5 Holiday Foods Cardiologists Are Eating to Lower Blood Pressure Transcript

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Holiday Foods That Lower Blood Pressure

Listen, around the holidays, everyone tells you what not to eat. But what if some of the holiday foods already on your table could actually lower your blood pressure and protect your heart?

Today, I'm sharing five hidden holiday food that do exactly that. I am Dr. Columbus Batiste, interventional cardiologist. And listen, if you're down with low BP, yeah you know me, you are in the right place.

Because on this channel, we're going to break down doctor approved evidence based ways to use food as medicine so you can start to prevent heart disease, not just treat it.

So in this video, we're gonna walk you through five holiday foods, how they work inside your arteries, what the research says, and how to put them on your plate without feeling like you're on a diet.

All right, let me say this upfront, all right? This is important. taking blood pressure medication is not a scarlet letter. You're not failure if you're on meds.

So as a matter of fact, if ever felt embarrassed or judged because you take blood-pressure medications, I want you to type no shame inside the comments, right?

Because listen, you are not alone. The goal isn't just how fast can I get off medications. Although, listen if your able to, that's great. I'd love that to be a part of your journey.

But the real goal is lowering your risk. Risk of what? Risk to stroke, risk of heart attack, and risk to kidney failure.

Beets and Leafy Greens

So you can be there for the people you love and live a life of purpose. Now listen, medication has its place, but lifestyle? Ah, it's the foundation and that's why I'm here.

Let's talk about the foods you could add. The ones you'll actually see on the holiday table that can help lower your blood pressure millimeter by millimeter.

Because trust me, millimeters do matter. So before we jump into the list, let me tell you about someone I met. I had the good opportunity of going out and doing blood pressure screens inside the community and around the holiday season, I often give free food out to as well.

And I've met this individual where he said that, listen, all year his blood was okay, but then the holidays hit. His weight was up eight to 10 pounds, his pressure was 15 to 20 points.

And he said, Doc, I just ate what everyone else ate. I'm not sure what happened. But instead of me just telling him, listen, go back and see your provider and tell them, you listen.

What your numbers are, we need to go up on medication. And I said listen let's start making some changes with your food and with you plate. He was down with it because he was done with low BP.

So we kept his favorite dishes, but we made some simple changes. We added more baked potatoes without the sour cream and the bacon. We had carrots and cabbage and apples and oranges.

We started his day with oatmeal and some fruit and we cut back on the really salty stuff. The canned soup, the box mixes, The deli meats and the fast food.

Same holidays, same family, just more real food, whole food plant-rich foods and less to no salty processed foods on his plate. And I'll tell you, over time, his January spike, it got smaller and smaller.

It shrank and shrunk and that's what I want for you. It's not about perfection, it's just about progress. All right, let's dive into those five hidden holiday foods.

Now, first up, beets and leafy greens. These are your holiday vessel relaxers. I'm talking about beats and spinach, arugula, kale, mustards, collards and even cabbage showing up in your salads, your sides and your stews.

You know, kind of like that Run DMC moment. Mom's in the kitchen cooking collard greens, right? And so we grew up hearing about them at the holiday table.

Now we understand what they're doing inside of our arteries. And here's the science. These foods are actually loaded with natural nitrates. Your body converts these nitrites into nitric oxide.

That's a gas that tells your blood vessels, hey, listen, you can relax and open up now. Once you think of nitric oxide like WD-40 for the arteries, it helps them stay flexible instead of rusty and stiff.

Now, these vegetables also bring to the table magnesium and potassium, and these really help to relax the smooth muscles in the vessel walls, they help improve how your body handles the sodium.

So quick honesty moment. I have to admit I wasn't always a lover of beets and even some of the leafy greens.

Winter Fruits

As a matter of fact, I used to quietly move them around my plate and hope nobody noticed. I might even actually put them inside the trash can, but my parents always seemed to find out and made me still eat them.

But now… I roast them with a little balsamic and garlic and I'm like, okay, mom and dad, you were right. That's the power of learning what these foods actually do inside your body and continue to try them.

So randomized trials, they move us beyond just this idea of taste and the subjective response. and they organize it and tell us that nitrate-rich vegetables like beets and spinach, they have been shown and demonstrated that 24-hour systolic blood pressure drops about three to five millimeters of mercury.

That's huge in people with elevated blood pressures. So it also is demonstrated, that single doses of beetroot juice has the ability to drop your systole, if that's the top number, blood-pressure by five to seven points for several hours.

