

HYPERTENSION

High blood pressure or hypertension rarely has noticeable symptoms, but if untreated it increases the risk of heart attack, heart failure, kidney disease, stroke or dementia.

The heart pumps blood around your body to deliver energy and oxygen. A certain amount of pressure in the blood vessels is needed to do this. However, if there is too much pressure in the blood vessels, it puts extra strain on the arteries and heart, which can lead to serious conditions.

Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg) and is recorded as two figures:

- Systolic pressure is the pressure of the blood when your heart beats to pump blood out.
- Diastolic pressure – the pressure of the blood when your heart rests in between beats, which reflects how strongly your arteries are resisting blood flow.

For example, if your blood pressure is 140/90mmHg, it means you have a systolic pressure of 140mmHg and a diastolic pressure of 90mmHg. A reading over 140/90mmHg indicates high blood pressure.

CAUSES

Hypertension may be caused by lifestyle factors, some medications and some diseases such as kidney disease or hyperthyroidism.

High blood pressure can be prevented by:

- losing weight if you need to
- reducing the amount of salt you eat
- exercising regularly
- eating a healthy diet
- cutting back if you drink too much alcohol
- cutting down on caffeine
- stopping smoking

SHIATSU TREATMENT

In shiatsu, we can consider that hypertension is an excess of blood in the upper half of the body and a deficiency of blood in the lower half.

To reduce high blood pressure we need to do two things:

- A) Bring the blood to the lower part of the body.
- B) Improve systemic circulation.

1) Do not rotate articulations. Joint rotations are very useful for musculoskeletal problems, but send the blood to the head, which is what we are trying to avoid.

2) As usual, work the whole body, but pay attention to the following points.

3) When working on the neck, always work in a caudal direction, from the head down towards the feet. We want the blood to go down, not up.

4) Work very slowly and deeply on the abdomen to improve systemic circulation.

See video on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mW7vZQaY3yA>

5) Stimulating the vagus nerve reduces blood pressure. We can do that by pressing on the anterior cervical region, stomach 9, 10 and 11. Work this area very slowly.

6) Du 16 (governing vessel 16) will help reduce blood pressure.

7) Working on the inguinal area (Liver 11 and 12) will improve circulation between the upper and lower parts of the body.

8) Finish with sustained pressure on Kidney 1 to descend the excess from above, to clear heat and to calm the Shen.

TCM

Liver fire (liver yang rising). Symptoms: Dry mouth, severe headaches, red eyes or face, bitter taste in mouth, blood pressure rises when angry or under stress, scant urine, vertigo.

Special points: Liver 2, liver 3, gallbladder 20, gallbladder 43, large intestine 4.

Liver yin and blood deficiency (sometimes associated with kidney yin deficiency, see below). Symptoms: blood pressure rises with fatigue and stress, dizziness, tinnitus, numbness in extremities, heat sensation on palms or soles of feet, insomnia or agitated dreams, blurred vision or dry eyes, amenorrhea or scant menstruation.

Special points: liver 3, liver 8, kidney 3, inside of legs.

Kidney yin deficiency. Symptoms: back pain, knee pain, night sweats, memory loss.

Special points: balance kidney meridians, and add spleen 6, stomach 36 (leg sanri), conception vessel 4 and 6 (central abdominal line).