

## MEET Amol Bhalerao

*Amol Bhalerao, a Supplier Quality Development Engineer with Magna Powertrain India, used his problem solving abilities to attain his health goals.*

Two years ago, his family doctor noticed a spike in Amol's blood pressure. He was prescribed medication to control his symptoms, but it bothered Amol to be on medication at such a young age. His doctor gave him a challenge: If he could get his weight below 75 kg, he could go off the medication.

"This was the trigger and motivation," Amol says, and acted as any problem solver would. He designed a diet and exercise program that would get the results he needed to for a healthy future.

This 36-year-old from Pune, India, lost a total of 30 kilograms (66 pounds) in a span of eight months. His dietary terms were strict but simple—no sweets, no rice, no fried food, no starch. Amol consumed a healthy variety of fruits, vegetables, whole or ground wheat carbohydrates, beans, chickpeas, and lentils. If he still felt hungry after dinner, he would drink a glass of milk.

*"We don't want to starve," he says, "but we want to eat what is good for our health, makes us feel full, and gives us the required nutrients with minimal fats."*

Amol committed to getting active five days a week. "Exercise held equal measure in my weight loss," he says. He incorporated brisk walking, yoga (specifically the sun salutation), HIIT (high intensity interval training), and muscle flexibility into his routine. He varied it up to ensure he got a well-rounded workout and avoid boredom. A day's routine might include a ten minute warm up consisting of jumping jacks and jogging in place, followed by six sun salutations alternated with sets of stomach crunches or side bends. The next day he'd go for a brisk walk, planned in advance, of

either five or eight kilometers, maintaining a consistent speed. He incorporated the benefits of HIIT by running for 100 meters after each kilometer or by walking uphill or on rougher terrain for a portion of his route.

*His carefully planned and executed regime showed real results within three months. As his weight began to drop, so did his blood pressure. By the six month mark, he was totally off his medication.*

"My BP was within normal limits, without fluctuation. I started to look leaner. This was the biggest motivation to keep me going."

Amol's friends and family, including his wife and son, were amazed by his transformation in such a short time. "I achieved my goal in just 8 months," he says. "I'm still continuing, but this is just to maintain my present status."

### AMOL BHALERAO

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## in THIS ISSUE

- 1 Meet Amol Bhalerao  
Did you know?
- 2 What is Cardiovascular Disease?  
Mental Illness in the Workplace
- 3 Eating for a Strong and Healthy Heart
- 4 Hearty Vegetable Soup  
Exercise for Cardiovascular Health

## DID YOU know?

*Having a pet can...*

### DECREASE YOUR:

- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol levels
- Triglyceride levels
- Feelings of loneliness

### AND INCREASE YOUR:

- Opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities
- Opportunities for socialization

[cdc.gov/healthypets/health\\_benefits.htm](https://cdc.gov/healthypets/health_benefits.htm)



WHAT IS

# CARDIOVASCULAR disease?

Cardiovascular disease generally refers to conditions that involve narrowed or blocked blood vessels that can lead to a heart attack, chest pain (angina) or stroke.

Cardiovascular disease is most commonly caused by atherosclerosis, a term used to describe a buildup of fatty plaques in your arteries. Plaque buildup thickens and stiffens artery walls, which can stop blood flow through your arteries to your organs and tissues. This may result in a heart attack or stroke.

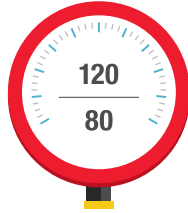
WHAT DO

# BLOOD PRESSURE numbers mean?

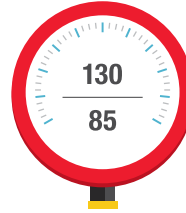
Your blood pressure is a good indicator of your cardiovascular health. Blood pressure is a measure of the force against your blood vessels caused by your heart beating (systolic blood pressure) and your heart relaxing (diastolic blood pressure).

When you get your blood pressure tested, you will get a result of two numbers, for example 120/80. The 120 is your systolic blood pressure and the 80 is your diastolic blood pressure.

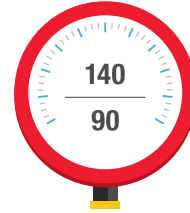
SYSTOLIC  
**120**  
.....  
DIASTOLIC  
**80**



A desirable reading is anything under 120/80, though anything under 129/84 is considered to be a **NORMAL** reading.



