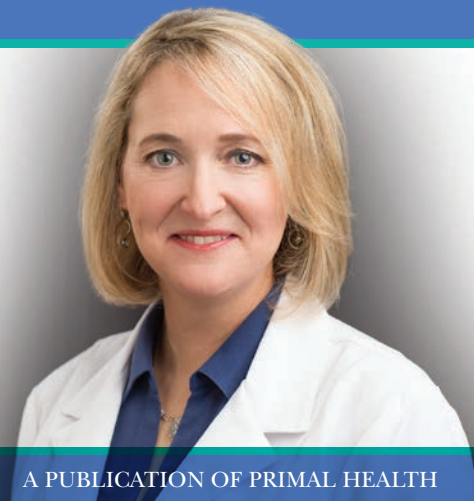


# Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 6

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## Top Blood Pressure Supplements and How to Use Them



**Achieving and maintaining healthy levels of blood pressure protects your arteries, heart, brain, kidneys, and eyes, and enhances your overall health and well-being.**

Elevated blood pressure is viewed and treated as a medical condition, but it's really a symptom of one or more underlying situations. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that elevated blood pressure shouldn't be dealt with — it most certainly should. But the way it's usually addressed today misses what's really going on.

When blood pressure is elevated, it's like a fire alarm going off. If you simply turn off the alarm, it won't put out the fire. And if you rely only on medications to lower blood pressure, the fire continues to burn.

The real trick is to identify what's causing blood pressure to rise, and address that. Supplements can be an effective tool, and I'll describe the important ones in a moment. But first, I'm going to address how to use them.

I find that when supplements are part of a program, many of my patients want to "cut to the chase," and just start taking the supplements.

Pills are easy to swallow, and some of the other changes that are needed to control blood pressure take a bit more effort. But supplements are intended to supplement — not substitute for — other necessary steps. They enhance the effects of a healthy diet and lifestyle.

First, it's vital to have an accurate reading of your blood pressure, and this may require more than a check at your doctor's office. "White coat hypertension" is quite common — your blood pressure goes up when you're in a doctor's office or when a nurse puts the cuff on your arm, inflates it, and watches.

I've had patients whose blood pressure shot up at the sight of a

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**IN THE NEXT ISSUE:**  
**How to Maintain  
and Improve Your Vision**

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blood-pressure cuff. Most people don't have such an extreme reaction, but I've seen "white coat" readings enough to tell me that it's essential to get an accurate measure. And I'm not alone.

In fact, this is an important point in the latest medical guidelines for screening for hypertension, released in late April of this year by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. In addition to having blood pressure checked during checkups at the

doctor, the guidelines state: "The USPSTF recommends obtaining blood pressure measurements outside of the clinical setting for diagnostic confirmation before starting treatment."<sup>1</sup>

## How to Get an Accurate Reading

To check blood pressure at home, you need a traditional blood pressure monitor with a cuff for your upper arm. Although there are gadgets that use your wrist, they aren't as accurate.

Familiarize yourself with the monitor instructions and follow them. If you're anxious or nervous about taking a measurement, try putting the cuff on your arm and sitting with it for a while, without inflating it. Get comfortable with the equipment and the process. And then, take a few measurements on different days, at different times of day.

Once you feel relaxed about checking your pressure, check it at the same time of day for a few days, taking two or three readings each time, about a minute apart, and keep a record. You will see your actual blood pressure. If it's higher than 120/80 mm Hg, it's above normal.

## Insulin and Blood Pressure

Elevated insulin drives up blood pressure. I see this in 80 percent of my patients with hypertension, but it isn't recognized or addressed in today's typical treatment, despite evidence that has existed in medical journals for decades.

For example, a study at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio that tracked more than 1,000 people, for 7

years, concluded that "increased fasting insulin concentration predicts hypertension." It was published in 1996.<sup>2</sup> This isn't an isolated study; others have drawn similar conclusions.

If you've been reading this newsletter for a while, you may recall that I've been talking about insulin for years. And the diet I recommend corrects the problem.

Insulin rises when we eat sugar and carbs. When we eat too many of these, for too many years, insulin stays elevated. A rise in blood pressure follows, along with risk for diabetes. This unhealthy path to disease can be stopped, and usually reversed, with a diet of whole foods that are low in carbs. The earlier newsletter issues that give details about what to eat are listed on page 6: *Related to This Topic*. I hope you take a look at them.

## Stress and Blood Pressure

I've found that about 20 percent of my patients' high blood pressure comes from stress. Some know, all too well, what is triggering stress in their life, such as a relationship, job, or some other type of situation. And there may be changes that they need to make. At other times, the stress triggers aren't obvious or seem impossible to change — traffic jams on the way to work, for example.

The sensation of stress stems from the way we react to things, and it's possible to learn to reduce stress by changing our reactions. On page 8, I cover some ways that my patients have succeeded in lowering their blood pressure by identifying and overcoming their personal stress triggers.

