

DASH to Better Blood Pressure

How Can You Lower Blood Pressure?

According to the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) sodium trial, the most important thing that you can do to lower your blood pressure is to eat a low-sodium, DASH-style diet. It is also important to exercise, maintain a healthful weight, and limit alcohol consumption. Incorporate good sources of calcium, magnesium, potassium, and fiber into your diet.

Meet the DASH Studies:

The DASH studies were coordinated by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

- DASH – First Study: This study set out to test dietary patterns to see which could be associated with lower blood pressure.
- DASH-Sodium – Second Study: This study adjusted the sodium levels in various diets to explore the effects of sodium on blood pressure.

DASH Results:

The DASH diet lowered blood pressure in those with high blood pressure. Reductions came quickly – usually within two weeks of starting the diet.

The authors estimated that the DASH diet may help prevent and control high blood

pressure and thus reduce the incidence of coronary heart disease by 15%. It can also reduce the incidence of stroke by 27%. The DASH diet lowered blood pressure as much as a single high blood pressure drug, which was an average of 6 systolic over 3 diastolic (mmHg) in reductions.

Make DASH Work for You!

The DASH eating plan includes whole grains, poultry, fish, and nuts. It has low levels of fats, red meats, and sweets. It is also high in potassium, calcium, and magnesium, as well as protein and fiber.

It is helpful to write down what you eat for several days or weeks to check your progress.

Here are common serving sizes:

- Grains: 1/2 cup of cooked grains, 1 slice of bread, or 1 ounce of dry cereal.
- Fruits and Vegetables: 1/2 cup of chopped fruits or vegetables, 1 cup of leafy greens, 1 medium piece of fruit, 1/4 cup dried fruit, or 3/4 of a cup of 100% fruit juice.
- Dairy: 1 cup of skim milk or nonfat yogurt.
- Protein: 2-3 ounces of lean meat, 4 egg whites, 1/2 cup of beans, or 2 tablespoons of nut butter.

Servings for a 2,000-Calorie Day:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| • Grains (ounce) | 6-8 |
| • Vegetables (half cup) | 4-5 |
| • Fruits (half cup) | 4-5 |
| • Low-fat/nonfat milk (cup) | 2-3 |
| • Meat, Poultry, Fish (oz) | 6 or less |
| • Nuts, Seeds, and Beans | 4-5/week |
| • Oils (tsp) | 2-3 |
| • Sweets | < 5/week |

This diet is higher in fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy products than what most people are used to eating. The DASH diet is also lower in sweets and sugary drinks than many people are used to. To learn more about the DASH diet, visit www.nhlbi.nih.gov.



BROUGHT TO YOU BY: