



YOUR RISK FOR HYPERTENSION .

BY MECHELLE MEADOWS

Did you know that many people don't know they have high blood pressure? The symptoms of high blood pressure, or hypertension, can be subtle or not present at all.

In 2017, the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association revised their definition of high blood pressure to suggest that someone with a blood pressure reading of 130/80 or above (changed from 140/90) should seek intervention. If your blood pressure is above 130/80, you may be able to treat it with lifestyle changes, such as diet and exercise, instead of medication. Your primary care physician can make the best recommendation.

Sources: American College of Cardiology. acc.org/latest-in-cardiology/articles/2017/11/08/11/47/mon-5pm-bp-guideline-aha-2017. Accessed 13 April 2018.
American Heart Association. heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/UnderstandSymptomsRisks/Know-Your-Risk-Factors-for-High-Blood-Pressure_UCM_002052_Article.jsp#.WtCsSYjwaUk. Accessed 13 April 2018.

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The most common risk factors for hypertension include: family history, age, gender (men are more susceptible before age 65; women are more susceptible at 65 and older), African-American race, and lifestyle factors, including little exercise, poor nutrition, smoking, alcohol use, and being overweight.

Take some time once each year to review your risks for hypertension. At minimum, have an annual blood pressure check by a physician, or a biometric screening at your workplace, to know where your numbers stand and if you need to take action.

Smart Facts

46%

of U.S. adults have high blood pressure, according to new 2017 guidelines.

7 OUT OF 10

adults with high blood pressure use medication to treat it.

MORE THAN 50%

of people with high blood pressure also have high cholesterol.

Sources: American College of Cardiology. acc.org/latest-in-cardiology/articles/2017/11/08/11/47/mon-5pm-bp-guideline-aha-2017. Accessed 13 April 2018.
American Heart Association. heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/UnderstandSymptomsRisks/Know-Your-Risk-Factors-for-High-Blood-Pressure_UCM_002052_Article.jsp#.WtCsSYjwaUk. Accessed 13 April 2018.



MAKING SENSE OF SALT .

BY RACHEL SAVIEO

Our bodies need salt to function, but too much can be harmful. High salt intake has been linked to high blood pressure, the leading cause of cardiovascular disease. While salt isn't the only cause of high blood pressure, cutting back on high-sodium foods is one simple way to lower your risk.

It may seem obvious that salty foods like crackers, chips, and pretzels are high in sodium, but did you know that 77% of Americans' sodium intake comes from packaged and restaurant foods? Many common foods can be sources of 'hidden' sodium, including breads and rolls, pizza, soup, poultry, cheeses, and condiments. The American Heart Association recommends that people consume less than 2300mg sodium per day, which is about one teaspoon of salt. It's easy to exceed this (the average American eats about 3400mg per day), so paying attention to nutrition labels is crucial to keeping your intake under control. Here is how the FDA defines sodium levels:

- **Low-sodium food:** less than 140mg per serving
- **Moderate-sodium food:** less than 400mg per serving
- **High-sodium food:** more than 400mg per serving

Keep in mind that labels are based on one serving size, so if you eat the whole container you will need to multiply the amount of sodium by the number of servings in it.

The key to being mindful of your salt intake when dining out is to order carefully. Always choose fresh greens and fruits when available, and ask for dressings on the side or for oil and vinegar to top your salad. Request that your dish be prepared without added salt and keep portion control in mind. Consider requesting a to-go box when you place your order and put half of the meal in the container when it arrives.

One way to counter the effect of high sodium intake may be to eat more foods that contain potassium. Recent studies have shown that people who eat the usual amount of salt but add servings of fruits and vegetables with potassium saw their blood pressure fall significantly. Foods that are high in potassium include bananas, raisins, spinach, chard, milk, potatoes baked with the skin, lima beans, and prunes.



The American Heart Association recommends that people consume less than 2300mg of sodium per day (about one teaspoon).

Sources: American Heart Association. heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@hcm/documents/downloadable/ucm_300625.pdf. Accessed 13 March 2018. WebMD. webmd.com/food-recipes/features/salt-sodium#1. Accessed 13 March 2018. WebMD. webmd.com/food-recipes/features/beware-of-the-salt-shockers#1. Accessed 13 March 2018.

