

FOUR EASY WAYS TO LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure can cause damage to your heart, brain, kidneys and eyes. Try these easy tricks to help keep your blood pressure under control

- **BREATHE DEEP**

A report from the National Institutes of Health suggests that breathing slowly for a few minutes every day could lower your blood pressure by 10 to 15 points. Take a slow, deep breath and exhale slowly to take fewer than 10 breaths a minute (down from the typical 16 to 19).

- **EAT A BANANA**

Doctors recommend about 4000 milligrams of potassium every day to help lower blood pressure. A banana has about 400 milligrams so include other high-potassium foods like orange juice, strawberries, tomatoes and raisins too.

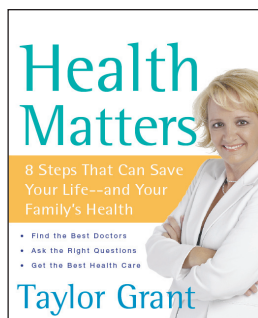
- **DRINK WATER**

Dehydration raises your blood pressure and puts a strain on your heart, making it work harder. When your body doesn't have enough water, it tries to hold onto the water you have to protect your cells - retaining salt and making your blood pressure go up. Drink at least 8 full glasses of water every day.

- **EAT GARLIC**

A new study from the University of Alabama at Birmingham shows that eating garlic is one of the best ways to lower your blood pressure. Apparently garlic triggers blood cells to release hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) which relaxes blood vessels. Fresh garlic was used in the study - researchers still have work to do to find out if garlic supplements would have the same effect.

Discover more easy things you can do to feel better and protect your health every day in Taylor's new book **HEALTH MATTERS**. Available in bookstores everywhere and at Amazon.com.



BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKUP

Blood Pressure Basics

Blood pressure is the force of blood against your artery walls. It is measured as two numbers – systolic (pressure as the heart beats) and diastolic (pressure as the heart relaxes between beats).

High blood pressure (called hypertension) is dangerous because it makes your heart work too hard and can harm your arteries. High blood pressure has no warning signs or symptoms, it can only be diagnosed by measuring it with a blood pressure monitor.

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| OPTIMAL | less than 120/80 |
| PREHYPERTENSIVE | 120/80 - 139/89 |

HYPERTENSION LEVELS

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| MILD | 140/90 - 159/99 |
| MODERATE | 160/100 - 179/109 |
| SEVERE | OVER 180/110 |

What's your VITAL SIGN?

Blood pressure is one of the most critical and EASIEST vital signs to check. If your blood pressure is above the optimal range, make an appointment to talk to your doctor about a plan to get it down - you can start with some of the tips below. Use page 22 of your POCKET HEALTH ORGANIZER to record your blood pressure at least every other week to see how your plan is working.

MY CURRENT BP _____ / _____

30 DAY GOAL BP _____ / _____

90 DAY GOAL BP _____ / _____

Blood Pressure Tips

Try these tips to lower your blood pressure and help keep your heart healthy.

- don't smoke
- don't add salt to your food
- laugh, laugh, laugh – studies show that the happier you are, the lower your blood pressure
- get more omega-3's in your diet (fish, walnuts, flaxseed) or take a daily fish oil supplement