Dr. Marlene's

## NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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## Inflammation

A poor diet is often an underlying cause of inflammation, but sometimes, a persistent infection can be the problem. Dental infections, sinus infections, and urinary tract infections are the most common ones I see.

An infection in one part of the body generates inflammation in the whole body and can be the reason blood pressure won't drop. In such cases, that infection needs to be effectively treated.

## Essential Potassium

We constantly hear about the need to reduce sodium for healthy blood pressure, but this omits the other, essential half of the picture. The key is a balance of sodium and potassium, because these two minerals work together in regulating fluid and blood pressure. And the ratio between the two is way off in today's diets: too much sodium and too little potassium.

In societies where only 1 percent of the people have high blood pressure, their natural diets contain between 4 and 14 times as much potassium as sodium. In today's Western diets, where more than 30 percent of people have high blood pressure, the ratio of sodium to potassium tips in the opposite direction: we eat up to 5 times as much sodium as potassium.<sup>3</sup>

What causes this huge imbalance? In the societies where hypertension is almost unheard of, there is no processed food, and diets are rich in vegetables, fruits, and other fresh foods. If you're trying to lower blood pressure naturally or to keep it in a healthy range, eating a diet of fresh food is the way to go.

You can't get enough potassium from supplements, which typically don't contain more than 99 mg per serving. This limited dosage, which can be helpful, is a precaution, as high-dose potassium supplements can be toxic, especially for people who take certain medications or have kidney disease.

## Healthy Nitrates

Nitrates are compounds that are added to cured meats as preservatives, where they are not good for you. However, nitrates are also found in many plant foods, and these can help to control your blood pressure. Your body uses nitrates to make nitric oxide, a gas that dilates blood vessels, helping them to relax and lowering blood pressure.

The reaction that triggers nitric oxide production occurs while nitrates are in your mouth and when a nitrate-rich food (or beverage) reaches your stomach. Studies have found that beet juice and beets, which are naturally high in nitrates, are effective in significantly lowering blood pressure; the juice is the most widely studied.<sup>4</sup>

Celery is another star for lowering blood pressure. In addition to lowering blood pressure, research shows that it helps to normalize insulin and blood sugar and to reduce inflammation in arteries — the leading cause of heart disease.<sup>5</sup>

If you're trying to lower blood sugar or insulin, I recommend celery because it's lower in carbs than beets. I've found that celery juice is especially effective for lowering blood pressure.

The only possible downside of celery is that compared to other

vegetables, it is relatively high in sodium. One medium stalk of celery contains about 30 mg of sodium, whereas many vegetables contain almost none. One cup of celery juice contains about 215 mg of sodium. This is still low compared to processed food.

In supplements, you can find extracts or concentrates of beets and other nitrate-rich food sources. These can be helpful but they don't replace the need for real vegetables.

## Essential Magnesium

Magnesium is essential for enabling arteries and muscles to relax, for a healthy heart rhythm, and for overall health. Studies with

### How to Get Enough Potassium

We need between 2,500 mg and 4,700 mg of potassium daily from our diets. Beans, squash, potatoes, and bananas are rich in potassium, but they are also high in carbs. This doesn't mean you shouldn't eat them, but go easy.

To keep things simple, I recommend focusing on eating plenty of fresh, non-starchy vegetables. These are some good low-carb options to incorporate into your meals or snacks, and their potassium content:

- ½ an avocado: 487 mg
- 1 cup frozen spinach: 540 mg
- 1 cup coconut water: 600 mg
- 1 cup cooked Swiss chard: 961 mg
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste (without added sugar): 486 mg



I'm not suggesting that you eat tomato paste by the spoonful, but you can add it to sauces or veggie dips for a potassium boost.



nearly 1,200 people show that it has a significant effect in reducing blood pressure.<sup>6</sup>

Most people don't get enough magnesium. As with potassium, your intake of magnesium from food will be higher if you eat a diet of fresh foods, but I find that most people also need magnesium supplements.

I recommend taking about 300 mg daily, but it's vital to break it up into several servings. Your body can absorb about 50 mg to 60 mg well at one time; more than that will not be efficiently absorbed. Adding a magnesium powder to water and drinking it throughout the day is a good way to go.

Taking more magnesium than you can absorb can cause diarrhea. If that happens, take less, or try taking a bath in Epsom salts, which contain magnesium that is absorbed through your skin.

### Green Tea or Extract

I routinely recommend green tea as a daily drink to my patients. It's a healthy alternative to soda or other sugary drinks. If you prefer, you can sweeten your green tea with stevia. Studies with nearly 1,700 people found that it is effective in lowering blood pressure in people of all ages and that it reduces the incidence of and death from heart disease.<sup>7</sup>

Green tea balances various natural chemicals in your body that regulate the constriction and dilation of blood vessels. It also enhances production of nitric oxide.

I recommend drinking 3 to 5 cups of green tea daily. If you prefer to take a supplement, look for green tea extract with 80 mg to 160 mg of EGCG (epigallocatechin gallate), an active component in

the tea. The amount of EGCG will be listed in the Supplement Facts.