If your blood pressure is between 130-139/85-89, you have **BORDERLINE HIGH** blood pressure.



If your blood pressure is over 140/90, then you have **HIGH** blood pressure.

Whether borderline high, or high, it is important to monitor and manage your blood pressure. Excessive pressure on your artery walls can not only cause damage to your blood vessels, but can also affect the health of other organs in your body. With proper management, a sudden health crisis, like a heart attack, as well as long term complications, can be prevented.



# MENTAL ILLNESS in the Workplace

Mental illness is often stigmatized and can make everyone in a workplace uncomfortable when not properly addressed. Here are a few tips to reduce the stigma of mental illness and help someone on the road to recovery.

**CRAZY**  
weird  
nuts

## LANGUAGE

When describing individuals with mental health issues, do you refer to them as being “crazy”, “weird” or “nuts”?

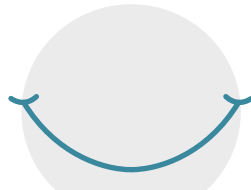
Words hurt and can further isolate someone struggling with mental health issues. Using discriminatory words lead to negative feelings towards an individual.



## EDUCATE YOURSELF

Stigma has a lot to do with lack of knowledge regarding the condition.

Learning about mental health helps to be sensitive to the mental health needs of colleagues and helps build better relationships with them.



## BE KIND

Kindness goes a long way, especially when someone is struggling with mental illness. Starting a conversation, being a good listener or simply smiling can make a positive impact in someone’s life.

Try to use empathetic statements like “that must have been really difficult for you” or “I’m sorry you’re not feeling well” when listening to a conversation.

Statements like “You’re worrying over nothing” or “stop being so down” are dismissive, and minimize a persons’ feelings.



## LISTEN AND ASK

One of the first steps to recovery and overcoming the stigma of mental illness is to treat it like any other illness. If someone at work looks like they’re not feeling well – ask! You can ask them if everything is ok or simply if they would like to talk. Remember to also be an attentive and respectful listener when someone is sharing their experience with you.



## TALK ABOUT IT

Mental illness affects us all and is more prevalent than we may know.

When we all start to talk about it, we overcome the shame and fear.

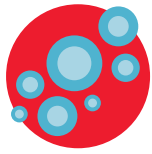
Help someone on their path to recovery today by breaking the silence.

WHAT DO

# CHOLESTEROL numbers mean?

Your cholesterol levels are another good indicator of your cardiovascular health because an excessive amount of cholesterol in the blood can result in clogging.

When you get your blood cholesterol tested (also called a lipid panel), you will get a few different numbers, including:



### HDL

Also known as the healthy cholesterol because it removes the LDLs from the blood vessels. Ideally you want to have a value above 1.5 mmol/L (58 mg/dL). A value below 1.1 mmol/L (42 mg/dL) is too low.

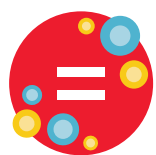


### LDL

Also called the lousy or bad cholesterol because it contributes to clogged arteries. Optimally, you want to have a value less than 2.5 mmol/L (100 mg/dL). A value above 4.1 mmol/L (160 mg/dL) is too high.

### TIP

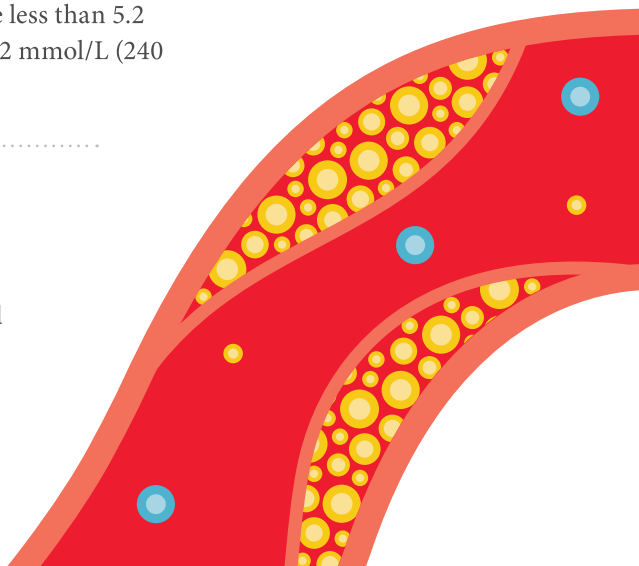
A good way to remember the difference between them is “H” for healthy and the higher this number the better, while “L” for lousy and the lower this number the better.



