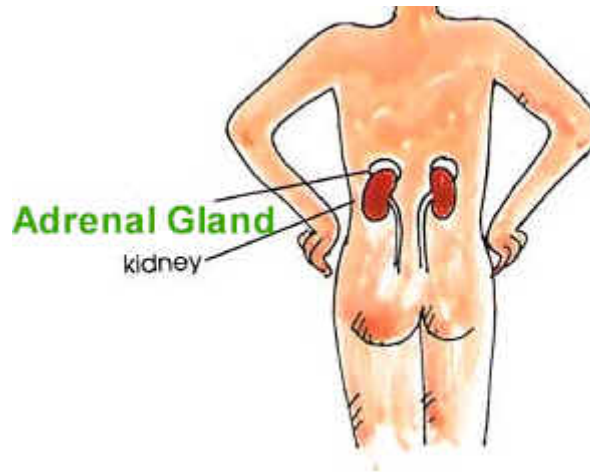


~ Ask Granny Earth ~

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Kidneys and Adrenal Glands- High blood pressure

Ask Granny Earth

Do you know what causes high blood pressure? Are there any herbs that I can take instead of the hypertension drugs to bring it down and keep it normal?

As you probably know, or if you don't, I will tell you; I am not a medical doctor. I am a Naturopath and herbalist - dedicated to the cause of healing. What I am about to say is strictly my opinion, which is based on my research, and education, coupled with common sense. That being said, hypertension has several causes, some of which are:

1. **heredity**
2. **diabetes mellitus** (lack of insulin - pancreas)
3. **kidney disease - kidney malfunction**
4. **adrenal disorders** (the adrenal glands sit atop the kidneys)

It would appear to me that there is a direct link between the health of our kidneys, one of the body's filtering organs (the others being liver, lungs, skin), and high blood pressure.

The two kidneys are bean-shaped organs, each about the size of a fist, and located just below the rib cage on either side of the spine. They filter the blood and keep it clean and chemically balanced, and they produce several important hormones. Since learning (in Anatomy 101) that the kidneys regulate blood pressure, it has baffled me that I could not find any creditable research to support this. Traditional medical organizations are still saying that high blood pressure “causes” kidney failure.

But- there is now research (on alternative health websites) to confirm that indeed the kidneys play an important part in the “dis-ease” of hypertension. So if I had high blood pressure, I would look for herbs that would support the healthy function of the kidneys and the adrenal glands, which sit on top of the kidneys.

Some herbs that are noted for healing the kidneys are:

1. **Self Heal** (*Prunella vulgaris*): Used medicinally in China since 200 BC for disturbed liver energy, it lowers fever and blood pressure, stimulates the liver and gall bladder, and is a **diuretic** that has **antibacterial** and blood purifying effects. Self Heal grows profusely in this area as a nuisance weed in our gardens and yards. It can be used as an effective ground cover though, as it is attractive with deep purple flowers, blooming from summer to autumn. Pick the flowers and leaves when in bloom and make a tea.
2. **Parsley root** (*Petroselinum crispum*): Is a strong **diuretic**, digestive tonic with **anti-inflammatory** and **antioxidant** properties. Used in the treatment of gout, rheumatism and arthritis. It encourages the flushing out of waste products from the inflamed joints via the kidneys. It is also used to treat cystitis (an inflammatory condition of the urinary bladder and ureters, characterized by pain, urgency and frequency or urination; caused by a bacterial infection or tumor). Yes, parsley root is what's at the other end of that wonderful culinary herb “parsley”. Just dig up the roots in the fall (of plants that you have not cut off the tops), after the first frost: slice them, dry them and make a tincture with them. Walla! You've got a medicinal tincture. Or you could just eat them. It is my belief that the potency of the root increases as it dries out, and the alcohol (as the base of the tincture) pulls out all of the healing phytochemicals. Then you can take the tincture as a medicine; it would be more convenient than eating parsley 3 X's a day.
3. **Borage** (*Borago officinalis*): Soothes damaged/irritated tissues, has mild sedative and antidepressant effects. Used for fevers, **high blood pressure**, bronchial infections, cirrhosis (liver), and chronic nephritis (diseases of the kidney- characterized by inflammation and abnormal function). Borage grows quite nicely in this area. If you purchase it at a nursery, be sure to get *Borago officinalis* species, and not *Borago pygmaea* (it doesn't have the same medicinal effect). You could start it

from seed in the spring. It grows to about 2 –3 feet tall and needs supported. You'll fall in love its little blue star-shaped, edible flowers.

These are just a few herbs that are reliable for healing the urinary system, and consequently, helping with high blood pressure. And let's not forget the ole reliable Garlic, too! These are all herbs that grow in this area, take very little care and are excellent remedies for high blood pressure.

It is my understanding, that most drugs prescribed to treat HBP, actually act to slow down the heart. This may help to keep you alive, but I suspect that you'd rather heal the condition that is causing the problem, in the first place.