

DRIVERS HEALTH



Sponsored by Blood Pressure (BP) DOWNSHIFT™

As a professional driver, you may think that your job stands in the way of a healthy lifestyle. But while being on the road may make it more challenging, you *can* still find the road to good health. Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation created the *Blood Pressure (BP) DownShift™* program to help you start developing healthy habits by **taking it one gear at a time.**

Remember that if it seems difficult to change habits, **you don't have to change everything at one time.** Small changes you make today will make it easier for you down the road. The first step is *easy* - log on to the *BP DownShift™* website at www.DriversHealth.com. From there, you can begin to learn the basics, find real solutions, and get inspired to make the right choices for your health, for your job, and for your loved ones.

As you will learn from the *BP DownShift™* website, good nutrition, fitness, managing stress, and quitting smoking are the four keys to overall health and well-being. Making smart choices in these areas can have a major positive impact on your health. And for **professional drivers**, making smart choices in your daily lifestyle can also have a positive impact on your livelihood, because good health is the key to staying safe and alert

on the road, being able to provide for your family, and maintaining your CDL.

As a service to our many readers we will outline ways in which drivers can make smart choices in regard to the four keys to overall health and well-being. This month, we'll discuss *good nutrition*. EATING RIGHT is one step a driver can take to **lower** high blood pressure. But given the realities of life on the road, you

“EATING RIGHT is one step a driver can take.”

may ask, “How can a driver eat better?” Again, the answer is, “by taking it one gear at a time.”

Ease into new eating habits slowly. You don't have to go on “a diet.” **Small changes** to your eating habits can make a

big difference. Here are *six* small steps you can take for better nutrition:

- 1. Don't add extra salt to food.** Take the salt shaker off your table.
- 2. Eat more fruits and vegetables.** Grab an apple, banana, peach or some grapes to eat on the road. Add a side salad to any meal you eat.
- 3. Switch to low-fat dairy products.** If you have cream in your coffee, you can switch to 1% or non-fat milk.
- 4. Avoid salty snacks.** If you usually snack on potato chips, try the low-salt version of your favorite brand. Or grab a box of raisins or a bag of trail mix instead.

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5. Cut back on extras like ketchup, mustard and soy sauce. They are loaded with salt.

6. Avoid butter and margarine when you can. At home, try drizzling your bread with olive oil instead of spreading on the butter.

There are some very easy changes you can make to help start applying these six basic rules to how you eat at home and how you eat on the road. Let's start out with 3 easy changes you can make to eat better at home and 3 easy changes you can make to eat better on the road.

EATING BETTER AT HOME - 3 easy changes your family can make:

- **Downshift your red meat intake:** Once a week, eat fish or chicken when you usually have red meat.
- **Downshift your desserts:** Twice a week, change your regular dessert to a piece of fruit.
- **Downshift your breakfast:** Three times a week, eat a whole-grain cereal or oatmeal for breakfast if you usually have donuts, egg sandwiches, or nothing at all.

EATING BETTER ON THE ROAD - 3 easy changes drivers can make:

- **Downshift your sodas:** Once a day, have a bottle of water instead of your usual can of soda. Eliminating just one can of soda per day will drop a pound of fat per month!
- **Downshift your lunch:** Twice a week,

have your usual sandwich, but eat it without the bread. Wrap your sandwich meat in large pieces of lettuce.

- **Downshift your portions:** If you can't live without your pretzels, buy the small bag instead of the large. Whenever you normally order a large, order a small. Don't eat more than you need to feel full...Eat slowly and wrap-up your leftovers.

As you can see, these basic changes are very simple to make. And that is what *BP DownShift™* is all about - making simple lifestyle changes and good decisions, and taking it one gear at a time.

“Take it one gear at a time.”

In next month's Drivers Health we will continue to discuss better nutrition and how you can eat better at home and on the road, including how you can cook healthier meals and how you can cut back on fat in your foods without cutting back on taste. In the meantime, please visit the *BP DownShift™* website at www.DriversHealth.com for helpful information on how you can get healthy and live longer by taking it one gear at a time.

Sources

1 Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration: Medical Advisory Criteria for Evaluation under 49CFRPart 391.41. Available at <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rules-regulations/administration/medical.htm>. Accessed March 1, 2007.

2 Novartis Announces BP DownShift, Free Educational Program to Help Professional Drivers Get Their High Blood Pressure Under Control. BP DownShift Press Release, April 27, 2006, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation, <http://www.novartis.com>.

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