### The Blue in Blueberries

Anthocyanins are a group of health-promoting plant nutrients that give blueberries and other plant foods their vibrant colors. Raspberries and blackcurrants contain similar amounts of anthocyanins but have not received as much attention as blueberries for their health benefits.

Anthocyanins reduce natural substances in your body that constrict blood vessels. They also increase your nitric oxide production. Studies show that the fresh berries, extracts, and juices made from them all help to reduce blood pressure.<sup>8</sup> One study found that eating blueberries daily positively influenced the expression of 608 genes and enhanced immune function and cellular health, in addition to reducing blood pressure.<sup>9</sup>

In supplements, anthocyanins are often found in bilberry, blueberry, or other food extracts that are included in formulas. For individual anthocyanin supplements, look for products with 40 mg to 80 mg of anthocyanins listed in the Supplement Facts.

### Grape Seed Extract

Many studies have found that grape seed extract reduces blood pressure. A review of studies with a total of 810 people found this: The extract was effective in lowering both prehypertension, meaning slightly elevated blood pressure (120–129 mm in the top number, or systolic pressure, and less than 80 mm Hg in the bottom number, or diastolic pressure), and hypertension, meaning blood

pressure that's higher than that. And when blood pressure was in a healthy range, the supplement helped to prevent it from rising.<sup>10</sup>

Grape seed extract reduces the viscosity — stickiness that makes it harder for blood to flow freely — and it increases circulation. It is also an antioxidant that protects cells against DNA damage.

Another review of research looked at 50 trials for evidence of other health benefits. It found that grape seed extract can reduce levels of fasting blood sugar, cholesterol, triglycerides, and C-reactive protein, a marker of inflammation.<sup>11</sup>

One recent study tested a patented grape seed extract (Enovita) and found that as well as reducing blood pressure, the supplement relieved perceived stress. Enovita grape seed extract is

### Top Vegetable Sources of Nitrates

These are vegetables rich in nitrates, starting with the highest nitrate content at the top of the list.



Arugula	Beet greens
Green spinach	Kohlrabi
Celery	Swiss chard
Radish	Leaf chicory
Butter leaf lettuce	Beetroot
Bok choy	Mustard greens
Lettuce	Curly kale
	Broccoli rabe

### Nitrate-Rich Herbs and Spices

Coriander	Parsley
Basil	

Nitrates are naturally present in most vegetables, so I'm not suggesting that you eat only the vegetables above. But I do suggest including a variety of these in your diet.

an ingredient in some supplements and is listed by name in the Supplement Facts. In the study, the effective dose was 300 mg daily.<sup>12</sup>

## Garlic

Garlic and garlic supplements effectively lower blood pressure. According to a review of studies with more than 500 people, garlic supplements reduced the top blood-pressure number by an average of about 8.7 mm Hg, and the bottom number by an average of 5.5 mm Hg. This degree of drop is believed to reduce the odds of damage to the heart by 16 to 40 percent.<sup>13</sup>

The main active ingredient in garlic, allicin, is released when garlic is chewed or crushed. Allicin is also the substance that gives garlic its telltale odor.

For health benefits, you can eat one clove of garlic daily, which is estimated to contain between 5 mg (5,000 mcg) and 18 mg (18,000 mcg) of allicin. If you prefer to take a supplement, I recommend looking for a product that lists the amount of allicin in the Supplement Facts — usually specified in micrograms (mcg). Studies have tested between 7 mg (7,000 mcg) and 31 mg (31,000 mcg) of allicin.

## L-Arginine

L-arginine is an amino acid that, like all amino acids, is a building block of protein. In addition, it helps to lower blood pressure because it increases production of nitric oxide, thereby widening blood vessels and improving blood flow. According to a review of studies with a total of 387 people, it lowered systolic blood pressure by an average of

5.39 mm Hg, and diastolic blood pressure by 2.66 mm Hg.<sup>14</sup>

## Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10)

More than a decade ago, studies with more than 300 people found that CoQ10 significantly lowered blood pressure.<sup>15</sup> But in more recent research, the decreases in blood pressure have been small, and there was no decrease in some situations.

In my practice, I've found that CoQ10 is helpful for blood pressure, but that's not the only reason I recommend it to patients. The biggest body of research with CoQ10 has looked at its effect on heart failure. And there is clear evidence that it is very beneficial for the heart, reducing hospitalizations in people with heart failure, reducing complications, improving quality of life, and reducing deaths.<sup>16</sup>

This makes sense because CoQ10 is an essential nutrient for

mitochondria, the components of all cells that generate energy. Without enough CoQ10, the mitochondria cannot produce enough energy to efficiently keep the heart beating and to support all the other processes within the human body.

Elevated blood pressure puts more stress on the heart. Nutrients that help the heart to work more efficiently, such as CoQ10, enhance heart health and overall well-being.

CoQ10 levels decline as we get older, just when we need it most, and CoQ10-rich foods — organ meats are the best sources — are generally not part of our usual diets. To make matters worse, statin drugs deplete CoQ10.

