

The following is contributed by Ms Guoyan (Emily) Yang, Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Clinical Research and Translation, NICM Health Research Institute.

Can complementary therapies lower blood pressure?

An increasing body of evidence suggests that some complementary therapies show promise in lowering blood pressure.

Mind-body therapies, such as tai chi ^[1-3], qigong ^[4-5], yoga ^[6-10] and meditation ^[11], may have small beneficial effects on blood pressure in people with high blood pressure. Mind-body therapies are generally safe if properly performed by a qualified practitioner or taught by a well-trained instructor ^[1]. However, some mind-body practices may need to be modified for people with conditions and/or diseases, including high blood pressure. Therefore, please talk to your healthcare provider and your complementary health practitioner or instructor when you are considering a mind-body practice for managing high blood pressure.

The University's new academic integrative healthcare centre, [Western Sydney Integrative Health at NICM Health Research Institute](#), will be opening in the second half of 2019 and will offer yoga therapy and yoga, tai chi and meditation classes taught by highly qualified and experienced instructors.

In addition, some foods and dietary supplements, such as cocoa ^[12-14], cinnamon ^[15], and garlic ^[16-18], may help reduce blood pressure in people with hypertension. However, the evidence that foods and dietary supplements can lower blood pressure is limited, and the effects on blood pressure are small. It is noteworthy that some other foods and dietary supplements may *raise* blood pressure, and some may interact in harmful ways with medicines used to manage high blood pressure. Hence, please speak to your healthcare provider about all your dietary supplements.

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