



Stewardship of the Body

“I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made” (Ps. 139)

Nutrition: The DASH Diet

As part of the nutrition series, some specific diets will be featured from time to time. One such diet is the DASH diet: **D**ietary **A**pproaches to **S**top **H**ypertension. This diet was developed by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute to reduce blood pressure, and it was found to work quickly. In one major study, blood pressure went down after only two weeks on the eating plan. It is felt that this diet may also be helpful in preventing heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and certain types of cancer.

The DASH plan emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. It also includes fish, poultry, nuts, seeds and dry beans. Lean meat, sweets and healthy fats are allowed in smaller amounts. The DASH plan is low in fat (especially saturated and trans fats), cholesterol and sodium while rich in nutrients, particularly magnesium, potassium and calcium, as well as lean protein and fiber.

Studies have shown that reducing sodium and eating foods (not supplements) that are rich in potassium, calcium and magnesium has a beneficial effect on blood pressure.

Mineral	Where it's found
Potassium (Helps the body get rid of sodium)	Found in many fruits & vegetables, potatoes, whole grains. Legumes, dairy products
Calcium (Eating too little is linked with high blood pressure & osteoporosis)	Dairy products, green leafy vegetables, fish with edible bones, calcium-fortified foods
Magnesium (Eating too little is linked with high blood pressure)	Legumes, green leafy vegetables, nuts & seeds, whole grains, lean meats

The standard DASH plan include 2300 milligrams of sodium while the low-sodium plan includes 1500 milligrams of sodium. The low-sodium plan can reduce blood pressure even more. One study found that weight loss is possible with the DASH plan at lower calorie levels along with increased physical activity. Losing weight helps reduce the blood pressure, also.

Some tips when shopping for your DASH diet:

- Make a list
- Eat before you shop
- Stick to the perimeter. The outer aisles of most grocery stores are where you'll typically find the healthier DASH food items (produce & low-fat dairy items)
- Buy fresh. Fresh foods have less sodium & fat than processed foods. They are also good sources of vitamins, minerals & fiber.
- Read nutrition labels.

The DASH Diet

Food Group	2000 Calories /day	1600 Calories/day	Serving size examples
Grains & grain products	6-8 servings/day	6 servings/day	1 slice whole-grain bread 2 oz. small bagel 1 oz. dry cereal (1/2 cup to 1 1/4 cup; check label) 1/2 cup cooked rice or pasta
Fruits (focus on fresh)	4-5 servings/day	4 servings/day	1 medium fruit 1/2 cup fresh frozen or canned fruit 4 oz. 100% fruit juice
Vegetables (focus on fresh)	4-5 servings/day	3-4 servings/day	1 cup raw leafy green vegetables 1/2 cup raw or cooked vegetables 1 small potato 4 oz. low-sodium vegetable juice
Dairy foods: fat-free or low-fat	2-3 servings/day	2-3 servings/day	1 cup fat free or 1% milk 1 cup low-fat or fat-free yogurt 1 1/2 oz. low-fat or fat-free cheese
Fish, poultry & lean meat	Up to 6 servings/day	3-6 servings/day	1 oz. seafood, cooked, skinless poultry or lean meat 1 egg or 2 egg whites (limit yolks to 4/week)
Nuts, seeds and legumes (beans, lentils, and peas)	4-5 servings/week	3 servings/week	1/3 cup or 1 1/2 oz. nuts 2 tablespoons peanut butter 2 tablespoons (1/2 oz.) seeds 1/2 cup cooked dry beans or peas
Fats & oils	2-3 servings/day	2 servings/day	1 teaspoon tub margarine 1 teaspoon vegetable oil 1 tablespoon low-fat mayonnaise 2 tablespoons low-fat salad dressing

Sweets & sugars	Up to 5 servings/week	0 servings	1 tablespoon sugar, jelly or jam ½ cup sorbet or gelatin 8 oz. lemonade

Source: Mayo Clinic Health Solutions; High Blood Pressure & Your Heart