



# food matters

WITH CONSULTANT NUTRITIONIST SUE RADD

## plant foods keep the pressure down

Plant foods protect against increases in blood pressure while red meats stimulate blood pressure to rise in young adults, according to new research published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

The CARDIA study—Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults—tracked the dietary intakes of more than 4300 adults (18-30 years old) and their risk of developing high blood pressure.

### meat drives up blood pressure

Eating red or processed meat 1-2 times per day or more often (think ham sandwich for lunch and roast for dinner) was linked with a 20-40 per cent higher risk of developing elevated blood pressure over a 15-year period, compared to eating meat a few times per week or less often.

This isn't surprising, as numerous studies have shown that vegetarians have lower blood pressure compared to meat eaters. It is also known that adding meat to a vegetarian diet increases blood pressure!

### high pressure leads to premature death

The reason the CARDIA study is of

such significance is that most previous studies have looked at older people—few have shown this effect applies to young people.

As high blood pressure is a common and major risk factor for stroke, heart disease and premature death, both young and old should take note of the findings!

### how to eat

Becoming a vegetarian is ideal for your blood pressure (and many other chronic diseases) but since most people are not vegetarians, the bottom line is to work out how you can eat more plant foods and less meat each week.

Particularly beneficial plant foods include wholegrains, vegetables, fruits and unsalted nuts. Try chickpea and vegetable curry or red lentil soup for mains rather than steak and three veg! Cut-up colourful fruits in season (or poach fruits in winter) and dry roast nuts for an excellent snack or dessert.

Remember to also skip salt, avoid alcohol, exercise daily and get your weight down to a healthy level if you want to achieve optimum results.

See **page 49** for a blood pressure—lowering recipe.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information on healthy eating, please contact *Sanitarium Nutrition Service*

AUSTRALIA: Locked Bag 7  
Central Coast Mail Centre, NSW  
2252 Phone: 1800 673 392

NEW ZEALAND: Private Bag  
92127, Auckland, New Zealand  
Phone: 0800 100 257

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