcium. Getting 200-300 mg of calcium at each meal from calcium-rich

foods is important and easy once you know how.

Step 2: Enjoy 10 servings of vegetables or fruits every day. Most people with high blood pressure will lower their systolic blood pressure by 10 mmHg within two weeks of eating optimal volumes of vegetables or fruits. Maintaining the habit will keep it down. One serving is a half of a cup. Ten servings is 1½ to 2 cups at every meal. That is an easy pill to swallow.

Step 3: Follow the "DASH" Diet—Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. The "DASH" eating plan has been proven to significantly lower both systolic and diastolic blood pressure in both men and women in just 14 days, even without lowering salt intake.

The DASH Diet is based on an eating plan rich in vegetables, fruits, low-fat dairy, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains. It is rich in fiber, potassium, calcium, magnesium and thousands of disease fighting phytochemicals found only in whole foods.

The evidence is so strong that the DASH Diet is endorsed by The American Heart Association; The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute; The US Guidelines for treatment of high blood pressure; and The Mayo Clinic.

To learn more about the DASH Diet and get help with menus and making the changes that will work for you, visit <http://www.dashdiet.org> and/or book an appointment with a Registered Dietitian. ■

Manual Therapy and its Role in Preventative Health Care

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lifestyle choices, or stress, but what about the possibility of physiological dysfunction caused by structural asymmetries?

Anything that creates an asymmetry in the body has the potential to aggravate the underlying tissues such as nerves, arteries, veins, or lymphatics. Depending where these asymmetries occur, there is the possibility to have problems with any system in the body.

All of the nerves that cause our

arteries to dilate or constrict, or our heart to beat faster or slower, have to travel through our body and pass through multiple structures before they reach their target sites. At any point along the path of these nerves there is the possibility of interruption. Interruption can occur from something as simple as poor postural habits, improper physical training, or direct trauma.

Simply put, the Osteopath looks at the relationship of certain ailments and the possibility that they are linked to structural

dysfunctions. "Osteopathic treatment works to restore proper mechanics, nerve impulses, and circulation of the body fluids."

Osteopathy allows for a different perspective on possible causes of dysfunction as well as a way of preventing these dysfunctions from occurring. Taking all of this into consideration it becomes apparent how interconnected our bodies are and how important it is to maintain our physical bodies with proper nutrition, physical exercise, and occasional maintenance through manual therapy. ■