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### Tips for Lowering Your Blood Pressure

As a primary care physician, I see patients who struggle with this question all too often. Most patients have an aversion to additional medications. I often get asked, “Don’t I already take too many medications?” or “Can’t we do away with some of these?” Trust me, I understand their concerns.

The point of this article is not to review how a large number of people suffer from hypertension, or the risks it creates to one’s health, because I am sure your primary health care provider has given you that lecture. Instead, I would like to provide you with some quick suggestions that can help limit the need for additional medications. Here are some things to think about before your next visit with your physician.

1. Do I get enough exercise? Over the decades numerous studies have proven 150 minutes of cardiovascular exercise per week can lower blood pressure better than some medications. It is best to start with a small attainable goal. Try walking 5 times a week for 10 to 15 minutes and work up to 30 minutes on a track, treadmill, or around your neighborhood.
2. Reduce your salt intake. Less than 3 grams of sodium a day, and in some cases less than 2 grams is advised. Take away your salt shaker. Order off the low sodium menu at the restaurant. Ask the waiter if the cook or chef can avoid adding salt to your meal. Look into salt substitutes, like Mrs. Dash, that have a variety of great flavors now. Many of these substitutes are made with potassium chloride, which can also help lower your blood pressure. Please remember that “salt is salt”, so using sea salt or anything with the name “salt” will adversely affect your blood pressure.
3. Stop smoking. Please talk with your doctors about strategies to improve your chances with this difficult addiction. Quitting can be one of the hardest things to do, but it has the highest return of investment for a longer, healthier life.
4. Avoid supplements and over-the-counter medications that can increase your blood pressure. Always review any of these with your pharmacist before you take them. Even over-the-counter decongestants may have ill effects on your blood pressure. Always use the same pharmacy, when possible. This will decrease the possibility of a drug to drug interaction that may negatively impact your blood pressure medication.
5. Drink less alcohol. If you take blood pressure medications, you really should drink less than 2 oz. of hard alcohol, 8 oz. of wine, or 24 oz. of beer a day. This is a large culprit in my clinic when I have patients who have difficulty controlling their blood pressure. Be honest with your doctor about your daily or weekly alcohol intake.

<https://www.cdc.gov/cdctv/diseaseandconditions/lifestyle/high-blood-pressure.html>

6. Do you have sleep apnea or risk of sleep apnea? This is a problem in which you stop breathing during sleep and your oxygen levels drop. This can make controlling your blood pressure difficult to manage. If you are obese, then your risk for sleep apnea is even higher. Talk with your physician if you wake after a full night sleep and still do not feel rested, you snore regularly, or if your partner noticed you stop breathing at night.

7. Stress management. I know, easier said than done. Yet, if you haven't looked into meditation, prayer, or other stress-relief techniques, you're passing up an opportunity to better regulate your blood pressure. Your mental well-being does affect your blood pressure and recognizing your stress triggers can help to keep things in check. We are just trying to fully appreciate the mind-body connection and discussing ways to reduce your overall stress with your physician can open your eyes to some new methods of staying healthy.

Remember the above strategies may help lower your blood pressure and, in some cases, avoid the addition of new medications. Most hypertension we see as physicians is related to genetics or family history, so don't be dismayed if you do all of the above and your provider still recommends a high blood pressure medication. They are safe, non-addictive, and have been studied for decades with positive findings. Being healthy involves being proactive and knowledgeable, and results will always vary from person to person. Staying on top of the variety of ways to control blood pressure is important to help reduce the overall amount of medications that you may need.

Quick Video Resources:

<https://youtu.be/FdF9Xzr2sPg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8pR6kaBoD8>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsxD6gZ\\_0a0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsxD6gZ_0a0)

Home exercise program to lower your blood pressure

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZIS\\_TRdXHM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZIS_TRdXHM)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJG\\_\\_lt5Bes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJG__lt5Bes)



Texas Quitline offers free and confidential resources, such as nicotine patches, gums, or lozenges, to those who qualify. Call 1-877-YES QUIT (1-877-937-7848) or visit [www.yesquit.org](http://www.yesquit.org). Nicotine Anonymous is a 12-step program to achieve abstinence from nicotine.



# QPIC Corner In Network Urgent Care Facilities



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IH 35 N/Loop 1604

For life threatening issues  
Please call 911

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[qpicsa.com](http://qpicsa.com)

## Healthy Recipe

<https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/266353/simple-grilled-salmon-vegetables/>  
Blood Pressure Healthy Recipe

Simple Grilled Salmon & Vegetables  
By: Hilary Meyer, Updated July 13, 2018  
EatingWell

Makes: 4 Servings  
Prep: 25 min

### Ingredients:

- 1 medium zucchini, halved lengthwise
- 2 red, orange and/or yellow bell peppers, trimmed, halved and seeded
- 1 medium red onion, cut into 1-inch wedges
- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ tsp salt, divided/Mrs. Dash
- 1/2 tsp ground pepper
- 1 ¼ lbs salmon fillet, cut into 4 portions
- 1 lemon, cut into 4 wedges



### Directions:

1. preheat grill to medium-high
2. Brush zucchini, peppers, and onion with oil and sprinkle with ¼ tsp salt. Sprinkle salmon with pepper and the remaining ¼ tsp salt.
3. Place the vegetables and the salmon pieces, skin-side down, on the grill. Cook the vegetables, turning once or twice, until just tender and grill marks appear, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Cook the salmon, without turning, until it flakes when tested with a fork, 8 to 10 minutes.
4. When cool enough to handle, roughly chop the vegetables and toss together in a large bowl. Remove the skin from the salmon fillets (if desired and serve alongside the vegetables. Garnish each serving with 1 tbsp. basil and serve with a lemon wedge.

### Nutritional Facts:

#### Per Serving:

281 calories; protein 30g; carbohydrates 11g; dietary fiber 3g; sugars 6g; total fat 13g; saturated fat 2g; cholesterol 66mg; vitamin a 3014IU; vitamin c 125mg; folate 74mcg; sodium 369mg; calcium 84mg; iron 2mg; magnesium 65mg; potassium 896mg

Source: EatingWell by: Hilary Meyer, Updated July 13, 2018

<https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/266353/simple-grilled-salmon-vegetables/>