DIETARY MANAGEMENT FOR HYPERTENSION

Diet plays a significant role to manage Hypertension or High Blood Pressure. Here are some dietary tips which are suitable for this condition:

**Calories:** A healthy diet providing Low Calories with Low Fats and Low Sugars rich in Complex Carbohydrates and Dietary Fibres is recommended to maintain the ideal body weight which has a beneficial impact on blood pressure regulation.

**Complex Carbohydrates:** Foods high in Complex Carbohydrates such as Whole Grains (like Oats, Millets, Whole Wheat, Brown Rice etc.) are low in calories and contain high dietary fibres which can bind bile acids and increase excretion of ‘Bad Cholesterol’ (Low Density Lipoprotein) levels in the blood and thus help in management for Heart Diseases along with Hypertension.

**Lean Protein (Low Fat):** A normal protein intake is recommended which include Plant Proteins (like- Lentils, Soyabean) that are high in fibres and low in saturated fats and Animal Proteins (like- Fresh Water Fish, Lean Chicken, Egg White, Low Fat Milk & its products) that rich in amino acids and also with low saturated fats and thus good for Heart Health as well as High Blood Pressure.

**Heart Healthy Fats:** Omega-6 Fatty Acids (Corn, Soy and Safflower oils, Walnuts) and Omega-3 Fatty Acids (Fish oil, Olive oil, Flaxseeds) are known as Heart Healthy Fats as they are highly unsaturated and more sensitive to oxidative damage and thus play a protective role in Heart Diseases and Hypertension.

**Low Sodium:** A decrease in Sodium (a major component of Salt) is directly associated with reducing Blood Pressure. Too much Sodium may lead to fluid retention which can raise blood pressure, especially in people who are sensitive to Sodium. Therefore, use of salt for cooking and also for table purposes should be restricted to the best extent possible.

**Potassium:** Another mineral, Potassium, is important in relation to control High Blood Pressure. Since it works with Sodium to regulate the body’s water balance, an adequate intake is an essential part of treatment for Hypertension. This can be done by including sufficient amounts of Potassium rich foods such as Skimmed Milk &its products (Yogurt), Fruits (Banana, Pears, Orange, Apple etc.) and Vegetables (Baked Potato, Tomato, Sweet Potato with skin, Mushroom, Broccoli, Carrot, Beans etc.) in daily diet.

**Calcium:** Calcium is involved in the control of the strength with which blood is pumped by the heart and with the amount of resistances in the flow of blood in the veins--both of which contribute to blood pressure. Thus, adequate amount of Calcium intake is also beneficial in treating Hypertension. Some of the Calcium rich foods are Milk & Milk products, Egg Whites, Leafy Vegetables etc.

**Magnesium:** Magnesium rich foods such as Dark Green Vegetables, Legumes, Cereals, Wheat Bread, Fish should be included in diet as Magnesium has a direct effect upon the relaxation capability of vascular smooth muscle cells and the regulation of High Blood Pressure.
Antioxidants: Antioxidants (Vitamin E, C, A, Selenium, Polyphenols) play a beneficial role to reduce Hypertension by lowering oxidative stress and relax blood vessels in the body. Green tea, Fruits and Vegetables, Whole Grains are rich in antioxidants which should be taken in daily diet.

Foods to Be Avoided to Manage Hypertension

- Salt preserved foods- Pickles, Canned food
- Highly salted foods such as Potato Chips
- Highly spicy foods and Condiments such as Ketchup sauce
- Fatty, Fried & Oily food
- Saturated Fats containing Ghee, Butter, Banaspati, Lard
- Full Fat Products such as Cheese or Ice Cream, Peanut butter, Salted butter, Chocolates
- High Sodium containing food- Regular Baking Powder, Ajinamotto (Mono sodium glutamate)
- Carbonated Beverages