You might think, doc, doesn't sound like much. But listen, I can't tell you more and more, millimeters matter. And over an entire population, a two to five point drop in systolic blood pressure translates into significantly fewer strokes and heart attacks.

So here's your holiday prescription. I want you to aim for at least one cup of nitrate rich veggies most days in the winter. On the holiday table, this might look like roasted beets and carrot.

It might like a salad with spinach and mixed greens or cabbage or collards and slaw or warm sautees. For me, it's looking like I'm getting mustards and collards, and kale and dandelions all cooked, but still some bite to it with sauteed onions and garlic.

I am getting hungry. All right, let's move on. Number two, winter fruits. Now these are tiny but mighty antioxidant bombs. So I m talking really about apples and pears and oranges and clementines, cranberries and frozen berries.

Now, some of you may see it in the form of pies and compotes, salads and sauces, and here's what they do. These fruits are rich in potassium, And once again, potassium helps your kidneys get rid of the excess sodium.

That's important. And so they're loaded also with soluble fiber. Now soluable fiber is extremely important because it helps with your weight, it help with blood sugar control and management, It helps to lower your cholesterol.

and these are all key drivers of high blood pressure. Now your citrus and your berries, they're packed with polyphenols and anthocyanins, and these are antioxidants that improve your endothelial function.

That inner lining of your arteries and the vessels, it helps the vessel have the ability to make more nitric oxide, that gas that allows the vestals to relax, stay less inflamed and to open up.

Aromatics for Flavor and Blood Pressure

So there, once again, there's large studies that show that people who eat more whole fruit, especially apples and pears several times a week, have a lower risk of developing high blood pressure.

There are metanolase studies, which are large grouping of studies that suggest that extra serving or two of fruit per day can reduce hypertension risk by about 7%. Now, additional berry trials show a three to four point drop in your systolic blood pressure in some of the groups inside the studies.

So again, they're small numbers, but big impact. Small things add up to a whole lot if you invest one cent every year compounding interest, you're gonna make a lot of money.

So on your holiday table, what this might look like this. Trading one slice of pie, I said it, for baked apples or pears with cinnamon. Adding orange segments and pomegranate seeds to those green salads.

Or using cranberries and berries inside sauces. With, of course, none of the sugar that the recipe calls for. All right, quick question for you. What winter fruit is always in your house?

Is it apples, oranges, pears, or something else? I need you to drop in the comments so I know what to build future recipes around, at least. find recipes to share with you.

Now, what's in my house? Apples. Apple day keeps the doctor away. All right, food number three, the aromatics they like to call it, right? This is the flavor that lowers blood pressure.

I'll tell you, What's food without flavor? Food is family, Food Is flavor. And so I want you to think about the base of stuffings, of soups, or gravies.

i'm talking about onions and garlic, celery and leeks even. and here's what they're doing inside you the garlic it contains sulfur compounds like allicin and that mildly inhibit your angiotensin converting enzyme.

Now this is the same enzyme some blood pressure medications will target. It also helps improve that nitric oxide availability. You're going to start to see this overlap between all these plant-rich foods that layer upon one another.

So onions and leeks and celery, they bring antioxidants and potassium and other phylochemicals that reduce the oxidative stress and improve the blood flow.

Now in simple terms, these ingredients basically are telling your arteries to relax and function better instead of staying constantly tense and uptight.

So multiple analyses, they show that garlic supplements can actually lower systolic blood pressure by seven to eight millimeters in your diastolic, the bottom number, by five millimeter in individuals with high blood pressure.

Now food isn't a pill, right? But it points in the same direction. And here's your holiday move. I want you to double the onions, the garlic, and the celery.

Beans, Lentils, and Chickpeas

Right? I said it, I wanted you cut back on that salt, realizing that one teaspoon of salt has significant amount of sodium inside of it. Want you use herbs and spices and citrus and a splash of vinegar for flavor instead of relying on all those salty broths and cured meats.

So if you're still with me, i need you just to type flavor in that you're with me and that I know you are on the team garlic and onion going forward in the holidays.

All right, number four food is pulses. I'm talking about what pulses? I am talking beans and lentils and chickpeas. Now these are your slow burning pressure regulators.

They contain what we call resistant carbohydrates. And so you will see them in winter soups and stews, and chilies and curries, in traditional dishes all around the world.

So when we look at these foods, they're high in potassium and magnesium, support a healthy blood pressure. They're packed with plant protein and plenty of fiber.

So you stay full and avoid those big blood sugar swings. Their low in sodium when you cook them yourself, of course. Now, if you buy them pre-packaged in a can, oftentimes they're high in Sodium.

