

DASH DIET

A Dash of Prevention:

An Easy, Great-Tasting Eating Plan That May Help Lower Your Blood Pressure

There's a new way to help beat high blood pressure. Research shows an eating plan called **Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension**, or **DASH**, which is rich in low-fat dairy foods, fruits and vegetables, may help to lower the risk of high blood pressure. It's a plan that adds foods to your diet rather than taking them away.

The **DASH** eating plan was designed for those with high blood pressure, but it is also a heart-healthy plan you can share with your family. The eating plan is twice as effective for African Americans, because they are at greater risk for high blood pressure than whites.

Eating Up May Ease the Pressure

In a large study funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, the **DASH** eating plan was shown to be the best plan for lowering blood pressure among diets tested. Participants eating three servings of low-fat dairy foods combined with a low-fat diet high in fruits and vegetables lowered their blood pressure more than those who ate a diet high in fruits and vegetables alone did. And it's easy to do.

An Ounce of Prevention . . . Reducing the Risk of High Blood Pressure

- ♥ Eat at least 2 to 3 servings of low-fat dairy foods every day.
- ♥ Eat 8 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
- ♥ Stop Smoking.
- ♥ Limit Alcohol intake.
- ♥ Lose weight, if overweight.

One note of caution: If you have high blood pressure and are taking blood pressure medications, please don't just stop taking your medicines and start the diet. **Talk with your doctor first!**

The DASH Eating Plan

You need to look no further than your local grocery store to find the food for the **DASH** eating plan. Use the chart below to help you plan your meals or take it with you to the store to help you when you shop.

Food Group	Daily Servings	1 Serving Equals	Examples & Notes
Grains & Grain Products	7 – 8	1 slice bread ½ Cup dry cereal ½ cup cooked rice, pasta or cereal	Whole wheat breads, English muffin, pita bread, bagel, cereals and fiber, grits, oatmeal
Vegetables	4 - 5	1 cup raw leafy vegetable ½ cup cooked vegetable 6 ounces vegetable juice	Tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, peas, squash, broccoli, turnip greens, collards, kale, spinach, artichokes, beans, sweet potatoes
Fruits	4 – 5	6 ounces fruit juice 1 medium fruit ¼ cup dried fruit ½ cup fresh, frozen or canned fruit	Apricots, bananas, dates, grapes, oranges, orange juice, grapefruit, grapefruit juice, mangoes, melons, peaches, pineapples, prunes, raisins, strawberries, tangerines
Low fat or nonfat dairy foods	2 – 3	8 ounces of milk 1 cup yogurt 1.5 ounces cheese	Skim or 1% milk, skim or low fat buttermilk, nonfat or low fat yogurt, part skim mozzarella cheese, nonfat cheese
Meats, poultry, fish	2 or less	3 ounces cooked meats, poultry, or fish	Select only lean; trim away visible fats; broil, roast or boil instead of frying; remove skin from poultry
Nuts, seeds and beans	4 – 5 a week	1.5 ounces or 1/3 cup 2 tablespoons seeds ½ cup cooked legumes	Almonds, filberts, mixed nuts, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds, kidney beans, lentils
<p>The serving sizes in this chart are for someone who eats 2,000 calories each day. The number of servings may increase or decrease depending on how many calories you need each day. Talk with your doctor or a registered dietician.</p>			

Source: "A Clinical Trial of the Effects of Dietary Patterns on Blood Pressure," New England Journal of Medicine, 336; 1117-1124, April 17, 1997.

DASH DIET

Hints for Success

Make gradual changes in your eating habits.

Most people find it hard to make changes in their diet if they try to do too much too fast. Start slow. Try some of these steps:

- ♥ If you only eat 1 or 2 vegetables a day, add one vegetable to lunch and one to dinner.
- ♥ If you don't eat fruit or only have juice at breakfast, add fruit as a snack.
- ♥ Use half the butter, margarine or salad dressing that you use now.
- ♥ Try low fat or nonfat condiments, like nonfat salad dressings.
- ♥ Drink low fat (1%) or skim milk with lunch or dinner instead of pop, alcohol or sugar-sweetened tea.

Treat meat as one part of the whole meal, instead of THE MEAL.

Although meat contains protein and other nutrients which are good for your body, it also has a lot of fat, including saturated fat, calories and cholesterol. Often people have a large portion of meat as a main course and don't eat enough vegetables or grains. Try some of the following:

- ♥ Limit meat to six ounces a day (2 servings). Three to four ounces is about the same size as a deck of cards.
- ♥ If you currently eat large portions of meat, cut back by ½ at each meal.
- ♥ Include two or more meatless meals every week.
- ♥ Include more servings of vegetables, rice, pasta and beans so that you need less meat to make a satisfying meal. Casseroles, pasta and stir-fry often include less meat and more vegetables, grains and beans.
- ♥ Buy less meat. If it's not there, you won't eat it.

