DR. MICOZZI'S

INSIDERS' CURES

The Insider's Secret to Conquering High Blood Pressure & Protecting Your Heart

How to EASILY defeat America's silent killer and the 9-Step Battle Plan to (permanent) heart health

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Shocking results! Not all is as it seems

In 1976, I was among a small group of U.S. graduate students awarded a scholarship to study in Asia. The scholarship was awarded by the Henry Luce Foundation (Founder of *Time, Life*, and *Fortune* magazines—who had been born in China of U.S. missionaries). Though it was barely one year after the last of the Americans were evacuated by helicopter from the rooftop of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, Vietnam, I decided to conduct my studies in Southeast Asia.

Unlike the other scholars who landed in large urban areas (what demographers call "primate" cities, like Taipei, Bangkok, Jakarta, Singapore, and Manila) I chose to go into the jungles of Mindanao, Philippines, bordering on the Spice Islands of storied history. There, I sought a more authentic encounter with indigenous cultures.

I went to an area called, "*Donde Non Hay Doctor*," or "where there is no doctor." These tens of thousands of islands, as well as the Malayan Peninsula, of Southeast Asia make up a living archaeology of human settlements. The original peoples of the area were pushed into the deep interior of the jungle islands by the arrival thousands of years ago by the Malay peoples of today. During the ancient era, the expansion of Hindu culture, Chinese mercantile influences, and the expansion of Islam turned Southeast Asia into the perfect melting pot to observe traditional healing. Including shamans, herbalists, midwives, and other traditional healers. Pretty good for a place that claims to have no doctor…

My base in Davao represented a rapidly growing population. It was quickly moving from a rural to urban setting, resulting in conflicts among the many different cultures and languages of Southeast Asia. In this environment, school children were rigorously segregated according to their abilities in performance in school.

My goal was to establish standards for normal blood pressure in children. All we knew at that time is that blood pressure is low (and heart rate high) in younger children and blood pressure increases as children age, until reaching the "normal" blood pressure of adulthood, which we say is 120/80.

I gathered the data, class by class. And soon, a pattern became clear. The rate of "higher" blood pressure was much greater among the remedial students in each grade, in each age group. So the students who did poorly in school were the ones with higher blood pressure.

So I started to look for physiological causes for the high blood pressure. Something that might be making the children "sick," that might account for their poor performance in school. But I couldn't figure it out. I couldn't find any physiological reason for these children to have high blood pressure. Nor a connection to their poor performance.

When I returned to the U.S., I mentioned my conundrum to a friend of mine, a neighbor of my parents. He was the Chairman of Physiology at the University of California and an expert on environmental physiology and stress. He was running studies in the "space age" Human Centrifuge Laboratory where they exposed humans to high stress and measured the effects of stress on raising blood pressure. And he was quick to point out the error in my thinking. When I turned my analysis around, I realized that the increased stress of doing poorly in school, and being segregated and treated poorly by the teachers, was responsible for raising blood pressure in these poor students.

Now, it's important to note that back then, "modern" medicine gave very little credence to the role of stress in health (just as it ignored nutrition). So my theory was debated.

Some had suggested that the students with high blood pressure must be drinking water with more salt in it. But while controlling salt intake has an important role in managing high blood pressure, the body is normally able to remove excess salt unless there is a reason for it to hang on to excess fluid and electrolytes (like salt). This can happen in times of stress. And, in Southeast Asia, there were traditional fishing villages that had the highest intake of salt yet recorded…yet blood pressure was actually low in adults and the elderly. Only when those villages were disrupted and the fishing communities moved from rural to urban areas, did blood pressure levels rapidly increase in those displaced and stressed populations.

So I persisted in defending my conclusion that stress was actually the cause of the high blood pressure. And finally, I was able to publish my results, as a student, in the *American Journal of Public Health*.

Fortunately times have changed. And my research prevailed. Today, nearly everyone understands how important stress can be to blood pressure and cardiovascu-

lar disease. The problem now, however, is how overlooked—or perhaps I should say "overshadowed"—blood pressure is as a primary risk factor for heart disease.

