

BEETS LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE

Including beetroot in your daily diet can be an easy and low-cost way to lower your blood pressure, reducing the need for expensive drugs, many of which may come with side effects.

why eat more beetroot?

An analysis of 16 clinical trials has concluded that drinking as little as one glass of beetroot juice daily (equivalent to two whole beetroot) can significantly lower elevated blood pressure. Twice that amount is required to drop your blood pressure if it is normal. The reductions are mainly in systolic pressure—the upper reading.

Researchers have found that the special blood pressure-lowering benefits of beetroot alone could reduce your risk of dying from stroke and heart disease by 14 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively.

Beetroot has also been found to improve exercise endurance and recovery in healthy people who go running or walking.

how beetroot helps you

Beetroot is a rich source of nitrate. Nitrate is converted inside your body to nitrite, then to nitric oxide, which helps relax blood vessel walls, improving blood flow and lowering blood pressure.

how to use more beetroot

- ▮ **Raw.** Shred raw beetroot finely, then enjoy it together with grated carrots, fresh herbs and a sweet dressing to make a tasty salad.
- ▮ **Juice.** You can buy beetroot juice from supermarkets or juice bars, or juice it yourself. Add an apple and some ginger for a little sweetness and zing.
- ▮ **Whole, cooked.** Supermarkets now sell cooked and peeled baby beetroot, which you can use in salads, soups, dips, bread and even chocolate cake! Better still, boil or steam your own, then dress it. You can also roast baby beetroot in its skin to caramelize it. Don't forget to use the leaves of the beet—they're super tender!
- ▮ **Canned.** This is the way that beetroot is more commonly consumed in Western countries. But remember to eat more than a slice or two!

The only side effect of eating more beetroot is that you may get some reddening of your urine and/or stools.



Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information.