

DASH Eating Plan



It's easy to adopt the **DASH** (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan. Even small changes lead to significant benefits.

Follow these steps to begin a healthy lifestyle for a lifetime.

1

ASSESS WHERE YOU ARE NOW

The DASH eating plan requires no special foods and has no hard-to-follow recipes. You can use the free, interactive, online Body Weight Planner (niddk.nih.gov/bwp) to find out how many calories you need per day to reach your goal weight. Then review the What's on Your Plate? guidelines to compare your current food habits with the DASH plan. This will help you see what changes you need to make.

2

DISCUSS MEDICATION WITH YOUR DOCTOR

If you take medication to control high blood pressure or cholesterol, **DO NOT** stop using it. Follow the DASH eating plan and talk with Dr. Johnson about your medication as part of an overall plan for wellness.

3

MAKE DASH A PART OF YOUR HEALTHY LIFE

The DASH eating plan along with other lifestyle changes can help you control your blood pressure or lower blood cholesterol. Important lifestyle recommendations include:

- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- Get regular physical activity
- If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation (up to 1 drink/day for women or 2 drinks/day for men)

4

DASH IS FOR EVERYONE IN THE FAMILY

Share your new eating habits with the whole family. DASH can be adjusted to meet different nutritional needs, food preferences and special diets.

5

DON'T WORRY

Remember that on some days the foods you eat may add up to more than the recommended servings from one food group and less from another. Or, you may have too much sodium on a particular day. Just try your best to keep the average of several days close to the DASH eating plan and the sodium level recommended for you.

What's on Your Plate?

Everything you eat and drink matters.

The right mix of foods can help you be healthier now and into the future.



6-8 ounces per day

Look for whole grains listed first or second on the ingredients list. Try oatmeal, popcorn, whole-grain bread and brown rice. Combine your favorite veggies and protein foods for a nutritious meal. Limit grain-based desserts and snacks, such as cakes, cookies and pastries.



2-2½ cups per day

Focus on whole fruits: fresh, frozen, dried or canned in 100% juice. Include fruit at breakfast, top whole-grain cereal with your favorite fruit, add berries to pancakes or mix dried fruit into hot oatmeal, enjoy as a snack or as a dessert.



2-2½ cups per day

Vary your veggies. Try adding fresh, frozen or canned vegetables to salads, sides and main dishes. Choose a variety of colorful vegetables prepared in healthful ways: steamed, sautéed, roasted or raw. Make extra vegetables and save for later. Use them for a stew, soup or a pasta dish.



Use sparingly

Choose vegetable oils instead of butter and oil-based sauces and dips instead of ones with butter, cream or cheese.



4-5 times per week



6 ounces or less per day

Lean meat, fish, poultry. Mix up your protein foods to include seafood, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, soy products, eggs and lean meats and poultry. Try main dishes made with beans or seafood like tuna salad or bean chili. Next taco night, try adding a new protein, like shrimp, beans, chicken or beef.



2-3 cups per day

Choose low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt and soy beverages to cut back on saturated fat. Replace sour cream, cream and regular cheese with low-fat yogurt, milk and cheeses.

- Drink and eat beverages and food with less sodium, saturated fat and added sugars.
- Use the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list to limit items high in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks. Water is calorie-free. Non-diet soda, energy or sports drinks and other sugar-sweetened drinks contain a lot of calories from added sugars and have few nutrients.