### Mayo Clinic Minute

**Why a Southern diet is linked to high blood pressure**

Fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, and sweet tea: ...

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**Ivan Porter II, M.D.**  
Nephrology  
Mayo Clinic

“... Those tend to play a larger role in the Southern diet, and we know that those are associated with high blood pressure.”

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That’s because Southern cooking tends to be high in saturated fats, salts and loaded with added sugar – all risk factors for hypertension.

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And a major risk factor for heart disease, stroke, vision problems and kidney disease – a huge problem in the African-American community, says Dr. Ivan Porter II, a Mayo Clinic nephrologist.

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“Forty-one percent of African-Americans can have high blood pressure, compared with 27 percent of their white counterparts or Caucasians.”

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Dr. Porter says it is time to change that.

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“If you can change the way that you approach your diet, you can certainly change the impact that high blood pressure can have on your health.”

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But it doesn’t mean fried chicken is completely off the menu.

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“Everything must be in moderation.”

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Dr. Porter tells his patients to start change by eliminating one high risk food at a time.

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“Look at the calories that they’re getting from sugar-sweetened beverages and try to eliminate that as a start.”

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For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I’m Ian Roth.