



Hypertension - Policy & Procedure

Policy:

The Keep Canada Slim program for clients with hypertension focuses on teaching people to choose lower-fat, higher-fibre, low-sodium food choices.

Worldwide, hypertension is a key modifiable risk factor for myocardial infarction and the third leading risk factor for death and disability; optimal control of blood pressure in people with hypertension could prevent almost half of all atherosclerotic cardiovascular events in North America. Over one-fifth of Canadians have hypertension. It remains one of the most common reasons for office visits, and over 4 million prescriptions for antihypertensive agents are written every month in Canada.

Studies have shown that even minor weight loss can have significant benefits. In a recent meta-analysis of 25 randomized controlled trials with a total of 4874 overweight or obese participants each kilogram of weight loss reduced systolic blood pressure by 1.1 mm Hg and diastolic blood pressure by 0.9 mm Hg. The reduction in blood pressure was significantly greater in populations with an average weight loss of more than 5 kg than in those with less weight loss, for both systolic (6.6 mm v. 2.7 mm Hg) and diastolic (5.1 mm v. 2.9 mm Hg) blood pressure.

Procedure:

The Keep Canada Slim program provides all 7 key strategies for hypertension control as listed by the Canadian Hypertension Education Program (CHEP) an initiative of the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ). These are: Physical Exercise, Weight Reduction, Alcohol Consumption (as part of overall caloric intake), Dietary Recommendations, Salt Intake, Potassium, Calcium and Magnesium Intake and Stress Management.

After Physical Exercise, controlling weight is considered the second most important strategy for controlling hypertension.

The Keep Canada Slim program is slightly more stringent than the dietary recommendations of the Canadian Diabetic Association (CDA) Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet.

Specifically we educate patients on the benefits of:

1. Regular exercise
2. Lowering sodium intake to less than 2300mg/day. (Typical Canadian diet 3300-4200mg/day).
3. Increasing the intake of complex carbohydrates which contain fibre
4. Reducing fat to less than 20% of the total calories consumed
5. Avoiding saturated and hydrogenated fats
6. Increasing the intake of monounsaturated fats such as olive oil, canola or peanut oils
7. Increasing the intake of Omega 3 fats (from tuna, salmon, almonds, walnuts and flax seed)

Keep Canada Slim also offers optional supplement programs that feature nutrients to offset nutrient deficiencies that typically occur during reduced-calorie programs. An additional supplement option can lower cortisol levels, an important step in reducing stress, which can help hypertensive patients better manage their condition.

Sources: Your Guide to Lowering Blood Pressure with DASH, US. Dept. of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institutes of Heart, Lung and Blood, NIH Publication No 06-4082, revised April, 2006; Applying the 2005 Canadian Hypertension Education Program recommendations: Module 3: Lifestyle modifications to prevent and treat hypertension, Rajdeep Padwal, General Internal Medicine, University of Alberta, Norman Campbell, Department of Medicine, University of Calgary, Rhian M. Touyz, Department of Nephrology, University of Ottawa.