



## Food Fixes to Control Blood Pressure

Take a trip to the grocery store, and you'll see shoppers buying things

like frozen pizza, canned soups, chips and pretzels, microwave meals, and processed deli meats. While these foods may be convenient and low in price, they actually cost a lot more in the long run when it comes to your health.

Processed foods are high in sodium. And that's one of the main reasons 68 million adults in the United States have high blood pressure. Left unchecked, high blood pressure can slowly damage your heart, arteries, brain, and kidneys without any warning symptoms.

The American Heart Association recommends limiting sodium to no more than 1,500 mg a day. A single serving of some fast food meals and frozen dinners can contain that much sodium. And most people get an average of 3,500 mg of sodium a day in their diet – more than twice the recommended amount.

To keep your blood pressure under control and protect your health, make the effort to lower the amount of sodium in your diet by:

- ✓ **Reading food labels** to check for sodium content.
- ✓ **Choosing low-sodium alternatives** whenever possible.
- ✓ **Avoiding packaged mixes**, frozen dinners, and other processed foods.

- ✓ **Looking up the nutritional value** of menu items when you go out to eat, and choosing low-sodium options.
- ✓ **Eating more fruits and vegetables**, and skipping the chips and pretzels.
- ✓ **Making your own soup**, instead of buying it in a can.
- ✓ **Always rinsing canned foods** to remove some of the sodium.

Your Guide to Lowering Blood Pressure  
[tinyurl.com/ekurp](http://tinyurl.com/ekurp)

*Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.  
U.S. Department of Agriculture.  
American Heart Association.*

## Daytime Napping Delivers Health Benefits

Former President Bill Clinton takes a 30-minute nap every afternoon. Miami Heat basketball player LeBron James takes a nap before every game. And the brilliant Albert Einstein always made time for a brief snooze. If it's good enough for them, it's good enough for you, and research proves it.

In a *Journal of Sleep Research* study, researchers found that a 6 to 35-minute nap improved memory recall. A midday snooze can also reverse the effects of what some call "information overload" after a day at the office. A nap can help you catch up on the 7 to 8 hours of sleep you should be getting for best health. And those extra zzzs can help lower your risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, depression, and certain types of cancer, according to the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention. If you're not getting enough sleep at night, here's how to add a power nap to your day:

- **Keep your naps to 30 minutes** or less, and not too late in the day.
- **Eliminate distractions** by turning out the lights or closing the door if you can. Turn off your cell phone, wear ear plugs, or listen to soothing music
- **Create a routine.** Research suggests the best time for a nap for most people is in the afternoon. If you can, make it a part of your daily schedule
- **Avoid caffeine.**

How to power nap like a pro  
[tinyurl.com/k4zs2lv](http://tinyurl.com/k4zs2lv)



- **Don't feel guilty.** If you're really feeling the urge for a nap, it's an

indicator that you're not getting enough sleep at night or are under too much stress. If napping doesn't help you feel less tired, see your doctor.

*Journal of Sleep Research.  
National Sleep Foundation.  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

### Give Your Mood a Makeover with Exercise

Do you ever need to improve your mood or give yourself an attitude adjustment?

If you're grumpy, feeling blue, or frustrated, it's likely exercise will help.

In a recent study, researchers tracked the exercise habits of 190 people for 10 weeks. Each person recorded the number of minutes they were physically active

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## Daily Weigh-In May Help Control Weight

If you pay attention to the stock, market, real

estate values, or the price of gas at the pump, you'll discover a cycle or pattern in the prices. When you understand the market, you can make smart decisions about when to buy, sell, or fill up your gas tank. And new research suggests that your body follows a similar cycle when it comes to your weight.

Researchers followed a group of people for a year who had a history of weight loss, weight gain, or maintained a healthy weight.

Every day they stepped on a scale and recorded their weight before breakfast. They found that most people reached their highest weight on Sunday or Monday after the weekend. Those who lost weight reported a consistent pattern of lower weigh-ins on weekdays. Those who gained weight showed daily changes in weight loss and weight gain, instead of consistent results.

An estimated two-thirds of all adults in the United States are overweight or obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If you're trying to lose weight, identifying your weight cycle may help. Are you eating healthy and

exercising during the week? What's your diet and level of physical activity like on the weekends? Try weighing yourself daily and see how your weight changes.

If you don't see a consistent pattern, change your exercise and eating habits to improve weight management. Eat more fruits and vegetables, drink more water, and be more active. This will help you maintain a healthy weight and help you lose weight if you need to.

*Obesity Facts*

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

Track your weight with a mobile app [tinyurl.com/q6m9kct](http://tinyurl.com/q6m9kct)



### Give Your Mood a Makeover with Exercise

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each day. They also kept track of their mood, level of stress, and sleep patterns. In the study, people who exercised at least 15 minutes a day felt happier than less active people.

Their outlook on life improved even more when they increased the amount of time they spent walking, jogging, swimming, and cycling. Even on days they did not exercise, people who were more active felt happier more often than people who exercised less.

It's no secret that exercise strengthens your heart, lungs, and muscles, aids in weight loss, and helps prevent a host of chronic diseases. But exercise can also do wonders to improve your mental health and help with depression. If you don't have time to exercise at least 30 minutes a day, don't give up on being physically active. Shorter exercise sessions are still beneficial and will improve your health and your mood.

*Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology.*

*American College of Sports Medicine.*

Try the 15-minute desk workout [tinyurl.com/mba4n5h](http://tinyurl.com/mba4n5h)

## Discover the Health Benefits of Pineapple

Nearly a million people a year visit the Dole Plantation Pineapple Garden Maze in Hawaii. The three-acre maze features 2.5 miles of twists, turns, and dead-ends made from 14,000 colorful Hawaiian plants. It's the largest permanent botanical labyrinth in the world. And if you can find your way to the heart of the maze, you'll discover the great "halakahiki," the Hawaiian word for "pineapple."

If you enjoy this sweet, tart, and tasty fruit, you're not alone. Pineapple growers around the world produce about 14 million tons of this fruit every year. It's eaten freshly sliced, frozen, cooked, juiced, and canned. And it's good for you.

A one-cup serving of pineapple contains all the vitamin C you need in a day. And it's also a rich source of vitamin A. These antioxidants help protect your immune system, prevent heart disease, reduce the risk for eye disease, and keep your skin healthy.



It's also low in calories (82 calories in a one-cup serving), which makes it a healthy and tasty treat. It does contain more natural sugar than some fruits, so don't overdo it.

Pineapple tastes great when it's eaten fresh, added to fruit smoothies, mixed into a fruit salad, or even chopped up with peppers, onions, and cilantro to make salsa.

*U.S. Department of Agriculture. National Institutes of Health.*

10 ways to enjoy pineapple [tinyurl.com/plxwbcn](http://tinyurl.com/plxwbcn)

### ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

**Q:** What is a normal blood sugar level?

**A:** Go to [www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-normal-blood-sugar.pdf](http://www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-normal-blood-sugar.pdf) to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: [evan@wellsource.com](mailto:evan@wellsource.com), subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

Health Challenge: "Eat Breakfast Every Day" available at: [www.wellsource.info/wn/hc-eat-breakfast.pdf](http://www.wellsource.info/wn/hc-eat-breakfast.pdf)

Start the day with a healthy meal.