

PRESSURE RELIEF *Remedies*



Keeping blood pressure on an even keel makes life a whole lot easier for your arteries—which in turn drops your risk of suffering a cardiovascular disaster.

Fortunately, natural methods for maintaining proper pressure abound. Turn the page for some of your best options.

*I*t's the killer no one talks about. Stroke—a disruption of circulation within the brain caused by either blockage or hemorrhage—is the third leading cause of death in the US, claiming more than 150,000 lives in 2004. But just as sobering is the damage stroke does to the more than half a million people who survive an attack every year; that number doesn't even begin to tell the story in terms of the toll stroke takes on both its victims and their families.

Keeping blood sugar and cholesterol within healthy limits—and not smoking—are vital in stroke prevention. But the single best way to avoid the health hazard some professionals now refer to as “brain attack” is to maintain a blood pressure of 120/80 or below; pressure in the healthy range helps prevent heart and kidney problems as well.

Salt is infamous for its pressure-promoting qualities, and certainly cutting sodium intake is an important first step in keeping blood pressure within limits (see “In Search of Salt Substitutes” on page 18). For many people, however, shunning the salt shaker is only the beginning—they need some extra help in bringing those numbers down.

A variety of prescription meds are used in blood-pressure control. But if you want to go a more natural route, ask your practitioner about the supplements listed in the following chart (many of which also address other cardiovascular concerns). In combination with a low-salt diet and increased exercise, they may help you—and your arteries—stay out of the high-pressure danger zone. ▶



BLOOD

Name

ARGININE

BILBERRY

COENZYME Q10

COLEUS

GARLIC

HAWTHORN

MAGNESIUM

NATTOKINASE

POTASSIUM

REISHI

RESVERATROL

PRESSURE Relief

NOTE: Always speak to a trained practitioner before starting a supplementation program. Do *not* stop prescription medications without professional advice.

What It Is

What It Does

<p>An amino acid, or protein building block; naturally found in chocolate, dairy, fish, meat and nuts</p>	<p>Helps counteract blood-vessel constriction; high levels found to be associated with low levels of an inflammation marker called C-reactive protein</p>
<p><i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>, a relative of the blueberry</p>	<p>Contains substances that aid blood flow; early studies support its usage in preventing cataracts</p>
<p>A vitamin-like compound found throughout the body; fish and meat are the best natural sources</p>	<p>Allows blood vessels to relax and widen; especially concentrated within heart tissue; helps all cells generate energy</p>
<p><i>Coleus forskohlii</i>, a member of the same family as the ornamental plant</p>	<p>The root contains forskolin, which relaxes the muscle tissue within blood-vessel walls; helps promote fat breakdown</p>
<p><i>Allium sativum</i>; one of the most widely consumed foods in the world</p>	<p>In addition to lowering blood pressure, garlic supplements have reduced arterial plaque formation in people with atherosclerosis</p>
<p>Various members of the <i>Crataegus</i> family; found throughout Europe, North America and western Asia</p>	<p>Improves cardiac blood flow; use as a heart remedy dates back to the days of ancient Greece</p>
<p>An essential mineral found in beans, dark green vegetables, fish, grains, meat and nuts</p>	<p>Deficiency linked to high blood pressure in large-scale studies; many people don't get enough from diet alone</p>
<p>A enzyme derived from <i>natto</i>, a fermented soyfood from Japan</p>	<p>Studies support traditional Japanese usage as a blood pressure-lowering agent; also enhances the body's ability to dissolve clots</p>
<p>A mineral found in beans, milk, vegetables and most types of fruit</p>	<p>Helps control blood pressure by regulating water balance; also required for proper electrical impulse transmission within the heart</p>
<p><i>Ganoderma lucidum</i>; a mushroom native to China that is now commercially cultivated throughout northern Asia and North America</p>	<p>Contains substances that demonstrate an ability to lower both pressure and LDL; also helps prevent dangerous blood clots</p>
<p>Best known as the healthy compound in red wine, but Japanese knotweed (<i>Polygonum cuspidatum</i>) contains much greater amounts</p>	<p>Has improved blood flow within the brain in studies, indicating an ability to fight stroke; may help fight obesity and type 2 diabetes</p>