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In conjunction with good eating and exercise habits.

"The best way to control high blood pressure is to avoid it in the first place," said Debra Finkelstein of West Bloomfield, a registered dietitian who was recently named Dietitian of the Year by the Michigan Dietetics Association. "The way to do that is to lower the amount of sodium in one's diet."

It sounds simple enough, but the fact is that as salt-loving Americans, we consume 10 to 15 times more sodium per day than

the 3,000 mg the American Heart Association deems acceptable. Besides the sodium which occurs naturally in food, we are a population with a penchant for fast and processed foods and hands which reach almost reflexively for the salt shaker when we sit down to meals.

"Why do we love salt so much? "It's an acquired taste," said Finkelstein who works at the Women's Health and Wellness Center in Farmington Hills. "Working moms, for example, depend on such childhood staples as macaroni and cheese, processed

cheese and meats, fast foods, without realizing how alarmingly high in sodium these foods are."

Kids learn to love salt early and continue to seek that flavor as they get older. It is a problem, however, that can be remedied quite easily.

"Cut back on salt gradually and learn to use other natural flavor enhancers like herb mixtures and lemon juice," said Finkelstein. "The truth is cutting back on salt let's you experience the natural flavors of food."

Also, the American Heart Association recommends losing weight. Typically an elevated blood pressure comes down significantly when a person loses weight.

Although people think of the salt shaker as the main culprit in high blood pressure, the fact is that processed foods pose an even greater pitfall.

"Canned vegetables and soups, processed cheese, things we typically think of as healthy are in fact laden with salt," said Dr. Muriel Wagner, a registered dietitian with a Southfield practice.

"Even frozen vegetables are packaged with added salt."

Salt is inexpensive, freezes well and gives people a taste they like so manufacturers use it. It is therefore up to the consumer to be wary and read labels.

"Stay away from foods which list more than 140 mg. of sodium per serving on the food label," said Wagner. There are so many wonderful low sodium alternatives on the market today that lowering one's sodium doesn't have to make a person feel compromised.

For example Wagner brings along a bottle of low sodium soy sauce when she goes out for Chinese food. "I ask the cook to prepare my meal with it. There really are simple solutions if you plan ahead," she says.

Finally, every diet needs to incorporate a wide variety of tasty and healthful foods. Low salt doesn't mean low taste. In fact, with a little creativity, those with high blood pressure can learn to eliminate salt and still eat a diet that is rich in flavor and nutrition.

Low-fat, low cholesterol dishes full of flavor

See related story — "Shake Salt Habit," on Taste front. Recipes are from the "American Heart Association Low-Fat, Low Cholesterol Cookbook."

Mix ingredients gently. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for up to six months. Use seasoning in casseroles, stews or fresh vegetable dishes.

1/2 teaspoon lemon rind, *gated* (optional)

Combine all ingredients in medium bowl. Toss gently with spoon until well blended. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dry, dark place for up to six months.

Use this mix with fish, chicken or turkey dishes.

CHICKEN WITH MUSTARD AND HERBS

4 boneless chicken breasts, about 4 ounces each, skinned, all visible fat removed
1 tablespoon herb seasoning
1 teaspoon lemon pepper seasoning

1 teaspoon vegetable oil
1/4 cup spicy brown mustard

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Place chicken breasts in a baking pan. Mix remaining ingredients together to make a paste. Thickly and evenly spread it over the top of each chicken breast. Bake 20 minutes, or just until meat has turned white throughout. Serves 4.

Recipe contains 174 calories, 235 mg. sodium.

SUMMER PASTA SALAD

1 1/2 cups broccoli florets
1 1/2 cup sliced carrots
3 cups cooked pasta spirals
1 1/2 cups sliced zucchini
1/4 cup plain non-fat yogurt

1/4 cup cider vinegar
2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Cook pasta omitting salt. Drain, rinse under cold water and set aside. In small bowl mix yogurt, vinegar, Parmesan cheese, mayonnaise and seasonings. Set aside.

In a large bowl combine pasta, yogurt mixture and vegetables. Mix well. Chill thoroughly and serve cold. Serves 4.

