

Reducing Blood Pressure without medicines

In over 95% of patients with high blood pressure (high BP), the cause is unknown. It tends to run in families. High BP affects up to 50% of middle-aged and older people. In Whelehans, we encounter many people who never had high blood pressure until they hit their 50s.

The silent killer

High blood pressure could be described the silent killer. This is because high blood pressure has no symptoms. It can triple your chance of developing heart disease, kidney disease and stroke. Regular checks are important. In Whelehans, we can check your blood pressure for free, simply call in any time. 10,000 people die every year every year in Ireland from preventable heart disease. Don't become a statistic, everybody over 40 should get their cholesterol, blood pressure and risk of diabetes checked once a year. In Whelehans, we can check your cholesterol, blood pressure, blood glucose and body mass index as part of our heart screening service. Screening takes place every Wednesday morning. Results are instant.

Can you reduce blood pressure without medication?

The answer is yes! However, with some people lifestyle changes are not enough and medication is required. The following are ways you can keep your blood pressure down.

Losing weight

Keeping your weight down will help prevent high blood pressure. If you need to lose some weight, start by limiting the portion size of your meals and snacks, and cut way back on high calorie foods. It is recommended to exercise at least half an hour five times a week. You will not lose any weight by cutting down food alone without exercise. If you are having trouble losing weight, ask staff in Whelehans about our weight loss clinic and our clinically proven weight loss products. Our weight loss products are based on natural ingredients and are not dangerous fad diets. You will not have to cut out your main meals which is a dangerous requirement of some diets on the market.

Increase exercise

Exercise is a key factor in preventing high blood pressure. If you get very little exercise now, start slowly and work your way up to at least 30 minutes of a moderate-level activity, such as brisk walking or bicycling, each day.

Healthy food

Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables. Stick to low fat versions of butter and milk. Avoid saturated fats. Do not fry food.

Omega 3

Fish is an important source of omega 3. Try to eat fish at least twice a week. Fish with high levels of omega 3 include salmon, sardines and anchovies. Fish oil stimulates blood circulation, increases the breakdown of fibrin, a compound involved in clot and scar formation, and additionally has been shown to reduce blood pressure. There is strong scientific evidence that omega fatty acids reduce blood triglyceride levels and regular intake reduces the risk of secondary and primary heart attack. Omega 3 supplements are beneficial if you don't eat a lot of fish. Whelehans Omega 3 supplement is €5.50 per 30.

Reduce salt

Salt and sodium can increase blood pressure, so it is important to limit it. It is recommended to limit salt to about one teaspoon daily. On average, 75% of our salt comes from processed food. When buying canned, processed, and convenience foods, most are labelled with sodium content so buy the brands that are lower in sodium. High is more than 1.5g salt per 100g (or 0.6g sodium) and low in salt is 0.3g salt or less per 100g (or 0.1g sodium).

If you salt your food at the table, try using less, or none. It may take a little while to get used to the new flavours, but you may find that food tastes better when you use less salt.

Stop smoking.

Smoking increases your chances of developing a heart disease, stroke, peripheral arterial disease, and several forms of cancer. Your chances of these conditions can increase five fold if you smoke and even more you smoke and your blood pressure is high.

Garlic

Garlic is beneficial in preventing heart disease in many ways. Some recent studies show that it beneficial in lowering total cholesterol including bad LDL cholesterol. It may help in preventing clots and there is some evidence of its benefits in lowering blood pressure. Garlic adds great flavour to your food. For those concerned about the smell of garlic from their breath, Whelehans Odourless one a day Garlic Capsules are €3.95 per 30 pack. Garlic is also a powerful antioxidant and is great for preventing and fighting colds.

Take your medication regularly

If you are prescribed medication from your doctor for blood pressure, it is very important to take it regularly. If you do not take it every day, your blood pressure will fluctuate, increasing your risk of heart disease. If you or a loved one are prescribed numerous medicines, Whelehans can blister pack your medication for free. We will put your medicine in easy to follow packs that divide your medicines into the times of the day and days of the week. We find this service is very beneficial for older people trying to manage numerous medicines. Whelehans also have a free prescription delivery service. We will collect your prescription from your GP and deliver your medication to your home for free.

Screening Service

Our heart screening service takes place every Wednesday morning; it only takes a few minutes and includes a check for blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose (diabetes) and body mass index. Results are instant. Our screening takes place in a private consultation room. You will get a printout of your results on the day. Please note that our foot clinic with chiropodist, James Pedley, takes place every Thursday in our private consultation room. Our free hearing test with our audiologist, Tony Battersea, takes place every second Monday. Call us at 04493 34591 to book any of our screening services or clinics.

For comprehensive and free health advice and information call in to Whelehans, log on to www.whelehans.ie or dial 04493 34591. You can find us on Facebook. You can also e-mail queries to info@whelehans.ie.