

## Management of New Patients with a Blood pressure of 180/120 or Greater

By Rick Shacket DO

**Hypothetical situation:** A new patient presents to your office with a blood pressure readings of 180/120 or greater.

**Questions:** When is it Okay do diagnostic procedures, e.g. ankle-brachial index (ABI) testing, allergy skin testing) for the purpose of doing a Comprehensive Whole-body Assessment (CWA) exam? Is the criteria different if we are treating patients in the office with minor surgery, i.e., wart removal or hemorrhoidectomy?

I have completed my research on the subject (Attached American Heart Association (AHA) research). I have decided upon the best way to approach treating Comprehensive Whole-body Assessment (CWA) patients with blood pressure readings of 180/120 or greater.

These are my suggested guidelines for scheduling CWA patients who are at risk if their blood pressure (BP) rises quickly and severely with readings of 180/120 or greater.

---

If we discover that a new CWA patient has a two BP reading of > 180/120 ("measure in both arms and use the higher reading" according to the AHA), taken more than 5 minutes apart, this is called a "Hypertensive Crisis". This is automatically a "high risk" patient, qualifying for a "level-5 new patient visit". PLEASE BILL FOR A LEVEL-5 VISIT. This patient must immediately be evaluated for either a "Hypertensive Urgency" or a "Hypertensive Emergency".

Staff needs to determine if there is "Target Organ Damage". They do this by asking the following questions:

- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- back pain
- numbness/weakness
- change in vision, or
- difficulty speaking

If Yes, then this should be considered a "hypertensive emergency". Call 911 and ask that this patient be transported by ambulance to an emergency room.

If we discover that a new CWA patient, without evidence of "Target Organ Damage" has a single BP reading of > 180/120, and then verify good BP technique: following:

- Have the patient avoid smoking, caffeine, or exercise within 30 minutes before measurements; empty his or her bladder; sit quietly for at least 5 minutes before measurements; and remain still during measurements.
- Support the limb used to measure BP, ensuring that the BP cuff is at heart level and using the correct cuff size; don't take the measurement over clothes.
- Measure in both arms and use the higher reading; an *average of 2 to 3 measurements* taken on 2 to 3 separate occasions will minimize error and provide a more accurate estimate.

If staff determines that the BP reading of > 180/120 is asymptomatic, then it's a probable "Hypertensive Urgency". At this point, staff needs to simply ask, is this treated hypertension, or untreated Hypertension.

- For treated hypertension, ask the patient if he/she has taken all his prescribed antihypertensive medications:
  - If Yes, continue with the CWA exam, and refer the patient back to his PCP to reinstitute or intensify antihypertensive drug therapy, and to treat anxiety as applicable
  - If No, then treat the patient as if he or she has untreated hypertension, below
- For untreated hypertension, "according to the attached guidelines", I recommend that we continue with the CWA with minimal delay by treating the patients anxiety as applicable, with Rx lorazepam Tablets 1 mg. Peak onset of lorazepam is in 60-90 minutes:
  - Same day CWA exam: Dispense one lorazepam immediately if the patient has a driver, and start the CWA in exactly 90 minutes
  - Next day CWA exam: Dispense three lorazepam immediately if the patient has a driver, and start the CWA the next day. Patient takes one lorazepam every 8-12 hours until the exam. Furthermore, the patient should start self-treating his/her BP immediately using one or more of the effective home remedies listed in the attached handout (What Doctors Know: Lower your blood pressure naturally overnight), until he/she can begin antihypertensive therapy with his primary care practitioner (PCP)
  - Next week CWA exam: Patient reschedules after starting antihypertensive therapy with his or her PCP

# Know the two types of High Blood Pressure (HBP) crisis to watch for

There are two types of hypertensive crises—both require immediate attention as early evaluation of organ function is critical to determine an appropriate course of action.

## Hypertensive Urgency

If your blood pressure is **180/120** or greater, wait about five minutes and try again. If the second reading is just as high and you are not experiencing any other associated symptoms of target organ damage such as chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness/weakness, change in vision, or difficulty speaking, this would be considered a hypertensive urgency. Your healthcare provider may just have you adjust or add medications, but rarely requires hospitalization.

## Hypertensive Emergency

If your blood pressure reading is **180/120 or greater and you are experiencing any other associated symptoms** of target organ damage such as chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness/weakness, change in vision, or difficulty speaking then this would be considered a hypertensive emergency. Do not wait to see if your pressure comes down on its own, Call 9-1-1.

## Be prepared

If you have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, track your blood pressure and medications. If possible during an emergency, having these logs with you can provide valuable information to the medical team providing treatment.

STAGE 1			
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

### Understanding Blood Pressure Readings



### Blood Pressure Fact Sheets

### Popular Articles



### Is your workout working? Infographic



### Cardiac Resynchronization Therapy (CRT)

Last Reviewed: Nov 30, 2017

\*All health/medical information on this website has been reviewed and approved by the American Heart Association, based on scientific research and American Heart Association guidelines. [Use this link](#) for more information on our content editorial process.

