



**Wolverhampton
Diabetes Care**

Hypertension - helping yourself?

Treating high blood pressure in people with diabetes has many positive effects on their long term health. Effective treatment reduces the risk of strokes, heart attacks and other circulatory problems especially those affecting the kidneys and the eyes.

If your blood pressure is high, you should make changes in your lifestyle which help to control blood pressure. Most people with diabetes need one or more medications. In order for the medication to be effective, it is crucial to address lifestyle factors at the same time. Changes to lifestyle will make the tablets more effective. These are the main changes you can make:

What dietary changes?

Cut down on your salt intake. We each eat about 10gms of salt each day and this can be easily reduced to 5gms each day. Most salt comes from processed foods and this may not be obvious. Avoid using high salt foods and don't add salt to food. Cut down on fat. Fat increases the amount of cholesterol in your blood. Eat more fruit and vegetable: everyone should aim to eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Fruits and vegetables contain potassium, which has the opposite effect of salt and can help lower blood pressure.

What sort of physical activity?

Be more active. Being active can help you lower your blood pressure. It will also help you to lose weight and reduce the amount of fats in your blood. Being active does not mean a fitness fanatic. It can mean walking regularly and gradually increasing the amount you do over three to six months. You are aiming to be active for at least 30 minutes, five times a week.

What about my weight?

Find and try to reach your ideal weight: What your ideal weight is will depend on how tall you are and whether you are male or female. If you are overweight, you should try to get down to a weight within the ideal range for you. Certainly don't put weight on.

What about alcohol and smoking?

Drink alcohol in moderation. If you are a man, you should be drinking no more than 3 units per day and if you are a woman, you should be drinking no more than 2 units per day. If you are regularly drinking over these amounts then it is likely to affect your blood pressure and you should cut back. Smoking is the biggest risk factor for having a heart attack – smoking and blood pressure do not mix.

Take your tablets?

No one likes taking tablets but missing blood pressure tablets causes confusion to your medical team and can harm you if the blood pressure swings up and down out of control. If tablets are not suiting you, tell your medical team – there are many options.

Seeking advice and what care to expect

You should always be told what your blood pressure reading is and keep a record of it in your diabetes book.

If you do not suffer with blood pressure, you should expect to have your blood pressure checked at least annually as a minimum.

If you have a problem with blood pressure, it should be checked regularly which is at least monthly whilst treatment is being adjusted and then every 3 – 4 months to be sure it remains stable.

Your medical team should be able to advise you about lifestyle measures and help you to understand the diet and exercise needs. They can give support and treatment if you want to stop smoking. They will explain your medication to you and adjust it if it is not suiting you.