I recommend taking 100 mg of CoQ10 daily for anyone who is middle-aged or older. If you take a statin drug, take 200 mg daily.

## Hawthorn

Extracted from the leaves, flowers, or berries of a bush that is in

### About Dr. Marlene

Dr. Marlene Merritt's passion for natural medicine is fueled by her drive to help others, and her own experience of overcoming a debilitating heart condition, diagnosed at the age of 20. A competitive cross-country cyclist at the time, she suddenly began experiencing severe chest pains. Forced to quit the sport, she suffered from extreme fatigue and constant pain for another 15 years, despite doing everything that conventional, Western medical doctors told her to do.

And then, the tide turned. A physician trained in naturopathic healing recommended a whole-food vitamin E supplement. A week after starting the supplement regimen, her energy began to return, and the pain began to disappear.

Dr. Marlene is a Doctor of Oriental Medicine, has a Master's in Nutrition, and is an Applied Clinical Nutritionist. She is Board Certified in Bariatric Counseling, and certified in the Bredesen MEND Protocol,<sup>™</sup> a groundbreaking method of reversing Alzheimer's disease. She sees patients at the Merritt Wellness Centers in Austin, Texas, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, trains health practitioners nationwide, and is the author of *Smart Blood Sugar* and *The Blood Pressure Solution*.



the rose family, hawthorn helps to lower blood pressure and strengthen the heart, so that it can pump more blood with each beat. Although the exact mechanism is unknown, it is believed that hawthorn increases blood flow to the heart and may help to dilate blood vessels.<sup>17</sup>

A recent review of studies with a total of 254 people found that hawthorn lowered blood pressure that was elevated in most people.<sup>18</sup> Dosages vary, depending upon how an extract is produced.

### Other Helpful Supplements

A lack of vitamin D and omega-3 fats promotes higher, unhealthy levels of inflammation that is bad for your heart and overall health. I suggest taking 1,000 mg of fish oil for omega-3s, and 5,000 IU (125 mg) of vitamin D with vitamin K2. Because vitamin D increases absorption of calcium, vitamin K2 is vital to ensure that calcium is used by your bones and doesn't get deposited in arteries.

Another helpful nutrient, rutin, is one I suggest looking for in formulas for blood pressure or heart health. It helps to regulate blood pressure and blood clotting, and to heal the lining of arteries.

### A Final Word

I can't emphasize enough how vital it is to eat a diet with plenty of fresh foods that is low enough in carbs to keep your levels of insulin and blood sugar in check. And if stress or inflammation are issues, these need to be addressed.

You can start taking supplements while working to improve these things, but don't use them as a substitute. Realistically, it can take a few weeks or a few months for levels of blood pressure to drop, so be patient.

Sometimes, patients start taking the supplements and then tell me they "don't work." When I put on my detective hat to find out what else is going on, I inevitably

find that their carb intake is higher than they can tolerate or there's unhandled stress or inflammation.

In looking at all the supplements I've covered, try to include food sources where possible, such as green tea and blueberries. For supplements, formulas that include food extracts and nutrients that you can't get from your diet, such as grape seed extract and CoQ10, can help to keep things simple.

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### Related to This Topic

These are some earlier issues of this newsletter that address related topics:

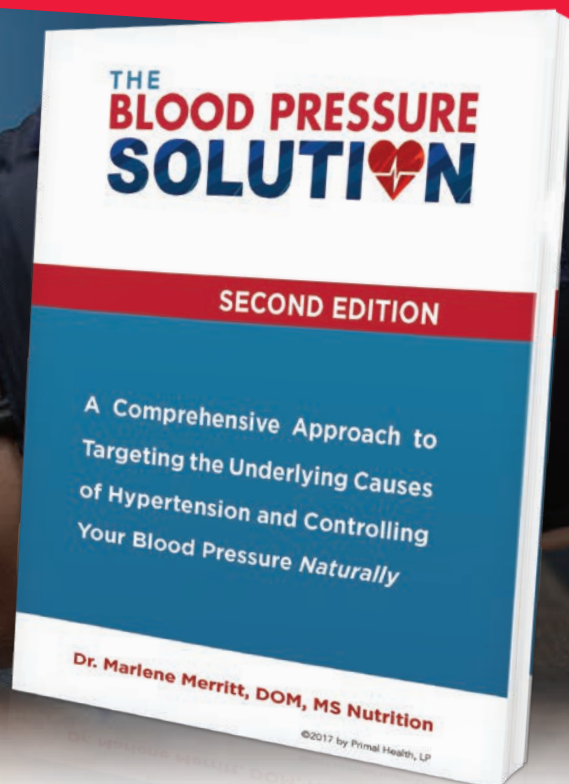
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Healthy Meat	3	2	The Diabetic's Guide to Eating Meat
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# Get Dr. Marlene's Best-Selling Book... **Blood Pressure Solution!**



**Dr. Marlene has been sounding the alarm about dangerous blood pressure drugs for the last 15 years — and offering a safe, natural alternative.**

She has worked with hundreds of patients who were suffering high blood pressure—many were taking two, three, even four medications and going through awful side effects...