### TOTAL CHOLESTEROL

Includes the total amount of HDLs and LDLs and other cholesterols. Desirable levels are less than 5.2 mmol/L (200 mg/dL). Values above 6.2 mmol/L (240 mg/dL) are far too high.

In some cases, you may also get a reading on your **TRIGLYCERIDES**, another fat or ‘lipid’ that circulates through your bloodstream. Triglycerides store unused calories and provide your body with energy, so we need them, but not too much, as they will also contribute to artery clogging. Ideally, you want your triglyceride levels under 1.7 mmol/L (150 mg/dL). Anything above 2.3 mmol/L (200 mg/dL) is considered elevated.



HOW DOES

# all this AFFECT ME?

### BAD NEWS

Excessive pressure on your artery walls caused by high cholesterol and/or high blood pressure can damage blood vessels and organs in your body and can lead to:

- Trouble with memory or understanding
- Vision loss
- Aneurysm
- Stroke
- Heart attack or heart failure
- Kidney damage

### GOOD NEWS

An estimated 80% of premature heart disease and stroke can be prevented through healthy behaviours such as:

- Following a healthy diet
- Enjoying regular exercise
- Practicing regular stress management techniques
- Quitting smoking
- Limiting alcohol intake
- Maintaining a healthy weight

Early signs of atherosclerosis may be detected through regular blood pressure and cholesterol tests, so it’s vitally important to see your healthcare provider for your annual check-ups!



## Eating for a Strong and Healthy Heart: 5 ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS



### 1 Magnesium

Plays an important role in producing our body’s energy molecules known as ATP. All muscles need ATP—the heart is a muscle and studies have shown that good levels of magnesium can reduce risk of stroke and heart attacks.

Did you know, stress depletes magnesium? Make sure you’re topping up by choosing foods high in magnesium, such as dark leafy greens, pulses (dried seeds that are high in protein and fibre) such as red lentils, nuts and chickpeas. If you choose to take a supplement, always speak to your physician first and ensure it is magnesium citrate as it is the most bioavailable form.



### 2 Co-Enzyme Q10

Another nutrient useful for ATP production, alongside magnesium is Co-Q10. It is a powerful antioxidant to help protect your arteries from damage. Increase the Co-Q10 in your body by including fatty fish like salmon, tuna or herring, and chicken.



### 3 Vitamin D

Research has shown a 40 percent higher risk of heart disease when deficient in vitamin D. The best source is sunshine, but you can also get some from fish, mushrooms and eggs. If you choose to take a supplement, speak to your physician first and ensure it is vitamin D3 for optimal absorption.



### 4 Omega 3 Fatty Acid

Polyunsaturated fats such as EPA and DHA can help prevent inflammation throughout the body as well protect against cardiovascular disease. Find it in fish, seafood and chia seeds.



### 5 Vitamin E

Known for its antioxidant properties, Vitamin E can help reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol and increase HDL (good) cholesterol. To get optimum benefit from vitamin E, you will also need to have good sources of Vitamin C, selenium and Co-Q10 in your diet. Find vitamin E in avocados, nuts, seeds, tomatoes and dark leafy greens.

# EXERCISE FOR Cardiovascular Health



*When we think of exercise around this time of the year, we often attribute it to getting in shape for the summer.*

As great as exercise is for helping us look good on the outside, it also has tremendous benefits for our internal health—particularly our heart vitality.

Being physically active improves the strength of your heart, and helps to keep your blood vessels healthy. A healthy heart can pump more blood to the body with less effort which, over time, reduces blood pressure. Lessening the workload for your heart helps to prevent heart disease and lowers the risk of strokes. Cardiovascular disease is the second leading cause of death in Canada, and rates are expected to continue to rise as our population ages.

## AIM FOR THIRTY MINUTES A DAY

Before you engage in any new exercise program or routine, it's best to speak with your doctor to ensure that any potential risks associated with exercise are addressed. Once you are clear to begin, aim to exercise for at least thirty minutes of exercise, five times a week (unless, instructed otherwise by your doctor). This is the minimum recommended time that you need to be active in order to see health benefits.