Use fruits or low fat foods as desserts and snacks.

Many people enjoy snacks. This can be a healthy benefit for your diet if you choose the right foods. Instead of chips, cookies, candy bars, or muffins, try some of the following:

- ♥ Fresh, whole fruits or canned fruits packed in their own juice
- ♥ Dried fruit (easy to leave in the car or carry in a lunch bag or purse)
- ♥ Unsalted pretzels or nuts mixed with raisins
- ♥ Graham crackers or other reduced fat crackers
- ♥ Gelatin

- ♥ Low fat and nonfat regular and frozen yogurt
- ♥ Popcorn, plain with no salt added
- ♥ Raw vegetables

Hints for Success

Reduce salt and sodium intake.

Higher salt is related to higher blood pressure, and Americans eat more salt than they need. Current recommendations are to have no more than 2400 mg/day of sodium. This is equal to about 1 teaspoon of table salt. You probably don't add that much salt to your food. Most of the salt we eat is invisible, either as part of the food itself or added during the preparation process (especially in fast or processed foods). In order to cut down on salt, try the following:

- ♥ Choose foods that are naturally low in salt like fresh fruits and vegetables
- ♥ Limit foods that are smoked, cured or processed
- ♥ Limit convenience foods like frozen meals, canned soups, sauce mixes and instant products
- ♥ Avoid certain spices like soy sauce, garlic salt and other salted spices.
- ♥ Use herbs, spices, and fruit juices in place of salt to season food
- ♥ Rinse canned vegetables to remove excess salt
- ♥ Break the habit of adding salt to food or water during cooking or at the table
- ♥ Read the labels on food packages and choose foods lower in salt.

Lose weight.

Being overweight increases the risk of developing high blood pressure and losing weight will lower your blood pressure. Try the following to lose weight:

- ♥ Choose foods low in calories and fat by cutting back on foods high in sugar like regular pop and deserts.
- ♥ Eat smaller amounts of foods at meals and fewer snacks throughout the day.
- ♥ Choose vegetables and fruits.
- ♥ Increase your physical activity to burn more calories.

Limit alcohol intake

Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure. If you drink, limit your alcohol intake to two drinks a day if you are a man and one drink a day if you are a woman. One drink is equal to 1-1/2 ounce of 80 proof whiskey, 5 ounces of wine, or 12 ounces of regular or light beer.

Increase physical activity

Regular physical activity helps lower blood pressure as well as helps lose weight. It also makes you feel and look better. Even moderate levels of activity, like brisk walking and yard work, are beneficial. Try to exercise 30 minutes per day three or more days per week.

Sample Menus

Breakfast

Item	Amount	Servings
Orange juice	6 ounces	1 fruit
1% low fat milk	8 ounces	1 dairy
Corn flakes (with 1 tsp. Sugar)	1 Cup	2 grain
Banana	1 medium	1 fruit
Whole wheat bread (with 1 Tablespoon jelly)	1 slice	1 grain
Soft margarine	1 teaspoon	1 fat

Lunch

Item	Amount	Servings
Chicken salad	¾ cup	1 poultry (meat)
Pita bread	½ slice, large	1 grain
Raw vegetables:		
Carrot & celery sticks	3-4 sticks	1 vegetable
Radishes	2	
Loose-leaf lettuce	2 leaves	
Part skim mozzarella cheese	1..5 slice (1 ½ ounce)	1 dairy

Dinner

Item	Amount	Servings
Baked cod	3 ounces	1 fish (meat)
Scallion rice	1 cup	2 grains
Steamed broccoli	½ cup	1 vegetable
Stewed tomatoes	½ cup	1 vegetable
Spinach salad:		
Raw spinach	½ cup	1 vegetable
Cherry tomatoes	2	
Cucumber	2 slices	
Light salad dressing	1 Tablespoon	1/2/ fat
Whole wheat dinner roll	1 small	1 grain
Soft margarine	1 teaspoon	1 fat
Melon balls	½ cup	1 fruit

Snack

Item	Amount	Servings
Dried apricots	1 ounce (1/4 cup)	1 fruit
Mini-pretzels	1 ounce (3/4 cup)	1 grain
Mixed nuts	1.5 ounces (1/3 cup)	1 nuts
Diet ginger ale	12 ounces	