Just like Kathleen Kelly, whose ankles swelled up from the prescription blood pressure drugs she was taking. She also suffered an awful cough from using Lisinopril. By the time she read Dr. Marlene's best-selling book, **Blood Pressure Solution**, Kathleen's doctor had her on three blood pressure medicines combined—and her blood pressure was still high!

"My patients are always surprised to see how easy it is to use my natural Blood Pressure Solution," said Dr. Marlene. "The diet is not restrictive. Many of the foods you thought were taboo are perfectly ok—like steak is ok, butter is ok, natural sea salt is ok, even several carb foods are good. Part of the solution is to get good fats into your diet."

After reading **Blood Pressure Solution**, Kathleen made simple lifestyle changes found in the book and began to see immediate results...

***"My blood pressure came down right away...I just feel great. I'm ecstatic. I go around telling everybody I found the fountain of youth. I have much more energy now. My concentration and focus are better. I can walk around my block without getting winded anymore. I am 100% off my medication."***

Did you see that? Kathleen reports she is 100% off her medications. And so can you!

Yes! You too can be off these anti-hypertensive drugs... maintain blood pressure in the normal range... and feel good again!

Dr. Marlene Merritt's **Blood Pressure Solution** is working for people all across America. And she believes it can work for you, too. Here's how...

Dr. Marlene originally developed her unique solution for her patients at the Merritt Wellness Center in Austin, Texas. And after seeing just how successful it was for people in her own community—she decided to put her entire natural solution, with step-by-step guidance, into an easy-to-use book called, **Blood Pressure Solution**.

This is a comprehensive approach to targeting the underlying causes of hypertension and controlling your blood pressure naturally.

Dr. Marlene's book has been sweeping the country with over 330,000 copies sold in the U.S., and even 32,000 copies shipped overseas.

So, are you ready to bring your blood pressure back to the normal range? Gain more energy? Drop a few unwanted pounds? And feel better than you have in years, just as Kathleen did?

Great! Get your copy of Dr. Marlene's best-selling book, **Blood Pressure Solution** today! Go to the website listed below, and you'll see a complete review of the book, watch videos from people just like Kathleen and order your copy of **Blood Pressure Solution**!

**Get Your Copy Today! Go To:**  
**[www.PrimalLabs.com/BPS](http://www.PrimalLabs.com/BPS)**

# How to Conquer Hidden Stress

One of my patients really wanted to retire and pursue personal interests that she deeply cared about. Money wasn't a barrier, but she was reluctant to make the change.

She had always enjoyed her career, but now, as she kept working, her job became less and less satisfying and somewhat frustrating — irritating, at times. Eventually, the situation became stressful enough to raise her blood pressure.

Once she made the decision to retire and follow her new goals, her blood pressure magically dropped. But the effects of stress on blood pressure are not always that clear-cut.

## Monitoring Stress

In other situations, stress triggers may be more subtle and difficult to identify. Or maybe you take stress for granted — in traffic jams during a daily commute, for example.

Many things in our daily lives can be stressful. How stressful they are to an individual depends upon how the situation is perceived — it's really a subjective reaction to different things in our lives. Some people thrive in a high-paced job, while others would find it overwhelming, and their stress levels skyrocket at the thought.

If you can identify your own stress triggers, then it's possible to learn how to reduce their stressful effects. Breathing exercises can be a simple way — breathing in for 5 seconds and out for 5 seconds, for example, and repeating this a few times. But sometimes, stress

triggers are hard to see, or they seem unavoidable.

## Heart Rate Variability Indicates Stress Levels

Heart rate variability, or HRV, is becoming a popular indicator of stress, and tracking it can help you learn how to manage stress more effectively. HRV is not the same as your heart rate. You can't measure HRV by putting your finger on your pulse, but you can track it with many of today's smartwatches and other digital devices.

HRV is a measure of the time between each heartbeat, which fluctuates from minute to minute in a healthy person. HRV is controlled by the autonomic nervous system, the part of the nervous system that regulates heartbeat, breathing, and blood pressure, among other things. And research has shown that HRV is a valid indicator of stress levels.<sup>1</sup>

## Helpful Devices and Apps

Until the last few years, the only way to track HRV was with an EKG in a doctor's office or, in your daily life, by wearing a chest strap with electrodes like the ones used by doctors. Now, smartwatches made by Apple, Samsung, and other companies, and wrist-worn fitness trackers, such as Fitbit, can monitor HRV. And various apps offer guidance on how to use HRV measurements to learn better stress management.

I've found that among my patients with elevated blood pressure, stress plays a role in



about one in five cases, and the stress triggers may be hidden or difficult to deal with. And then, monitoring HRV and learning to control it can be an effective way to lower blood pressure.