Cholesterol is NOT the most important risk factor for heart disease

A lavish amount of attention, effort, and money has been spent on controlling cholesterol. And the great medical-pharmaceutical complex has worked relentlessly to continue to lower the recommended cholesterol level for heart health. Of course, the end result is that more and more people will be caught in the net of taking dangerous cholesterol-lowering drugs.

But the truth is…half of the people who die of heart disease have *normal* cholesterol levels. And lowering cholesterol by a few points may not have any effect at all. Cholesterol is NOT the most important risk factor it's set up to be.

Blood pressure, on the other hand, is a *much* different story. Above *all* else, controlling blood pressure has the most direct and essential connection to cutting heart disease. The importance of controlling blood pressure should not be overlooked, or taken for granted. While lowering cholesterol by a few points may or may not have any benefit, lowering blood pressure by even a few points is *always* worthwhile.

And when it comes to your heart's greatest threat, I have what might be a *surprising* recommendation…

The ONE prescription I will *always* recommend for high blood pressure

This powerful cause of heart disease requires a potent remedy.

Admittedly, one of the challenges of natural, alternative therapies is that, while effective, they are gentler and generally take effect over longer periods of time (see *The Secret to Spotting the Truth Behind the Headlines* in your free Library of Confidential Cures), as compared to their highly-potent drug counterparts.

And when it comes to lowering high blood pressure, you need to use something that is going to work fast.

Extremists who reject ALL drugs in favor of natural supplements have nothing to talk about here, because there aren't really any dietary supplements that can bring down high blood pressure quickly. While some "natural experts" may claim to have nutrients that work for supporting blood pressure…don't be fooled. There are many that can support heart health overall, which I will show you later in this report, but none will compare to the most effective, and necessary approach—taking a blood pressure medication.

So, while there are many natural medicine "experts" who won't—or can't—recommend a drug medication, I can and will when it is the best medicine.

While there *are* many effective "mind-body" therapies that can help manage your underlying stress (see below and also my book with Michael Jawer, *Your Emotional Type*, available at www.DrMicozzi.com), there is no acceptable alternative treatment that can substitute for fast and effective drug therapy for this dangerous condition. And fortunately, modern medicine has developed many safe and effective drugs to control blood pressure over the decades.

If you have high blood pressure you should have your blood pressure monitored and treated by a physician using these effective drug therapies. However, you and your doctor need not run to the latest, most expensive blood pressure drug offered by the drug industry. It is important to choose wisely.

What to look for…

Safe and effective drugs for blood pressure have been around for several decades with an immense amount of clinical experience on their best uses. Many people don't realize that even after a new drug is "approved" for use by the FDA, something called "post-marketing surveillance" is required to continue for many years.

It is during this surveillance, when drugs are being used by millions of people over many years, that so many of the disastrous side effects of many drugs are discovered. This is why we are constantly hearing that new drugs "approved" by the FDA are subsequently found to have dangerous side effects and the FDA issues "warnings" and restrictions, or they are pulled off the market altogether.

So when it comes to choosing a blood pressure drug, the safest course of action is to work with your doctor to choose one that's been around for many years. This could also save you a lot of money, since you'll have more generic drugs to choose from, which are a fraction of the cost of new, still-patented drugs. The point is—newer is not always better—or safer. Especially when it comes to anti-hypertensive medications.

Talk to your physician about trying out these older, effective drugs for controlling blood pressure. Remember, everyone is an individual and may react differently to different medications. It may take some trial and error, with very close monitoring, to find the right medication for you.

The older drugs for blood pressure fall under the following categories:

1. Drugs that act to lower blood pressure through their effect on the nervous system

Clonidine

Methyldopa

Reserpine

Propranolol

2. Drugs that lower blood pressure by their effect on nerve endings

Guanethidine

Monoamine oxidase inhibitors

Reserpine

3. Drugs that lower blood pressure by dilating blood vessels

Diazoxide

Hydralazine

Minoxidil

Nitroprusside

Prazosin

Thiazides

4. Drugs that lower blood pressure by blocking nerve receptors ("Beta" and "Alpha" Blockers)

Metapropolol

Nadolol

Phentolamine

Phenoxybenzamine

Prazosin

Propranolol

5. Drugs that lower blood pressure by influencing blood-pressure regulating hormones produced by the kidney

Captopril

Saralasin

These drugs are given by their generic names as they are all off patent. Check with your doctor to see what is available by prescription and if they are appropriate for you.

