

Mental health and wellbeing

Nutrition Support Action Plan (NSAP) for case managers/key workers – high blood pressure (hypertension)

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the pressure of the blood in the arteries as the heart pumps it around the body.

What's wrong with high blood pressure?

High blood pressure (hypertension) can cause serious problems like heart attack, stroke, heart failure or kidney disease.

What can my consumer do if they have high blood pressure?

Although many people with high blood pressure need ongoing medication, lifestyle changes can help. A healthy eating pattern that is low in salt can help to control hypertension.

Diet changes they can follow include....

- eating more fruit and vegetables
- eating more legumes
- eating low fat dairy products

How can my consumer eat less salt?

- By eating plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables
- By choosing foods normally processed without salt and foods labelled 'no added salt', 'low salt', or 'reduced salt'
- By choosing packaged foods carefully. The following is a guide to salt (sodium) in food.
 - Aim for: under 120mg/100g - this is considered as low salt intake
 - Exception: 400mg/100g or less is acceptable for some products, for example, wholegrain bread.
- By avoiding processed foods such as processed meats, commercial sauces, soups, packet seasoning and stock
- By avoiding potato chips/crisps, high salt take-away foods and salted nuts
- By limiting salt when cooking or eating meals. Instead, use flavourings other than salt such as herbs, lemon juice and spices.

What else will help my consumer lower their blood pressure?

- Weight loss: this helps to lower blood pressure and decrease the work the heart must do
- Being active: this helps to regulate weight, appetite, and overall heart health
- Limiting alcohol: this can help to their lower blood pressure, blood fats, body weight and reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Actions for case manager/key worker

1. Check your consumer is taking anti-hypertensive medication, if prescribed.
2. Does your consumer follow a healthy diet? Check with 'NSAP Assessing your consumer's diet'.
3. Does your consumer do enough physical activity? Half an hour most days can be done in bouts of 10 or 15 minutes.
4. Does your consumer need to lose weight? Refer them to the health service's dietitian or an Accredited Practising Dietitian (www.daa.asn.au and search 'Find a Dietitian').
5. Has your consumer had their fasting blood fats tested? This can be done at their local GP surgery.
6. Does your consumer have high blood fats? Follow recommendations above

(that suit your consumer's food preferences).

7. Does your consumer need to reduce their alcohol intake? Refer them to the health service's 'Alcohol & Other Drugs' support service.
8. Does your consumer need to stop smoking? Try Quitline on 137 848.

Need more information?

- Heart Foundation:
www.heartfoundation.org.au
- Refer to your health service's dietitian or an Accredited Practising Dietitian:
www.daa.asn.au (click on 'Find a Dietitian')