Recipe contains 269 calories, 138 mg. sodium

Quick tips

Here are some quick tips from the American Heart Association.

- Make use of herbs and spices instead of salt.
- Salt can be reduced or eliminated unless the recipe calls for yeast.
- Use reduced or no salt varieties of canned soups, vegetables and other processed foods. Do not add salt to boiling water when cooking pasta, rice, vegetables and cereals.
- Use onion and garlic flakes or powder in lieu of onion and garlic salt.
- Drain and rinse canned tuna, sardines and salmon

Chef Larry shares some of momma's favorite recipes

See Larry Jane's column Taste Buds on Taste front.

baking powder
1 teaspoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 cup lard or 5 tablespoons butter
3/4 cup buttermilk or sour milk
Combine all the dry ingredients

and sift. Cut in lard or butter until crumbly. Add buttermilk and stir just to mix. Do not overmix.
Turn the dough onto a floured board and knead for 1 minute. Cut into circles and place on an ungreased baking sheet. Place in a

preheated 450 degree oven for 10-12 minutes. Makes about 24.

MOMMA'S HOMEMADE POTATO DUMPLINGS

1 1/2 pounds potatoes, boiled and peeled and cooled
1/2 cup fresh bread crumbs
2 eggs, beaten
2 tablespoons milk
2 tablespoons finely minced onion
1/4 cup flour
1 tablespoon chopped fresh or dried parsley
salt and pepper to taste
Grate potatoes on one of those four sided graters. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Taste for

salt and pepper. Form into walnut sized balls and drop into simmering stew, soup or broth.
Cover and cook gently for 16 minutes. Makes about 24.

2 teaspoons baking soda
24 ounces chocolate chips
1 - 8-ounce Hershey bar, grated
3 cups chopped nuts

Mix together the butter with both the sugars until creamy. Add eggs and vanilla and blend well.
Mix flour with oatmeal powder, salt, baking powder and baking soda. Mix well. Combine both mixtures and mix well. Stir in chocolate chips, grated chocolate and nuts.
Roll into balls and place 2-inches apart on a baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes at 375 degrees F. Makes about 10 dozen, depending on the size. Recipe can be halved.

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one from Poland, and the other from Italy, for teaching her how to cook many different ethnic dishes.

Even though Italian was spoken to her since a very early age, she has been formally studying language for four years at Oakland Community College. She is hoping to go to Italy someday to meet and visit her many aunts and uncles who live there.

Gallizzi continues to support her alma mater, St. Joseph's College in Collegeville, Ind., by organizing fund-raising dinners and soliciting donations from alumni as well as other sources.

Thank you Kathy Gallizzi for sharing your recipes with us and congratulations on being a Winner Dinner.

Pineapple biscuits tasty dessert, snack

AP — You can't top these quick-and-easy biscuits, because they top themselves! A glistening pineapple glaze forms during baking, just like on an upside-down cake. Because you start with refrigerated biscuits, you only need one baking dish.
In it, you can heat the glaze in your microwave oven, then bake the biscuits in your conventional oven. Serve them warm for breakfast, brunch, dessert, or a coffee-time snack.

PINEAPPLE UPSIDE-DOWN BISCUITS

2 tablespoons margarine or butter
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
1 tablespoon light corn syrup
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
8 1/4-ounce can pineapple slices, drained, or 13 1/2-

ounce can pineapple tidbits, drained
1 package (10) refrigerated biscuits

In an 8 by 1 1/4-inch round microwave-safe baking dish, cook margarine or butter, uncovered, on 100 percent power (high) for 40 to 60 seconds or until melted. Add brown sugar, corn syrup and cinnamon; stir until sugar is dissolved.

Arrange drained pineapple slices or tidbits in the dish. Separate biscuits; arrange in a single layer atop pineapple. Bake in a 400-degree F oven for 18 to 20 minutes or until biscuits are golden brown. Carefully invert onto a serving plate. Serve warm. Makes 8 servings.
Nutrition information per serving: 221 cal., 7 g fat, 0 mg chol., 2 g pro., 41 g carbs., 0 g fiber, 420 mg sodium. RDA: 10 percent iron, 16 percent thiamine.

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