Starting NOW—Relaxation tactics from the "Inside"

Once you have your blood pressure under control through appropriate drug therapy and monitoring by a physician, it is time to address the underlying stress that contributes to high blood pressure, heart disease, and many if not most other chronic diseases.

A basic approach in all of natural medicine is that the mind and body work together and each continually influences the other. Thus, nearly any effective therapy is essentially a mind-body therapy. However, some therapies are specifically called "mind-body" because they appear to draw directly on the power of our thoughts, emotions, and feelings to influence the disease or healthy states of our normal body functions. Literally, "mind over matter." There are several that are safe, proven effective, and widely available.

Biofeedback. We all learn as adults to control our emotions and feelings and to project a calm and controlled image to the outside world. But under the rigid exterior of the body, our feelings have a torrent of effects on our internal workings. Biofeedback gives us back information about how blood pressure, heart rate, and other vital signs are responding to environmental stimuli and stresses—and teaches how to consciously control our reactions for a healthier, stress-free response to life.

Guided Imagery. Visualization is a powerful ability of the mind. You can literally create images in your "mind's eye" and train yourself to see your body becoming healthier. You can visualize a picture of immune system cells destroying cancer cells, for example. Or you can imagine yourself in a calm, healing environment and literally take your body to that place physiologically, lowering your blood pressure along the way.

Hypnosis. Today, hypnosis is understood as using the "power of suggestion" to move mind-body connections in proper alignment for healthier outcomes.

Meditation & Yoga. There are different approaches to meditation. Transcendental Meditation (TM) came to the U.S. from India, but there are strong traditions of meditation, or "contemplative thought," in the early U.S., dating from our Founding Fathers, such as Adams

and Jefferson, to men of American letters, such as Emerson and Thoreau. And today, it can be seen as a simple, practical "break" from our hectic day. We can think of this form as Mindfulness Meditation. Simply paying attention to what is happening in the moment and how you are feeling about it.

Likewise, yoga is used to enter meditative states. There are several approaches in India but the Hatha-Yoga tradition, emphasizing physical postures and breathing, has become most popular in the west (probably because of its emphasis on the physical vs. mental aspects of meditation). Either way, yoga and meditation are pathways to the mind-body connection whereby entering into a more peaceful, calm state has clear benefits in lowering blood pressure and improving health.

These are just a few of the prominent mind-body techniques that are available. Though keep in mind, not all of these techniques will work for everyone. For more on how to identify which therapy is more likely to work for you, see *How to Beat the Dirty Dozen: A guide to the mainstream's most puzzling illnesses* in your free Library of Confidential Cures. You can also learn more in my books *Your Emotional Type* (Jawer & Micozzi) and *New World Mindfulness* (McCown & Micozzi). In the meantime, you can get started now towards any mind-body approach to managing stress by following these eight easy steps…

1. Pick a word or short phrase that has personal meaning, such as "love" or "peace," or the Christian "Lord is my shepherd," or Jewish "shalom"

2. Sit quietly in a comfortable position

3. Close your eyes

4. Relax your muscles

5. Breathe slowly, naturally, repeating your word or phrase silently, as you exhale

6. Take a passive attitude, dismiss all distractions

7. Continue for 10 to 12 minutes; do not stand for another 1 or 2 minutes

8. Repeat twice per day

What you eat and *how* you eat it

As you can see, we can control blood pressure with appropriate drug medications and reduce stress with effective mind-body techniques. These are important steps to reducing heart disease and promoting heart health.

But preventing the development of heart disease is an area where diet and nutrition, alternative treatments, and dietary supplements also have an important role. The body is not static—it has the ability to heal itself. This is an important basis of all alternative and complementary remedies, whether they are dietary supplements and herbs, or mind-body techniques.

In fact, my colleague, Dr. Dean Ornish (who co-chaired my medical conference on Complementary & Alternative Medicine in 1999) has shown the right diet can not only prevent but actually reverse heart disease.

Dr. Ornish emphasizes the benefits of the low-fat, high-carbohydrate aspect of his diet. However, I give attention to the social benefits of the Ornish program. He recommends that participants ideally eat together, and even cook and shop for food together. This provides much-needed social support and positive interaction with other motivated people.