Some of my patients have successfully lowered their stress-related high blood pressure by using a device made by HeartMath ([www.heartmath.com](http://www.heartmath.com)). You connect the device to a computer or smartphone and use it with an app for short periods — say, five minutes. It helps you learn how to lower stress.

By practicing stress-lowering techniques with the device, such as deep breathing, you train yourself to recognize and consciously lower stress in daily life.

Smartwatches and fitness trackers that are worn on the wrist can track HRV patterns continually during the day and night, or take readings at certain times. And then, you can make changes in your routine — getting more sleep or exercising more, for example — and see what improves your HRV.

Controlling blood pressure is only one possible reason for better stress management. In addition, lowering stress can enhance your overall health and well-being.

1 Costin, R., et al. "Mental stress detection using heart rate variability and morphologic variability of EeG signals." IEEE: 2012 International Conference and Exposition on Electrical and Power Engineering, 2012:591-596.



# Best Shoes to Reduce Knee Pain

If your knees hurt when you walk, a different pair of shoes could help, according to research led by a foot doctor in Australia. Over the years, there has been some uncertainty about the best types of shoes for people with osteoarthritis in the knee, and this latest research found some answers.<sup>1</sup>

The study was done on 164 people with moderate to severe osteoarthritis of the knee. For six months, two types of shoes were tested. Half the study participants wore one type of shoe while the other half wore a different type. Both types of shoes were worn for at least six hours daily during the trial.

The two types of shoes were what researchers called “stable supportive” and “flat flexible” (see images and descriptions). Each study participant chose a specific pair from a variety of options in each category.

After shoes were worn for six months, researchers evaluated pain scores — a rating of pain on a scale of 1 to 11 by each participant — and found that pain in the knees and hip muscles decreased significantly in the group wearing the supportive shoes, but not in the other group.

## Lessons Learned

If you have pain or discomfort in your knees or hips, it makes sense to wear shoes that put less stress on these joints. And if you don’t have knee or hip pain, wearing the right shoes can help you stay active in comfort.

An earlier study by the same research group found that people with knee problems often wore shoes that were over three years old, with significant signs of wear and tear. And these old shoes did not provide good support.

We all know that going for a walk each day is a good way to enhance all aspects of your health. The right shoes can help you stay in shape to keep walking.

## Two Types of Shoes that Were Studied

These types of shoes, called “stable supportive” by researchers, proved to help

reduce knee and hip pain in people with osteoarthritis. Compared to the shoes below, they have a thicker heel and a more rigid sole, and they provide arch support.



These types of shoes, called “flat flexible” by researchers, were not effective in reducing knee pain. They have a thinner, more flexible sole and do not provide arch support.

# Your Gut and Diabetes

If you don’t have a diverse composition of bacteria in your gut, your body is less sensitive to insulin. I’ve seen this for years in my practice, and a recent European study helps to explain why. This is important because poor sensitivity to insulin — insulin resistance — is the major factor that increases risk for diabetes and enables

progression of the disease.

The study, which looked at 1,990 people, found that lack of diversity of bacteria in the intestines increases production of a substance called imidazole propionate, which blocks the ability of insulin to lower blood sugar.<sup>2</sup> As a result, it contributes to insulin resistance.

Eating a diet of processed food disrupts the balance of microbes in the gut. In contrast, fiber in vegetables feeds beneficial bacteria in the intestines and promotes diversity. And fermented foods, such as sauerkraut, other fermented vegetables, and cultured yogurt, increase and help maintain a variety of good gut bacteria.

1 Paterson, K.L., et al. “The Effect of Flat Flexible Versus Stable Supportive Shoes on Knee Osteoarthritis Symptoms: A Randomized Trial.” *Ann Intern Med.* 2021 Apr;174(4):462-471. 2 Molinaro, A., et al. “Imidazole propionate is increased in diabetes and associated with dietary patterns and altered microbial ecology.” *Nat Commun.* 2020 Nov 18;11(1):5881.

## Two Nutrition Myths Busted

Recent research by the International Food Information Council,<sup>1</sup> a nonprofit educational organization, has found some nutritional myths that I often run into with new patients. So, I thought I should share the facts with you.

**Myth #1:** Fortified food is healthy. Fortification means that vitamins or minerals are added to a processed food product; those nutrients are not naturally present in the ingredients in that product.

Nutritionally, the effect is much like taking a pill that contains synthetic vitamins. But because of the added synthetic nutrients, product labeling or advertising can make the food seem healthier than it really is.

Fortified cereals, for example, can be made with refined grains and loaded with sugar, and fortified juices are often high in sugar. And fortified foods of any type may contain chemical additives.

Consider this: If a food is really nutritious, why would it need to have synthetic vitamins added to it? Whole, fresh food is a better option.

**Myth #2:** Total and added sugars are *the* things to look for on food labels and avoid. Yes, sugar should be avoided. But it isn't the only thing to check on labels. "Total carbohydrates" is an equally important label item.

Added sugar and natural sugar are types of carbohydrates. Other carbohydrates are found in starchy ingredients: wheat, rice, and corn,

for example. Additional, isolated starches, such as potato starch or corn starch, can also be added to processed foods.