# What Doctors Know: Lower your blood pressure naturally overnight



One 12-ounce can of soda contains about 40 grams of fructose, one of the leading high blood pressure risk factors in North America. (Fotolia)

Premium Health News Service

DECEMBER 3, 2014, 4:30 AM

**S**ource: Pacific Prime Insurance  
[whatdoctorsknow.com](http://whatdoctorsknow.com)

High blood pressure and stress are the proverbial chicken and egg. It works like this: if a person eats lots of sugars and grains, insulin receptors get wonky and shut down, meaning blood cells can no longer absorb magnesium, one of the brain's most important sources of stress relief.

Stressful situations can cause your blood pressure to spike, if only temporarily, and long-term stress can lead to long-term hypertension problems.

If you find yourself stuck in the hamster wheel of stress and hypertension, there's plenty you can do to ease the pressure, literally. And it needn't take long. Our bodies have a remarkable ability to heal themselves. [Good](#)

health is a lifelong investment, but a little loving care can improve blood pressure almost instantaneously.

## TIPS

1. Take a shot of cayenne pepper. Cayenne opens up blood vessels and helps increase blood flow. This decreases blood pressure naturally, by increasing the rate that blood flows through your system.

Easy fix: Mix a half-teaspoon of cayenne into a glass of warm water and honey each morning. This is not only good for blood pressure, but helps to prepare your tummy for digestion for the rest of the day.

2. Take an omega-3 oil. Omega 6:3 ratio is important. A lot of us get way too much omega-6 in our diets, which is what's caused the omega-3 craze. Refined vegetable oil is one of the main culprits, and found in almost all processed foods, and even some orange juices. Because we have way too much omega-6 in our systems, we need to compensate by taking some form of omega-3 oil. Decreasing your intake of processed foods will have a similar effect.

Easy fix: A teaspoon of omega-3 oil (flaxseed oil, walnut oil or, by far the best option, krill oil) every night does more than just balance your omega rations: it assists in desensitizing your insulin receptors, promotes cell rejuvenation and healthy sleep, and will help you to wake up feeling fresh and alive.

3. Quit soda. One 12-ounce can of soda contains about 40 grams of fructose, one of the leading high blood pressure risk factors in North America. Consuming 74 or more grams of fructose per day increases your risk of high blood pressure by 77 percent. For people accustomed to drinking a can or two of soda daily, cutting the pop can have a dramatic effect on blood pressure, even eliminating the problem altogether.

Easy fix: Switch to coconut water. It's a super sweet and satisfying drink, and all those extra electrolytes have been shown to lower blood pressure. If you're used to drinking several sodas a day, in addition to fruit juice and other processed beverages, try eliminating at least one a day and substituting another for coconut water.

4. Cut down on processed food. Just about all processed foods contain huge amounts of fructose, particularly fruit drinks or any fruit-flavored products. Fructose is hidden all over the supermarket, even in the most unlikely places: processed meats, breads, pasta sauces and dressings. Fast food chains love fructose. The only thing they love more is vegetable oil.

Easy fix: If eliminating all processed foods feels like too big a leap, start reading nutritional information and putting back anything containing high-fructose corn syrup, vegetable oil or canola oil.

5. Take apple cider vinegar. In addition to lowering blood pressure almost overnight, apple cider vinegar has a myriad of fringe benefits. Apple cider vinegar helps with indigestion, especially if you suffer from diarrhea. It also soothes sore throats, cures hiccups instantly, and lowers cholesterol. Most importantly, it helps with weight loss by improving metabolism and reducing water retention -- and a healthy weight is key to normalizing blood pressure.

Easy fix: Three teaspoons per day of apple cider vinegar can lower your blood pressure significantly within a week. If the taste is too much, mix it with a little warm water or add it to your favorite beverage (as long as it's not a sugary soda).

6. Add garlic to everything. If you're already suffering from high blood pressure, eating garlic regularly can reduce your blood pressure by about 20 points, or 10 to 15 percent. When garlic is crushed it releases allicin, which decreases blood pressure and acts as a natural anti-inflammatory. Make sure you let your garlic sit for about 15 minutes after chopping or crushing, to allow the allicin to release. Cook on a low temperature to get the maximum benefit, as a high temperature will kill many of garlic's healing properties.

Easy fix: Take garlic capsules if you don't like the taste of garlic, or can't stand to have garlic breath. Garlic capsules are just as effective as the real deal, and sometimes more so if you have a habit of overcooking your food or don't give the allicin time to release.

(WhatDoctorsKnow is a magazine devoted to up-to-the minute information on health issues from physicians, major hospitals and clinics, universities and health care agencies across the U.S. Online at <http://www.whatdoctorsknow.com>.)

(c) 2014 WHATDOCTORSKNOW.COM DISTRIBUTED BY TRIBUNE CONTENT AGENCY, LLC.

Copyright © 2018, Chicago Tribune

**This article is related to:** [Nutrition](#)