

The DASH Diet

Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) is an eating plan that was created to lower blood pressure. This diet is also “heart healthy” and lowers risk of heart attack and stroke. The DASH plan is high in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and protein that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol. The plan also focuses on keeping salt intake to less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) per day. Even lower salt intake (1,500 mg per day) can lower blood pressure even more. The DASH eating plan below is based on 2,000 calories per day.

Food Group	Daily Servings	Serving Size	Examples
Grains and Starches	6-8	1 slice whole grain bread ½ cup cooked oatmeal ½ whole grain English muffin 1/3 cup brown or wild rice	100% whole wheat bread, 100% Whole wheat pasta, Old-fashioned Rolled oats, brown rice, barley, sweet potatoes
Vegetables	4-5	1 cup leafy or raw vegetables ½ cup cooked vegetables 6 oz low sodium vegetable juice	Brussel sprouts, green beans, carrots, zucchini, tomatoes, broccoli, bell peppers, cauliflower, spinach, peas, etc.
Fruit	4-5	1 medium fruit 1/2 banana 15 grapes 2 Tbsp dried fruit ½ cup fresh or frozen fruit	Berries, melon, apples, oranges, grapefruit, bananas, dried apricots, raisins, peaches, pears, plums, pineapple, mango, prunes, kiwi, etc.
Dairy Foods, low-fat or non-fat	2-3	8 oz. (1 cup) milk 1 cup yogurt 1 ½ oz cheese	Skim or 1% milk, Non-fat plain or Greek yogurt, part-skim or low-fat cheeses
Lean meat, poultry, fish	6 oz or less	3 oz cooked meat, chicken, turkey, fish	Round or loin cuts of beef and pork, Skinless poultry Roast, broil or grill meats; remove skin.
Nuts, Seeds, Dry Beans	4-5 weekly	¼ cup or 1 oz nuts 2 Tbsp or ½ oz seeds ½ cup cooked beans	Almonds, pecans, walnuts, peanuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, lentils, kidney beans, black beans, chickpeas, etc.
Fats and Oils	2-3	1 tsp. tub margarine or butter 1 Tbsp low-fat mayo 2 Tbsp oil-based salad dressing ¼ Avocado 10 olives	Olive, peanut, canola oils. Choose spreads and dressings based on these oils.
Sweets	5 weekly	1 Tbsp sugar, jelly, jam or honey 3 pieces hard candy ½ cup non-fat or low-fat frozen yogurt or ice cream 1-2 small cookies 1oz dark chocolate	

Getting Started

6. **Change gradually and focus on small steps to big change.**
7. **Add more fruit and vegetables to your day.**
 - Keep fruits and vegetables on hand. Use frozen, canned, or dried if they are more convenient than fresh. Try ready-to-eat items like pre-peeled carrots, prewashed salad mix, single-serving cans of fruit.
 - If you now eat one or two vegetables a day, add a serving at lunch and another at dinner to reach 4-5 servings per day.
 - If you don't eat fruit now or only have juice at breakfast, add a serving to your meals. You can also have fruit for a snack or dessert.
8. **Aim for 3 servings of Dairy per day.**
 - Slowly switch to fat-free and low-fat dairy products. Work your way to 3 servings a day.
 - Drink milk with lunch or dinner, instead of soda, sugar-sweetened tea, or alcohol.
 - Choose low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk to reduce your intake of saturated fat, total fat, cholesterol and calories.
9. **Treat meat as one part of the whole meal, instead of the focus.**
 - Limit meat to 6 ounces a day (2 servings). 3 ounces of beef, pork and chicken is about the size of a deck of cards.
 - If you are eating more than this, cut the amount of meat gradually—by half or a third at each meal.
 - Include 2 or more vegetarian-style (meatless) meals each week.
 - Add fruit and vegetables, whole grain rice, pasta and dry beans to meals to get full without lots of meat.
 - Try casseroles, pasta, and stir-fry dishes that have less meat and more vegetables, grains and dry beans.
10. **Shake the salt habit.**
 - Add no salt to your meal at the table. Use half the usual amount (or less) when cooking or baking.
 - Buy vegetables fresh, plain frozen or canned with “no added salt.”
 - Use fresh poultry, fish and lean meats, rather than canned, smoked, cured or processed meats.
 - Be spicy instead of salty. Flavor foods with herbs, spices, lemon, lime, vinegar, or salt-free seasoning blends.
 - Cut back on frozen dinners, pizza, and canned soups/broths. Try the reduced sodium varieties.
 - When eating out, order foods without sauces. Ask that no salt, soy sauce, or other salty seasonings be used.

Sample DASH Menu

Breakfast

- Orange, 1 small
- Oatmeal, 100% rolled oats or steel-cut, 1 cup cooked
- 1% milk, 8 oz (1 cup)
- Walnuts, 2 Tbsp
- Brown sugar, 1 tsp

Lunch

- Chicken salad with 1 Tbsp light mayo, grapes, celery, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup
- 100% whole wheat pita bread, 1 slice
- Lettuce, 2 leaves
- Carrots, 3-4 sticks
- Celery, 3-4 sticks
- Radishes, 2
- Fruit salad, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- 1% milk, 8 oz

Dinner

- Cod, baked 3 oz.
- Brown rice, with scallions, 1 cup
- Broccoli, steamed, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- Tomatoes, stewed, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- Spinach salad, with
 - raw spinach, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup
 - sliced mushrooms, 2
 - cucumber, 2 slices
 - bean sprouts, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
- Italian dressing, light, 1 Tbsp.

Snacks

- Apple and string cheese
- 2 Tbsp nuts, 2 Tbsp dried fruit
- 1 cup pea pods, Greek yogurt

Reference:

2013 AHA/ACC Guideline on Lifestyle Management to Reduce Cardiovascular Risk: a Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines. Available at: <http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/early/2013/11/11/01.cir.0000437740.48606.d1>