

DASH Eating Plan

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan is a way of eating that helps lower high blood pressure. This eating plan is rich in fruits, vegetables, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products. It also emphasizes intake of other heart healthy foods, such as whole grains, fish, poultry, and nuts. This plan is low in red meats, sweets, added sugars, and sugary beverages.

Due to the foods encouraged and the foods that are limited, the DASH diet is low in: sodium, total fat and saturated fat, cholesterol and added sugar. This eating plan is rich in potassium, magnesium, and calcium, as well as protein and fiber.

People following the DASH eating plan who also lowered their sodium intake further reduced their blood pressure, as compared to a low sodium diet alone.

Following the DASH Eating Plan:

Food Group	Serving Sizes	Examples of Foods	Value to DASH Eating Plan
Grains & grain products 6-8 servings per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice bread • 1 ounce dry cereal • ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal 	Whole wheat or whole grain versions of breads, rolls, pasta, English muffin, pita bread, bagel, or breakfast cereals. Grits, oatmeal, brown rice, unsalted pretzels, air popped popcorn	Major sources of energy (calories) and dietary fiber
Vegetables 4-5 servings per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup raw leafy vegetables • ½ cup cooked or raw cut up vegetables • ½ cup low sodium vegetable juice 	Broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, cucumbers, leafy greens, green beans, peas, potatoes, peppers, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes	Rich sources of potassium, magnesium, and dietary fiber
Fruits 4-5 servings per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 medium fruit (size of tennis ball) • ¼ cup dried fruit 	Apples, apricots, bananas, dates, grapes, mangoes, melons, oranges, peaches, pineapples,	Important sources of potassium, magnesium, and dietary fiber

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit • ½ cup fruit juice 	prunes, raisins, strawberries, tangerines	
Fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products 2-3 servings per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup milk • 1 cup yogurt • 1 ½ ounces cheese 	Fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk or butter milk. Fat-free, low-fat, or reduced fat cheese, fat-free, low-fat, or regular frozen yogurt.	Major sources of calcium and protein
Lean meats, poultry, and fish No more than 2 servings per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 ounces of cooked meats, poultry, or fish • 1 egg 	Select lean or extra lean meat. Trim away visible fat. Broil, roast, or grill instead of fry. Remove skin from poultry.	Rich sources of protein and magnesium
Nuts, seeds, and legumes 4-5 serving per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/3- 1 ½ ounces nuts or seeds • 2 Tbsp. nut butter • ½ cup cooked legumes (dried beans or peas) 	Almonds, hazelnuts, mixed nuts, sunflower seeds, peanuts, kidney beans, lentils, and split peas.	Rich sources of energy (calories), magnesium, potassium, vegetarian protein, and dietary fiber.
Fats and oils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 tsp soft margarine • 1 Tbsp low-fat mayonnaise • 2 Tbsp light salad dressing • 1 tsp oil 	Soft margarine, low-fat mayonnaise, light salad dressing, and vegetable oils (canola, olive, avocado, corn, safflower)	Less than 30% of calories in the DASH Diet are from fat

Tips for eating the DASH way

- Start small. Make gradual changes to your eating habits.
- Plan your meals around foods that contain fiber, such as whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, beans, or vegetables.
- Treat meat as a small part of the whole meal, instead of the focus. Have only 3 ounces of meat at a meal, which is about the size of a deck of cards.

- Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy products. If you are lactose intolerant, try lactase enzyme pills or lactose-free or lactose-reduced products.
- Use fruit or sugar-free gelatin as desserts and snack alternatives.
- If you drink alcohol, limit it to one serving per day for women and two servings per day for men to keep blood pressure from rising. One serving of alcohol is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of hard alcohol.
- Choose products that are low in sodium (less than 140 milligrams per serving) or have no added salt.
- Buy fresh or frozen vegetables. Use canned vegetables with “no salt added.” If unable to find no salt added, drain liquid and rinse well with water to reduce sodium content.
- Choose ready-to-eat breakfast cereals and breads that are low in sodium.
- Cut back on cured and brined foods (example: processed breakfast meats, pickles, olives). Use spices and herbs instead of salt. Substitute lemon, lime, vinegar, or salt-free seasoning blends.
- Choose convenience foods less often. When you do choose convenience foods, compare nutrition facts labels to make a lower sodium choice.

The DASH Eating Plan Sample Menu (Based on 2000 Calories/Day)

2300 mg sodium menu	Substitutions to ↓ sodium to 1500 mg	Servings
Breakfast		
¾ cup bran flakes cereal	¾ cup shredded wheat	1 grain
1 slice whole wheat bread		1 grain
1 medium banana		1 fruit
½ cup fat-free, no sugar added yogurt		1/2 milk product
1 cup low-fat milk		1 milk product
1 tsp olive oil		1 fat
Lunch		
Chicken salad	Unsalted chicken salad	1 poultry
2 slices whole wheat bread	Low sodium bread	2 grain
1 tbsp Dijon mustard	Regular mustard	

Salad made with 1/2 cup tomato wedges, 1/2 cup cucumber slices		2 vegetables
1 tbsp sunflower seeds	Unsalted seeds	1/2 nuts
1 tbsp salad dressing		1/2 fat
1 slice (3/4 ounce) of natural, reduced fat cheddar cheese	1 slice (3/4 ounce) natural swiss cheese, low sodium	1/2 milk product
1/2 cup fruit cocktail		1 fruit
Dinner		
3 ounces baked fish		1 meat
2 tbsp tomato sauce	No salt added tomato sauce	
1 cup green beans		2 vegetables
1/2 tsp canola oil for cooking		1/2 fat
1 small baked potato		1 vegetable
Whole wheat dinner roll		1 grain
1 tsp soft margarine	Unsalted margarine	1 fat
1 apple		1 fruit
Snack		
1/3 cup unsalted almonds		1 nut
1/4 cup raisins		1 fruit
1 orange		1 fruit