

Patient Help Sheet

High Blood Pressure

Here are some tips that you can use to help balance and support your health during this time. Please feel free to call me if you have further questions or concerns.

"Life is either a great adventure or nothing" - Helen Keller

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Have you recently been diagnosed with high blood pressure (HBP)? You're not alone! According to the CDC, one in three U.S. adults have high blood pressure and only half of those have their condition under control. Many health factors intertwine to cause HBP including: genetics (family history), other conditions such as diabetes and kidney disease as well as lifestyle factors, such as diets too high in sodium and too low in potassium, a lack of physical activity, excessive alcohol and caffeine intake, tobacco use, chronic stress and obesity. While many medications exist to help control high blood pressure, they do not always work well and can have adverse side effects. Chronic high blood pressure is often referred to as the 'silent killer' as there are often no bothersome symptoms, making it easy to ignore. However, if left untreated HBP significantly increases one's risk of stroke and heart disease. Fortunately, for people willing to be proactive there are many natural ways to lower blood pressure and mitigate the side effects of medication.

4 Tips for naturally lowering blood pressure

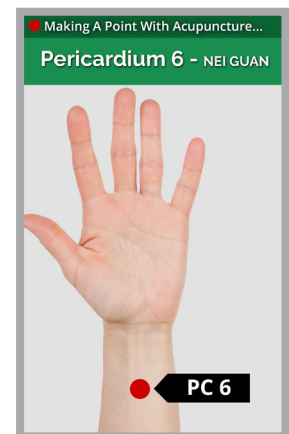
Acceptance

The first step in naturally treating your HBP is to accept it. Denial will keep most people from consistently developing and maintaining lifestyle habits that bring blood pressure into healthy ranges. It's especially easy to do because often in the initial stages HBP has no obvious symptoms that impair enjoyment of daily life.

Get acupuncture!

Several recent studies on the effects of acupuncture on hypertension indicate that it can have a significant impact on lowering high blood pressure and managing the side effects of medication (Cevik, 2013). Researchers at University of California at Irvine have been studying the neuroendocrine mechanism underlying the significant clinical effect acupuncture has on the treatment of hypertension for the last 15 years. They have discovered that electroacupuncture (EA) at the points P 5-6, Li11-10, St 36-37 and Ht 6-7 lowered hypertension and that low frequency and low current electroacupuncture (EA) produces significant results. Notably when P 5-6 receives only acupuncture without needle manipulation to stimulate 'deQi' sensation there was no effect on hypertension. EA is used to deliver consistent stimulation to the underlying nerves which send impulses to the rVLM part of the brain, a part of the medulla which interacts with the cardiovascular system. EA at low frequency at P 5-6, Li 11-10, St 36-37 and Ht 6-7 causes a release of enkephalin neuropeptides, endorphins, and GABA which has a net effect of lowering high blood pressure. In an eight-week study with participants receiving EA acupuncture once per week, there was a clinically significant result lowering of BP by 12-18 mmHg and results lasted up to four weeks post treatment. (Zhou, 2011)

According to Acupuncture and oriental medicine (OM) theory there are about 11 different patterns of hypertension, with most people presenting with a mixed pattern. The most common OM pattern for hypertension is called Liver Yang Rising (LYR). LYR is always a secondary pattern; underlying primary patterns can vary from years of chronic stress and internalized tension (liver Qi stagnation), years of overwork, chronic sleep disturbances and menopause can lead to yin deficiency or years of digestive irregularity and excessive weight can lead to a buildup of phlegm (high cholesterol). A professional acupuncture practitioner will carefully evaluate your overall health to determine your pattern and select the best points to regulate your HBP.



Please consult with a qualified acupuncturist before pressing any acupressure point

Try Acupressure

Acupressure applies gentle pressure at acupoints. Pause and linger along tender points (no more than 30 seconds at a time). Press gently as aggressive, deep pressure can irritate nerves. The pressure should feel pleasant.

Begin by sitting or lying down in a comfortable position with your body supported. H 7 is located on the wrist above the pinkie finger. Next move over to locate P 6 by placing your ring finger at the inner wrist crease, laying the middle finger and index finger along side, bend your index finger and press in the center of the forearm (should be between two tendons). Locate St 36 by placing one hand just below the outer knee cap (index finger by the kneecap), use your other hand to find St 36 (just below your pinkie finger) just off the outer shin.

Make your own Acupressure patches

You can try make your own acupressure patch: place a small round seed, dried round bean, or bead on the points using a bandaid or medical tape to affix in place.

Aromatherapy

Inhaling Clary Sage essential oil was found to be more effective in lowering blood pressure than lavender oil. Participants inhaled clary sage for an hour. Try using a diffuser with clary sage essential oil one to three times throughout your day.