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Doctor for high blood pressure

Your doctor and other members of your healthcare team can help you develop a treatment plan suited to your current health and health risks. Your team can also help you understand your plan and figure out ways to put it into action. You don't have to make all the changes at once. In fact, trying to change things all at once usually doesn't work. If you smoke and eat too much fat, for instance, you may want to quit smoking first. Then, you can begin lowering the fat in your diet. Your healthcare team will help you make these decisions. Whatever areas you need to work on, the key is to use a sensible plan that you can follow for life.What efforts will this take from me?Although your healthcare team can help, only you can take charge of your health and actually make the lifestyle changes you need.If you have high cholesterol, it's up to you to choose to eat a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol - and to take medicine, if needed.If you have been told to watch the salt in your diet or take other steps to control your blood pressure, it is up to you to follow through.Only you can commit to a program of regular physical activity.You're the one who must work to lose excess pounds and quit smoking, if needed.If your doctor prescribes medicine, you're the person who has to take it as directed.It is your right as a patient to get the combination of the best treatment plan components. You deserve the best possible care. This means you must take these actions.Practice asking for what you want so you'll be able to say it when the time comes.Be assertive about what you want and don't want.Don't give up. It may take some time until you have the right mix of treatment options.Be a good medical consumer. If you have tried to make changes and they are not working, you may have to switch treatment plans. Make sure you have a healthcare provider who will work with you to reach your goals. You need to get your blood pressure checked regularly so that you know if it is high. Untreated high blood pressure and the atherosclerosis that it can cause may do the following:damage blood vesselsharm the heartinjure kidneysdamage eyescause strokeinterfere with sexual function and pleasurecontribute to mental deteriorationcause pregnancy problemsThe body can withstand increased blood pressure for months or even years. However, over time, untreated high blood pressure can cause serious health problems. That's why you need to get your blood pressure checked regularly. It is best to have this done by a healthcare provider.If you have never been diagnosed with high blood pressure, and you do not have any other serious medical conditions, the American Heart Association recommends that you have your blood pressure checked at least once every 2 years. This is especially important if you have risk factors for high blood pressure.If you find out you have high blood pressure, you can take steps to treat it and avoid serious complications. Untreated high blood pressure can have many negative effects on your body, including stroke and other problems. If you have high blood pressure, it is essential that you see your doctor regularly so you can see how well your treatment is working.Related Articles Credit: Syldavia/Getty Plus how to bring that BP back up to speed. Credit: Syldavia/Getty Here's a scary stat: heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Add that to the fact that about half of Americans have at least one key risk factor for heart disease, such as low blood pressure (which causes poor blood flow to the heart and other organs) and don't know it. But there's good news in all these grim numbers: "Blood pressure remains the major reversible cardiovascular risk factor," says Mark Moyad, M.D., M.P.H., author of The Supplement Handbook. Read on to find out seven possible causes low blood pressure, and how to raise yours if needed for a ticker that's in tip-top shape. Advertisement Advertisement Credit: Maskot/Getty Hypotension, the medical term for low blood pressure, is classified as a reading of 90 mmHg systolic (the top number in blood pressure reading) over 60 mmHg diastolic. Symptoms of low blood pressure (including weakness, dizziness, fatigue, and sweating, among others) can occur in one person with a low reading and not another, says Dr. Moyad. In fact, unless there is an underlying disease, having low blood pressure is often an indicator of good health.So what causes low blood pressure? There are often a few factors that may be causing yours to drop. Keep reading to discover 'em all. (Related: The Most Common Causes of High Blood Pressure, Explained) Credit: d3sign/Getty Dehydration is one of the most common causes of hypotension, resulting in dizziness and weakness, says Dr. Moyad. If you suffer from frequent dehydration, be mindful of how you're hydrating. Consume less alcohol and more water."Remember this saying: 'Clear is Cool,'" he says. "This means your urine should be clear in color (a sign of hydration) and not dark yellow." Other hydration helpers include foods with more sodium and reducing the intake of potassium-boosting