KEEP EYE HEALTH IN SIGHT .

BY JOHN THOMAS

If you don't have to squint to read text messages or slow down to read street signs, you might assume you don't have to think about your eyes. But there's a lot more to eye health than how well you can see. That's why it's important to see an optometrist. Here are some things to consider:

- **Get checked.** An annual eye exam is a good idea for everyone, even if you don't have vision insurance. Sure, the optometrist will check your vision, but he or she also will check for problems such as glaucoma and cataracts. The bonus? As he or she checks your eyes, your optometrist also will check for signs of conditions, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and more. And if the optometrist does discover serious problems—including diseases of the eyes—it will be covered under your health insurance policy, as will injuries to your eyes.
- **Vision coverage makes it easy.** Most standard vision policies allow for an annual exam with a small co-pay. You'll find that coverage for lenses, contacts, and frames will vary, but basic costs are usually covered in part by your insurance. Of course, if you want hip, new frames, you'll pay more. Bottom line: Know what your policy covers before your visit, especially in case your provider suggests additional tests.
- **Find a doc.** Finding an eye-care provider is similar to finding a family doctor: Go to your insurer's website and search for in-network providers in your area. Then contact that provider and confirm that he or she accepts your insurance, and make an appointment.

Just as with any other health matter, you shouldn't take your eyes for granted just because they don't give you problems. Regular eye exams will help ensure you not only see well, but that any problems you might be having will be seen before they become bigger problems.



May is National Physical Fitness Month

The President's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition encourages Americans to stay active in May for National Physical Fitness month. Physical activity has countless benefits, including improved bone and heart health, as well as a decreased risk of diabetes and cancer. Find everyday ideas to move more at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/get-active/activity-plan.htm.

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services. healthfinder.gov/NHO/MayToolkit.aspx. Accessed 13 March 2018.

HARVEST OF THE MONTH: RASPBERRIES

BY MEGAN MILLER

Did you know raspberries have the highest concentration of antioxidant strength of all fruits? But it doesn't stop there; these small berries contain ellagic acid, which prevents cancer by stopping the growth of cancer cells! Raspberries contain lots of fiber, which helps us feel full longer, helping us lose weight. They also have astounding anti-aging effects on the skin by filling in wrinkles, and their oil even has a sun protection factor. Raspberries are especially good for pregnant women and lactating mothers.

How to Select

Look for firm, fleshy berries that are dark in color. Stay away from ones that are mushy, soft, or moldy. Also, avoid berries packed too tightly in their container.

How to Store

As they are highly perishable, aim to purchase raspberries one to two days before use. Keep them in the original container, cover with plastic wrap, and pop them in the refrigerator. Do NOT keep raspberries at room temperature or in strong sunlight for too long.



How to Prepare

Raspberries eaten raw and fresh provide the maximum nutritional value. However, they also can be used in smoothies, teas, oatmeal, sprinkled on top of a dish to enhance flavor, added chilled to drinks, or consumed as a dried fruit.

Source: [Organic Facts.organicfacts.net/health-benefits/fruit/health-benefits-of-raspberry.html](https://OrganicFacts.organicfacts.net/health-benefits/fruit/health-benefits-of-raspberry.html). Accessed 19 March 2018.



Recipe: Raspberry & Cream Cheese Sweet Potato Toast

Ingredients (makes 1 serving):

- 1 large sliced sweet potato (¼ inch thick)
- 1 ½ Tbsp reduced-fat cream cheese
- 1 ½ tsp thawed frozen raspberries, mashed
- 2 tsp toasted chopped hazelnuts
- ½ tsp honey

Directions:

1. Toast sweet potato in a toaster or toaster oven until just cooked through and starting to brown, 12 to 15 minutes.
2. Top with cream cheese, raspberries, hazelnuts, and honey.

Nutrition Information:

PER SERVING: 135 calories, 4g protein, 8g fat, 3g saturated fat, 16mg cholesterol, 87mg sodium, 14g carbohydrates, 2g fiber,

Source: [Eating Well.eatingwell.com/recipe/262100/raspberry-cream-cheese-sweet-potato-toast/](https://EatingWell.eatingwell.com/recipe/262100/raspberry-cream-cheese-sweet-potato-toast/). Accessed 19 March 2018.