

Lidia Kuleshnyk, B.Sc. M.E.S.  
Apona Healing Arts / Macrosnacks  
416-964-8885  
e-mail: [lidia@aponahealingarts.com](mailto:lidia@aponahealingarts.com) / [lidia@macrosnacks.com](mailto:lidia@macrosnacks.com)

## Macrobiotics, Blood Pressure and Stress

“About fifteen years ago, one of our friends studying in Boston was also a student at Harvard Medical School. He conducted a series of research projects with the macrobiotic community. He began visiting a student house in the Boston area with equipment to measure blood pressure. Many of our friends who were eating a macrobiotic diet and were active in the Boston community participated. The results of his efforts were tremendous. He checked the blood pressure of more than two hundred of our friends and found that they were substantially lower than that of the average American.

Our friend then conducted another study in which blood cholesterol levels were checked and then compared to a control population from the Framingham Heart Study. Our macrobiotic friends were found to have much lower cholesterol levels than the non-macrobiotic people. The researchers at Harvard and Framingham were very impressed by the extremely low cholesterol levels, which were among the lowest levels in any human population in the world.

The results helped to change the view of heart disease, so that by the mid-seventies, leading public health organizations, including the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, the American Heart Association, and others began recommending a diet based around whole cereal grains, beans, and fresh vegetables as a way to prevent the buildup of cholesterol, high blood pressure, and other forms of heart disease.

The level of blood pressure is a common barometer of our response to stress. ***The interesting thing about the Harvard studies was that macrobiotic people were maintaining a relatively stress-free internal environment while living in the middle of one of the largest cities in North America.*** From this we can begin to see that stress is due largely to our diet and physical condition and not simply the result of our environment. Why is it, for example, that in a given environment one person will feel highly stressed while another remains more calm and relaxed? The difference must be due to each person’s physical condition and make up, both of which are determined primarily by diet.

Over the years, I have met many people who were suffering from various types of stress, both physical and emotional, who were able to become more healthy and stress-free by changing their way of eating. Over the years, macrobiotic educational organizations including the East West Foundation and the Kushi Foundation have publicized case histories of people who were able to lower their blood pressure and cholesterol levels by following a balanced macrobiotic diet. For readers experiencing stress of any sort, the first step toward recovering a more natural balance is to begin eating a diet prepared in harmony with nature, using the best-quality ingredients. The recipes and information presented in this book and its companion volume in the

*Macrobiotic Health and Education Series*, offer a practical way for everyone to recover from stress and to enjoy a harmonious, creative, and happy life.”

Aveline Kushi  
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**Source:** Aveline Kushi. *Stress and Hypertension*. Japan Publications, 1988.

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