To be clear, I am not defending sugar. But what many people overlook is that in your body, all types of carbohydrates are treated in the same way. And an overload of carbohydrates is harmful because it raises insulin and blood sugar, disturbs healthy metabolism, and sets the stage for diabetes and other diseases.

Deciphering food labels can be tricky. The simplest way to avoid any label confusion is to buy food that doesn't come in packages, such as real vegetables, meat, and fish. But when you do buy packaged food, "total carbohydrates" is the first item I suggest checking in the Nutrition Facts.

## Are You Getting Out and About?

Vaccines and lower rates of COVID-19 infection in many parts of the country have opened the doors to many activities that pandemic lockdowns had stopped. But not everyone is taking advantage of the opportunities.

A recent survey of more than 1,000 American adults by Invisibly,<sup>2</sup> a research company, found that women are less likely to go out and do things than men. And among all those surveyed, this is how many were willing to do different activities:

- Get a haircut: 63.5%
- Go to the dentist: 61%
- Eat at a restaurant: 55%
- Return to work in an office: 55%
- Go to the gym: 47%

As you may know if you've been reading this newsletter for a while, I'm all for precautions to stop the spread of infection, including wearing masks, social distancing, and getting vaccinated. And in case you're wondering, my husband and I got our vaccine shots as soon as we were eligible.

In other words, I am not suggesting that you throw caution to the wind. Quite the contrary. However, if you've been vaccinated and are following public health recommendations for masking and social distancing, do get out and do things.

The safest activities are outdoors. Take a walk every day, and check out interesting outdoor venues to visit, such as local parks and gardens.

If you have a tooth that needs attention and you're reluctant to visit your dentist, call the dental office and ask some questions. Have the staff been vaccinated? What safety protocols are in place? And then decide what's best for you to do.

For other indoor activities, I'm not suggesting that you push yourself beyond your own comfort level. But I do encourage you to stay well informed about public health recommendations and to get out and do those things you feel are safe for you. It will make you feel better — and that's good for your health.

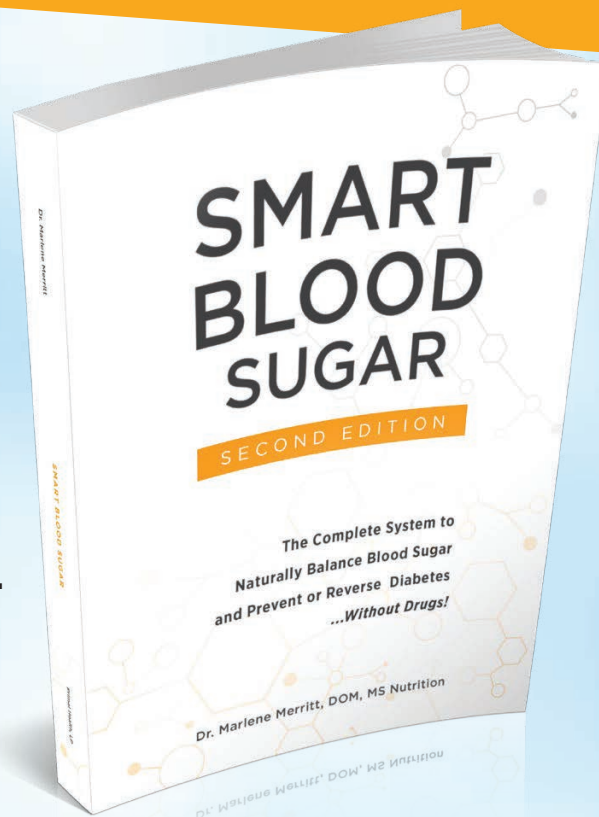
<sup>1</sup> [www.foodinsight.org](http://www.foodinsight.org) <sup>2</sup> [www.invisibly.com](http://www.invisibly.com)

# Dr. Marlene Discovers “Insulin Switch” That Stops Blood Sugar Spikes



This blood sugar “switch” is built into every cell of the body and, when it is flipped “ON”...

- Blood sugar returns to the healthy range
- Weight is shed from belly, neck, arms, and thighs
- Energy levels return to normal
- Sleep becomes easy again



Dr. Marlene has been helping people repair their blood sugar for the last 15 years.

Just like Arthur Mabee, who was suffering from high blood sugar. His insulin levels were so high, the blood vessels in his eyes began bursting. He was severely overweight and suffering from heart problems. Arthur's doctor wanted to put him on Metformin...

That's when Arthur discovered Dr. Marlene's best-selling book, **Smart Blood Sugar**. “I said, ‘Well, I’m going to order this book because this doctor knows exactly what she’s talking about,’” Arthur explained.

In just three days of using Dr. Marlene's **Smart Blood Sugar** program, Arthur began to feel changes in his body. He gained more energy, his memory improved, he began sleeping 8 to 12 hours per night—and best of all—he lost 118 pounds since reading the book.