Human diet is a behavior. People eat foods not nutrients. And the way we eat may be just as important as what we eat. Chinese Medicine and Ayurveda stress the way we eat: They place emphasis on the time of day, food and beverage combinations, family and social and community circumstances, even the seasons of the year. These are all aspects that are completely ignored by mainstream medicine and the natural products industry alike.

Fifteen years ago, epidemiologists puzzled over the "French Paradox"—that is, the French eat the "wrong" things in their diet (like cheese, liver pate, and pastries), smoke more, and drink more wine, on average—but their rate of heart disease is half that in the U.S.!

The epidemiologists did not know to take into account the traditional French lifestyle of taking two hours for lunch (often adding a little nap time). They eat slowly and in social circumstances, insisting on fresh and deliciously prepared dishes. And they take six or eight weeks off for the summer, with frequent long, three- and four-day weekends and holidays in between. The epidemiologists also did not understand the stress-reducing benefits of moderate wine consumption.

We had our own example of the French paradox here in the U.S. in the little Italian-American community of Rosetto, Pennsylvania. Residents here ate too much of the wrong foods, drank more wine, and smoked more—but were healthier. It turns out they were happy, had

strong families, loved their neighbors and cared about their community. A little bit of kindness and love goes a long way for the "heart."

Our bodies are not defenseless when it comes to metabolizing rich foods, alcohol, or even tobacco smoke. A positive mindset and healthy habits of how we eat are just as important as what we eat. (For guidelines on the healthiest foods to eat, see *The "Top of the Food Chain" Cure for Obesity* in your free Library of Confidential Cures.)

The Heart Disease Battle Plan:
Nine proven secrets for gaining control

As I mentioned above, there are many nutritional supplements that can benefit overall heart health generally (but not blood pressure specifically). Following are nine of my favorites. These nutrients have been shown to help lower cholesterol, support the heart muscle, and promote free-flowing blood to the heart and circulation .

1. Gugulipid. Gugulipid, or gum-guggul, is from the resin of one of the remarkable gum trees found in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Australia. Centuries ago, gum tree resins were employed in the ancient Ayurvedic pharmacy. The knowledge of how and when to harvest the resins, how to prepare and store them, and how to administer them are critical to achieving its therapeutic benefits. There are accordingly questions about the supply, formulation, and potency of different preparations, so check with your qualified health practitioner about the sources and uses of this dietary supplement. But when used appropriately, this therapy has been shown to lower cholesterol.

2. Garlic. The clinical studies of garlic on heart health address three areas: (1) lipids, like cholesterol (2) blood pressure, and (3) atherosclerosis and thrombosis. Investigators have explored its use as a treatment for mild hypertension and high cholesterol. Heavy consumption may lead to slowed blood clotting, perioperative bleeding, and spontaneous hemorrhage. Numerous studies have long documented garlic's irreversible inhibitory effect on platelet aggregation and fibrinolytic activity in humans, which makes the blood "thinner."

Cholesterol levels have been related to use of garlic as well. Nearly 40 clinical trials, consistently showed that compared with placebo, various garlic preparations led to small, statistically significant reduction in total cholesterol at 1 month. Garlic preparations studied included standardized dehydrated tablets, "aged garlic extract," oil macerates, distillates, raw garlic, and combination tablets. Statistically significant reduction in low-density lipoprotein levels (LDL) cholesterol and in triglycerides were also found.

To benefit from the heart health effects of garlic take one or two fresh cloves per day; or if using a garlic extract, take 200-400 mg, two to three times per day.

3. B Vitamin and Flavonoids. The levels of a chemical called homocysteine in the blood are strongly and consistently linked to the risk of heart disease. The leading researcher who has worked for decades to demonstrate this effect lives in my home town in New England. I brought him to speak to the College of Physicians in Philadelphia over 10 years ago to try to get the word out about this critically important finding. All these years later, your doctor may *still* not know to do anything about homocysteine. But lowering homocysteine to healthy levels is easily achieved by supplementing with folic acid, vitamin B6, and vitamin B12.

Try daily doses of 800 mcg of folic acid, 25-50 mg of vitamin B6, and 100-300 mcg of vitamin B12.