foods.Another common cause of dehydration? Over-exercising, according to Jay Wohlgemuth, M.D., senior vice president and chief healthcare officer at HealthTap. "If you really overdo it (especially in the heat) and need to replenish, sometimes water isn't enough," he says. "Make sure to hydrate with an electrolyte replacement like Gatorade to hydrate quickly." Dr. Wohlgemuth notes that frequent travelers should be mindful too, as airplane travel can leave you feeling dehydrated. (Check out exactly how to stay hydrated while training for an endurance race.) Advertisement Credit: tifonimages/Getty Postprandial hypotension, which is when your blood pressure drops suddenly after a meal, is common as we age, says Dr. Moyad. "Try not to eat large meals. Smaller meals with fewer carbs tend to prevent blood pressure swings." (Related: Finally, An Easy-to-Follow Guide to Portion Sizes) Credit: courtneyk/Getty A slow heart rate, valve disease, or other heart problems that can prevent the heart from adequately pumping blood could also be causes of low blood pressure. If you have symptoms such as vision changes, fainting, or frequent dizziness, you should talk to your doctor about the possibility of having a larger heart condition. (See also: This Woman Thought She Had Anxiety, But It Was Actually a Rare Heart Defect)But both M.D.s emphasize the importance of staying calm (and not scaring yourself for no reason!). Just because you have low blood pressure doesn't mean you're also going to have a heart condition. "Work with a doctor you trust to determine if you have low blood pressure with symptoms," says Dr. Moyad. "Having just low blood pressure might mean the healthiest option for you to do is nothing. Your doctor will do a series of blood tests among other evaluations to determine if there is a reason for this drop." If there's not, your pressure may change simply because of age or lifestyle changes, such as cutting back on drinking and smoking. Credit: RuthBlack/Getty Sometimes a change in blood pressure can be blamed simply for sticking another candle in your birthday cake. "As we get older, our ability to handle drops or changes in blood pressure changes, and we become more sensitive to these changes," says Dr. Moyad. (Here's how to calculate your heart's age to determine if your ticker is aging faster than the rest of your body.) Advertisement Advertisement Credit: Florin Seitan/EyeEm/Getty "Many supplements can cause blood pressure drops," says Dr. Moyad. These include arginine, citrulline, fish oil, melatonin, anti-stress supplements, and even some calcium supplements. Some prescription drugs can do the same, he adds. So make sure you talk to your doctor about the possible side effects before starting a new medication. (Psst... have you heard about vitamin IV drips? Here's what you need to know about this trendy treatment.) Credit: Siri Stafford/Getty Anemia, a condition in which you have a reduced number of red blood cells to carry oxygen throughout your body, can increase your risk of hypotension. Symptoms of anemia are similar to those of low blood pressure, such as lack of energy, dizziness, and feeling weak. (Oh and add increased risk for bruising to the anemia symptom list.)Causes of anemia range from illness to your diet, so make sure you talk to your doctor about your symptoms and the best form of treatment if you suspect you might be suffering from anemia. Credit: Andrew Brookes/Getty Hormone conditions from low blood sugar to thyroid disease may also cause low blood pressure, says Dr. Moyad. Be diligent about your yearly physical. Your doctor will take blood work that could flag these problems early on, so they can be treated and prevented earlier. Chronic conditions such as an adrenal insufficiency or nervous system disorder could cause orthostatic hypotension, which is a form of low blood pressure that happens when you stand up, according to Dr. Wohlgemuth. While mild symptoms are generally nothing to worry about, if you have symptoms for a few hours or days you should seek medical treatment to find out what's really going on, he explains. Advertisement Credit: laflor/Getty While you might be alarmed to find you have low blood pressure and are investigating what causes low blood pressure in your body, Dr. Moyad stresses the importance of making sure you get an accurate reading. Many factors can influence your blood pressure levels, from stress right before the measurement to keeping your legs crossed—even having a full bladder. This is why it's important to know your average blood pressure, in the event that at your yearly physical you get a number that skews way too low (or high). If you're really concerned, Dr. Moyad recommends taking your blood pressure at home every few months to keep a current record. You can get an at-home monitor online or at drugstores for under \$100. "No other health number in medicine has such a large variation or risk of being inaccurate," says Dr. Moyad. "It's important to know your numbers to know the difference between a problem and being inaccurate." (Up Next: What You Should Know About Your Resting Heart Rate)

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