*“I’ve improved my health 190%... I no longer have diabetes. I no longer have a pre-diabetic condition,” shared Arthur. “My eyes have even cleared up. This has definitely helped me more than anything I’ve ever done in my life.”*



Did you see that? Arthur no longer has diabetes. And so can you! Yes—it is possible to reverse type 2 diabetes and maintain blood sugar in the normal range.

Dr. Marlene's **Smart Blood Sugar** is working for people all across America. And she believes it can work for you, too. Here's how...

This simple plan works by doing a few simple things that bring blood sugar down while stopping a few things that have been pushing blood sugar up. It's a combination of these two actions that make the protocol work so well.

Dr. Marlene's **Smart Blood Sugar** has become a best-selling book because it cuts through all the confusing and contradictory information and zeros in on the exact steps to take right now to heal your blood sugar.

In this easy-to-read, 100-page book, you will find step-by-step guidance, easy tools, and dozens of tips on how to maintain healthy blood sugar levels and repair insulin resistance without wasting a lot of time or money.

“Get this book, sit down, and do the same thing I did. Read it word for word,” Arthur shares with others. “**Smart Blood Sugar** will help you greatly.”

It's time to bring your blood sugar back in the healthy range. Get your copy of Dr. Marlene's best-selling book, **Smart Blood Sugar**, today for only \$27!

**Order Your Copy Today!**  
**[www.SmartBloodSugar.com/Book](http://www.SmartBloodSugar.com/Book)**





# Q&A

**Q: What else can I eat for breakfast besides eggs and bacon?**

— Paul N.

**A:** There are a million ways to eat breakfast. When I travel, the concept of breakfast varies wildly: cold fish and hot miso soup in Japan; thin brown bread, sliced cheese, and deli meats with coffee in Germany; or salad with eggs and pico de gallo in Mexico.

These different types of breakfasts stem from cultural traditions. And those traditions are based on which foods were available, historically, and gained popularity in different parts of the world.

In this country, marketing has also played a role in determining which foods we associate with breakfast. As an example, the combination of bacon and eggs was popularized in the 1920s by a marketing expert of that era, who was hired by a pork producer to sell pork. Bacon was a practical option because the curing process helps to preserve the meat — an important feature before homes had refrigerators.

In the decades since then, breakfast foods have been marketed more and more intensely, which is how sugary cereal came to be mistakenly viewed as a nutritious start to the day.

There isn't any physiological reason to eat a particular food for breakfast. Just watch out for excess carbs, processed foods, and added sugar. Any combination of some

protein, healthy fat, and vegetables can be a healthy breakfast. One convenient approach is to make a dinner with extra vegetables and fish or meat the day before and have leftovers for breakfast.

This may seem like a strange thing to eat in the morning, at first, but many of my patients enjoy this approach and develop their own ways of customizing leftovers. They might heat up leftovers and add some tomatoes or avocado on the side. Or wilt some fresh spinach in a frying pan and add the leftovers to heat them in the same pan. And some leftovers taste good cold.

From the time we were kids, we've developed tastes for eating certain foods for specific meals. But we can develop new tastes and habits. If we don't limit the choices for breakfast and think in terms of fresh, nutritious foods, there are many options.

**Q: You recommend taking a multivitamin with food concentrates, and about 100 percent of the daily recommended amount of each vitamin, not higher doses. I've seen some products that seem to fit the bill but have much higher amounts of vitamin D and vitamin B12. Are these okay to take?** — Sandra S.

**A:** If you aren't taking extra vitamin D and vitamin B12, in separate supplements, the higher doses of these vitamins in a multi are a good thing. But I do have a caution about vitamin D.

With a higher dose of vitamin D, you also need to take vitamin K2. Vitamin D increases absorption of calcium. More vitamin D means more calcium is absorbed, and

then there is a risk that some of the calcium may get deposited in your arteries instead of your bones.

Vitamin K2 acts like a traffic cop for the calcium. It directs the calcium to your bones and helps to keep it out of arteries.

There are multivitamins that include vitamin K2. If you choose a product with extra vitamin D but not K2, I suggest taking one daily serving of an additional supplement of vitamin K2.

For vitamin B12, a higher dose may be good because B12 levels generally drop as we get older, partially because the digestive system doesn't absorb it as well in later years. And B12 is important for healthy nerves, a healthy brain, and overall health.

You may also want to check an earlier issue of this newsletter, where I cover multivitamins in more detail: Volume 2, Issue 8, *Do You Really Need a Multivitamin?*

## Do you have a question for Dr. Marlene?

Send your health-related questions to [drmarlene@naturalhealthconnections.com](mailto:drmarlene@naturalhealthconnections.com). Please include your first name and the initial of your last name. Although she cannot answer each question directly, Dr. Marlene will select a few in each newsletter and will address other questions and concerns in articles in future issues. Answers are intended for educational purposes only and should not be viewed as medical advice. If you need help with your subscription or have questions about Primal Health supplements, email [support@primalhealthlp.com](mailto:support@primalhealthlp.com) or call 877-300-7849.