4. Selenium & Vitamin E. Since selenium comes from the soil in which foods are grown, and livestock are grazed, selenium levels in the body often correlate. I studied the role of selenium in preventing cancer in China during the 1980's. But selenium is also important for the heart. Deep in the interior of Mainland China lies the land with the lowest levels of selenium anywhere on earth. In this low-selenium area of China, we find high rates of "Ke-Shan" disease, a deadly cardiomyopathy wherein the heart muscle itself does not function. Besides contributing to the health of the heart muscle, selenium also helps activate the important antioxidant enzyme, glutathione peroxidase, which is also important to heart health.

Selenium is often thought to work in combination with vitamin E, especially as an antioxidant. On its own, vitamin E protects low-density lipoprotein cholesterol from being oxidized and reduces heart disease.

Take selenium 100 mcg per day, and vitamin E 400 IU per day.

5. Magnesium. Magnesium deficiency can develop if you already have heart disease and are being treated for heart disease, especially with the use of digitalis and certain diuretic drugs. Some researchers believe that

magnesium supplementation helps prevent the occurrence of sudden death in people with heart disease and helps increase survival.

Take 300-400 mg of magnesium per day for six weeks to restore healthy magnesium levels.

6. Hawthorn. Hawthorn is a member of the rose family with sharp thorns and small white or pink flowers that develop a bright red fruit, found in woodlands. The constituents improve heart muscle function, heart output, and blood flow in the coronary arteries and to the heart muscle. It also reduces resistance to blood flow.

Try a commonly used extract from leaves and flowers standardized on total flavonoid or procyanidin content, 160-900 mg per day for 4 to 8 weeks. If using a traditional preparation of the berries or fruit, try 4-5 grams per day.

7. Terminalia arjuna. This Ayurvedic herb has been well known in India for its heart benefits since at least 500 BC. It contains a flavone called arjunolone, as well as arjunic acid, and arjunetin and arjunosides, which are glycosides (like the better-known digitalis). Arjuna seems similar to other heart-active medicinal plants like Lily of the Valley (*Convallaria majalis*) that help survival with heart disease. As with gugulipid, check with your health practitioner about appropriate sources and uses of this dietary supplement.

8. Coenzyme Q10. This critical enzyme co-factor is an essential component of mitochondrial membranes which are not only the energy factories of the cells but also produce water for proper hydration at the cell level (see *The Insider's Answer to Healthy Aging and Vitality*). The more active a cell needs to be in the body, the more immediate and important are its effects. The muscles do a lot of physical work, and especially the heart muscle. That's why drugs and chemicals that poison the mitochondria are so toxic to the heart and muscles as well as the other tissues and organs of the body. Coenzyme Q10 is coming to be considered a key nutritional supplement.

Try 30-50 mg of coenzyme Q10 per day.

9. Vitamin D. A new study from Germany highlights the heart benefits of the critical nutrient Vitamin D, which has so many healthy properties. Researchers found that vitamin D (a critical nutrient, deficiency of which is reaching worldwide "epidemic" levels) is associated with lower death rates in patients with heart disease, and overall. These researchers measured actual levels of vitamin D in the blood, rather than looking at daily intake of vitamin D.

Taking 1,000-2,000 IU of vitamin D is appropriate for most people.

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A combined approach represents the best of complementary medicine: safe and effective drugs to control blood pressure, dietary supplements for heart health, a sensible program of diet and exercise, achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, and using effective mind-body therapies that match your emotional type for stress management.

Red Yeast Rice Considered

Despite the hype and scare tactics that have surrounded it in recent years, red yeast rice remains a safe and effective option for lowering cholesterol levels. When choosing a red yeast rice product, look for four important things:

1. Choose organic.
2. Choose a product that has been processed to remove a potential toxin called citrinin, a by-product of the red yeast rice fermentation process.
3. Choose a supplement made in the USA that meets FDA Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and the standards of US Pharmacopeia (USP).
4. Make sure it contains 1,200 mg of pure red yeast rice. Anything less and you will not be taking a clinically effective dose.

Red yeast rice can be combined with complementary ingredients to boost its effectiveness. Of course, as you now know, lowering your cholesterol is not enough for heart health. A more comprehensive approach is the best long-term solution.

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