But here's the thing, they are great for your gut microbiome, the gut bacteria. And so the fiber, it fuels and feeds the good bacteria inside your system, making, once again, a short chain fatty acids that will lower inflammation and help your blood vessels function better.

So these legume-rich eating patterns are associated with lower blood pressure and better cardiovascular outcomes, especially when you replace red and processed meats, but also refined grains.

You see, life isn't just about what you're not eating, it's about when are eating for your health. Listen, your holiday prescription I wanna see on the table, I want to see adding beans and lentils to stuffing and soups and cabbage rolls, or maybe serving like a chickpea or white bean dip with veggie sticks instead of the cheese-heavy dips that you might otherwise set out.

All right, number five, oats and whole grains. And of course, the humble potato, your all-day blood pressure stabilizers. Now you see them in oatmeal breakfast, whole grain rolls, stuffings, mashed potatoes, are all just good, right?

And here's what they bring. Oats and grains, they deliver soluble fiber, magnesium and potassium. They improve your insulin sensitivity and they help your weight and relax the blood pressures.

So you want the fiber. You want to whole-grain. Don't get those dinner rolls where the fibers taken all out and it melts in your mouth, not in you hand.

Oats, Whole Grains, and Potatoes

You know which ones I'm talking about. I want the stuff that makes you chew because when the fiber feeds the gut bacteria, once again, it produces this short chain fatty acids, lowering that inflammation, supporting your arterial health.

Now, here's the key. Baked potatoes are incredible when they're baked or broiled and they are actually not bad for you, believe it or not. It's not the potato that's bad, it's all the other stuff we add to it, the sour cream and the cheddar cheese and bacon.

We want to leave all that stuff off and let's find recipes that are going to wet your palate and nourish your soul. I'll tell you that when you start having eating potatoes that have the potassium and vitamin C offsetting once again that sodium and from the rest of the meal, you get power.

That's why studies and analyses have shown and demonstrated that even looking at oatmeal consumption, lowers the blood pressure, two or three millimeters of mercury, individuals with high blood-pressure.

And if your consumption of whole grains is amongst the highest, you have a 25% lower risk of developing high-blood pressure to those who don't eat very many whole-grains.

So once again, The millimeters actually matter. They matter, and here's what you can do. I want you to make your stuffing with whole grain bread, rice, wild rice or quinoa.

Start at least one holiday morning with oatmeal topped with fruits and nuts. Throw in some flax meal on there instead of the pastries. Prepare mashed or baked potatoes without all the butter and the cheese, but use plant milk and herbs and roasted garlic instead because you have to begin to start to picture your arteries like pipes.

Just like you're not going to comb your hair over the pipes and pour oil down the drain because it's going to clog it up, that these pipes are stiff and narrow, the pressure will build.

And the kinds of foods that I'm talking about will help keep your pipes smooth and flexible and open so your heart doesn't have to push as hard. Now too often we get so locked in on what we can't eat that the word diet feels like exactly that, you die from it.

But when you shift that mindset to what you can add, That's when real health begins. So instead of just saying don't eat this, don' eat that, think about, listen, I want to have all the all-stars, the nitrate all stars, beets and winter greens that relax my vessels.

I wan't the winter fruits and berries, tiny but mighty antioxidant bombs, aromatics, garlic, onion, celery, leeks for flavor that also lower the blood pressure.

I want the beans and lentils that are the slow-burning pressure regulators. I Want the oats, the whole grains, and potatoes, all-day pressure stabilizers.

You don't have to overhaul everything at overnight. i'd like you to, but you don' have too. you just start by adding these in, food by food. Because guess what?

A journey of a thousand miles? It starts with a single step. So here's your first step this week. Don't try to do it all five at once. Just pick one food, one of these foods, to make sure it shows up on your plate three times.

Next week, add another, then another. Over time, you'll start to see the difference. And guess what? Your energy, your weight, and your lab numbers and, yes, blood pressure readings are going to improve.

When you try it, come back and comment. Holiday Blood Pressure Step 1. done and tell me what you added. Now, if you're wondering how these holiday powerhouse foods fit into an overall blood pressure plan, I've got more videos that I'm going to create talking about the power of nutrition of eating combined with stress and sleep and movement.

So I want you to check those out in the future. All right. Thanks for tuning in. I won't you remember if we want to go fast, go alone. If you want go far go together.

Let's go far together building healthier hearts stronger communities and happy holidays So like it share it send it maybe save a life. I'll see you next time