If you're finding it difficult to stay active for thirty minutes straight, break your sessions up into two, fifteen minute workouts. The effects on your health remain the same regardless of you working out over a longer or shorter duration, as it is the intensity of the exercise that you do within that time frame.

## MONITOR YOUR HEART RATE

Investing in a device that can monitor your heart rate is also extremely helpful. If you are at risk for developing cardiovascular disease or currently have cardiovascular disease, a monitoring device is a great way to make sure that you are working at the right intensity and also not overdoing it! Wearable fitness trackers and even some smartphones are great options to use when working out, so be sure to see what option would work best for you. The ideal target heart rate for exercise should be between 50–85% of your maximum. When first starting, aim for 40–60%, then build up to the higher rate over a few weeks. Using the Karvonen Formula you can quickly find out what your target heart rate should be, in relation to the intensity of your exercise.

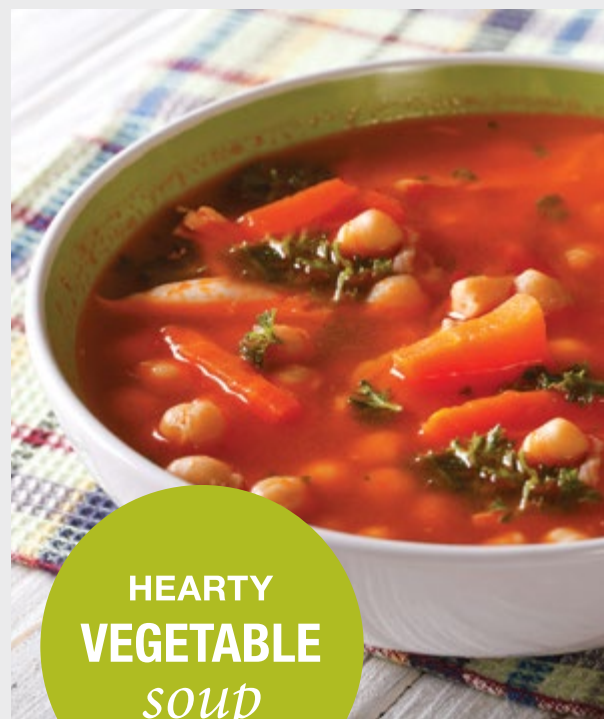
Check out the “Find Your Target Heart Rate Zone” article on the Magna Wellness website to get started! [magnawellness.ca/?t=health-articles&id=30](https://magnawellness.ca/?t=health-articles&id=30)

## LOWER YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

One of the best ways to lower blood pressure is to engage in moderate to high intensity cardiovascular (or aerobic) exercise. Get your blood pumping and heart rate moving through constant exercise for 30 minutes a session.

Weight training is also a great way to lower blood pressure levels and it increases your body's stamina. It helps to build strong muscles which are important for performing movements safely while exercising and works your heart, which in turn lowers blood pressure.

Need some aerobic exercise and weight training ideas? Check out the “Health Videos” on the Magna Wellness site for more ideas. Remember, the first step is to literally take the first step. Get moving and see the benefits today!



## HEARTY VEGETABLE soup

*Perfect for cooler evenings, this delicious, hearty soup packs in many essential nutrients needed for a healthy heart. Eat as a meal or as a starter.*

### INGREDIENTS

2 TBSP	coconut oil
3	carrots, diced
1	yellow onion, diced
2	garlic cloves, minced
2 CUPS	butternut squash, cubed
½ TSP	allspice
PINCH	of cayenne pepper
8 CUPS	chicken or vegetable broth (preferably low sodium)
2 CUPS	diced tomatoes
4 SPRIGS	fresh thyme
2 CUPS	kale, chopped
1 CUP	chickpeas, rinsed

### DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oil in large pot on medium heat. Add carrots and onion and cook 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 minute. Add squash, all spice, cayenne, and cook 5 minutes. Add broth and tomatoes and let simmer for 30 minutes.
2. Add chickpeas, kale, and thyme and cook for an additional 5 minutes.



[onemedical.com/blog/live-well/natural-ways-to-treat-high-blood-pressure-part-2/](https://onemedical.com/blog/live-well/natural-ways-to-treat-high-blood-pressure-part-2/)

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### WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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