

# The DASH Diet for Lowering High Blood Pressure



Have you been diagnosed with, or suspect you may have, high blood pressure? If yes, there is something you can do to get your blood pressure back in check.

The DASH diet resulted from the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension clinical study. The DASH combination diet has been proven to lower blood pressure and can help prevent and control high blood pressure.



The DASH diet helps keep your blood pressure in check because it is rich in fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, and low in saturated and total fat. It is also low in cholesterol and high in dietary fibre, potassium, calcium, and magnesium. Check out the chart below for servings and examples of ways you can eat the DASH way.

Food Group Servings	Serving Sizes	Healthy Examples	Benefit
<b>Vegetables and Fruit 8-10 per day</b>	1 cup raw leafy vegetable, 1 med fruit or vegetable	Tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, bananas, strawberries, dates, broccoli, spinach, beans, peas, oranges	Rich sources of potassium, magnesium, and fibre
<b>Grain Products 7-8 per day</b>	1 slice of bread, ½ cup dry cereal, ½ cooked rice	Whole-wheat bread, pita or bagel, oatmeal, pasta	Major sources of energy and fibre
<b>Milk and Alternatives 2-3 per day</b>	1 cup of milk, 50g of cheese, ¾ cup of yogurt	Skim or 1% milk, nonfat or low-fat yogurt, part-skim mozzarella cheese	Major source of calcium and protein
<b>Meat and Alternatives 2-3 per day</b>	3 oz cooked meats, poultry, fish	Select only lean cuts and trim away visible fats; broil, roast or boil meats	Rich sources of protein, iron and magnesium
<b>Nuts, seeds, and legumes 4-5 Per Week</b>	1/3 cup of nuts, 2 tbsp seeds, ½ cup of cooked legumes	Almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds, kidney beans, lentils	Rich sources of magnesium, potassium, protein, fibre, omega 3 fat

## Tips on eating the DASH way

- Start small and make gradual changes in your eating habits.
- Center your meal around healthy carbohydrates such as whole grain pasta, brown rice, beans, and vegetables.
- Treat meat as one part of the whole meal, instead of the main focus.
- Use fruits and low-fat, low-calorie foods such as sugar-free gelatin for desserts and snacks.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



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What are some other ways to *reduce* high blood pressure?

There are lots of ways!

- ✓ Exercise regularly
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight
- ✓ Avoid excess alcohol
- ✓ Lower stress levels
- ✓ Eat a healthy diet
- ✓ Limit your sodium intake
- ✓ Avoid smoking
- ✓ Get support

Here is a chart showing the change in blood pressure after an intervention had been in place:

Effects of change in blood pressure in adults with Hypertension	Action	Change in blood pressure (mmHg SBP/DBP)
Decreased Na <sup>+</sup> intake	Reduce by 1800mg	-5.8/2.5
Weight loss	Lose 4.5kg	-7.2/5.9
Decrease alcohol intake	By 2.7 drinks/day	-4.6/2.3
Exercise	3x/week (30-60min)	-10.3/7.5
Dash Diet	Follow diet	-11.4/5.5
Flax	¼ cup	-15/7

Gray, J. (2000). *Therapeutic choices*. [Ottawa]: Canadian Pharmacists Association.

