

ADOPT THE DASH* EATING PLAN

The DASH* diet evolved from the study “Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension,” a multi-center study funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. The study found that eating a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and low-fat or non-fat dairy foods (while also being low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol) caused significant reductions in blood pressure.

- **6-8 servings of grains and grain products per day.** Make at least half your grains whole grains. One serving equals 1 slice bread, ½ bagel, ½ cup dry cereal, ½ cup cooked rice, pasta or cereal.
- **4-5 servings of vegetables per day.** Eat more dark green and orange veggies like broccoli, kale and other dark greens; carrots, sweet potatoes, and winter squash. One serving equals 1 cup raw leafy vegetables, ½ cup cooked vegetables, 6 ounces vegetable juice.
- **4-5 servings of fruit per day.** One serving equals 1 medium fruit, ¼ cup dried fruit, ½ cup fresh, frozen, canned fruit, or 6 ounces fruit juice.
- **2-3 servings of low-fat or non-fat dairy products per day.** One serving equals 1 cup milk, 1 cup yogurt, 1½ ounces cheese.
- **2 or less servings of meat, poultry, or fish per day.** One serving equals 3 ounces of cooked meat, poultry, or fish.

- **4-5 servings of nuts, seeds, or legumes per week.** One serving equals 1/3 cup nuts, 2 tablespoons seeds, ½ cup cooked legumes, 3 ounces tofu.

* The DASH eating plan is based on 2,000 calories a day. Your number of daily servings may vary depending on the number of calories you need.

INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular physical activity will help you lower blood pressure and lose weight. It will also make you feel and look better. Even moderate levels of physical activity, like brisk walking and yard work, are beneficial. Try to increase your physical activity to 30 minutes per day, most days of the week.

LIMIT ALCOHOL INTAKE

Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure. If you drink, limit yourself to two drinks a day if you are a man and one drink a day if you are a woman or a lighter-weight person. One drink is equal to 1½ ounces of 80-proof whiskey, 5 ounces of wine, or 12 ounces of regular or light beer.

STOP SMOKING

Cigarette smoking is a powerful risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Blood pressure rises significantly with each cigarette. Therapies to lower blood pressure may not be as effective if smoking is continued. Stopping the use of tobacco products is essential for overall cardiovascular health.

The Seventh Report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure (August 2004). National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, NIH Publication No. 04-5230.

The DASH Eating Plan (May 2003). Department of Health and Human Services, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, NIH publication 03-4082.

Your Guide to Lowering Blood Pressure (May 2003). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, NIH Publication No. 03-5232.

To obtain “The DASH Diet” fact sheet or for more information, call University of Nevada Cooperative Extension:
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AN APPLE
A DAY

Managing High Blood Pressure

Fact Sheet 05-49 (Revised 2012)



University of Nevada
Cooperative Extension

Prepared by University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and the University of Nevada School of Medicine.

About one in three American adults has high blood pressure, also known as hypertension. Untreated, it can damage arteries and increase the risk for heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, and blindness.

Although medications are frequently used, the following lifestyle changes may decrease your blood pressure and possibly reduce the need for medications. Hypertension can almost always be prevented, so these steps are very important even if you do not have high blood pressure.



LOSE WEIGHT IF OVERWEIGHT



Being overweight increases your risk of developing high blood pressure but losing weight may reduce that risk and may help to lower blood pressure. For some people, a modest weight loss may reduce their high blood pressure to the point where medicine is no longer needed. Positive results have been demonstrated with a 10-pound weight loss. Always check with your doctor before reducing or stopping your blood pressure medication.

Losing weight and keeping it off often involves making different food choices and increasing physical activity for life.

Choose lower fat, lower calorie foods

- Prepare food by broiling or baking more often instead of frying.
- Eat fewer breaded and fried foods.
- Eat lean meat, fish, and poultry without skin.
- Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and beans.
- Use the food label to choose lower calorie foods.
- Drink fewer alcoholic and high-calorie beverages.
- Drink six to eight glasses of water a day.

Limit your portion sizes

To lose weight, it's not just the **type** of foods you eat that's important, but also the **amount**.

- Eat smaller portions—do not go back for seconds.

Get Moving

Eating less is only half of the solution in weight loss – increasing your physical activity is the other. By cutting down on calories and increasing physical activity, you will be able to lose more weight and keep it off longer than if you only dieted or only exercised.



REDUCE SODIUM INTAKE



Higher sodium intake is related to higher blood pressure, and Americans eat more sodium than they need. Current recommendations are to consume no more than 2,400 milligrams (mg) per day of sodium – about 1 teaspoon of table salt. Most of the sodium we eat is invisible, either as a natural part of the food itself or mixed in during preparation (especially in fast or processed foods).

Try these tips to lower your sodium intake:

Add little or no salt to foods. Gradually reduce the amount you use to give yourself time to adjust to a “less salty” taste.

Always check the Nutrition Facts panel for the amount of sodium in a serving. Choose those lower in sodium most of the time.

Look for products that say:

- Sodium free—less than 5 mg per serving.
- Very low sodium—35 mg or less per serving.
- Low sodium—140 mg or less per serving.
- Reduced/Less sodium—usual sodium level is reduced by 25%.
- Unsalted, no salt added, or without added salt—made without the salt that's normally used, but still contains the sodium that's a natural part of the food itself.

Limit use of highly processed convenience foods. Look for lower sodium versions of snack crackers, canned soups, and processed meats. Use frozen vegetables without added sauces instead of canned vegetables or use canned vegetables with no added salt. Choose freshly prepared foods whenever possible.

Tips To Reduce Salt and Sodium

- Buy fresh, plain frozen, or canned “with no salt added” vegetables and tomatoes.
- Use fresh poultry, fish, and lean meat, rather than those that are canned, smoked, cured, or salted.
- Use herbs, spices, and salt-free seasoning blends in cooking and at the table.
- Cut back on instant or flavored rice, pasta, and cereal mixes, which usually have added salt.
- Choose “convenience” foods that are low in sodium. Cut back on frozen dinners, pizza, packaged mixes, canned soups or broth, and salad dressings—these often have a lot of sodium.
- When available, buy low- or reduced-sodium or no-salt-added versions of foods.

