

DASH Diet: Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension



The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan is rich in whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and dairy products that are low in fat and fat-free. The DASH diet approach has been shown to improve health. It helps to lower blood pressure and cholesterol, and is associated with lower risk of several types of cancer, heart disease, stroke, heart failure, kidney stones, and reduced risk of developing diabetes. Also, by choosing the right calorie level, it is appropriate as a plan for weight loss.

Getting started

Start small. Make gradual changes in your eating habits.

- If you eat one or two vegetables a day, add a serving at lunch and another at dinner.
- If you don't eat fruit now or have only juice at breakfast, add a serving to your meals. Eat fruit as a snack.

- Use only half the butter, margarine, or salad dressing that you do now.
- Gradually increase dairy products to two or three a day. Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy products.

Treat meat as one part of the whole meal instead of the focus.

- If you eat large portions of meat, cut back gradually—by a half or a third at each meal. Increase servings of vegetables, rice, pasta, and dry beans at meals.
- Include two or more vegetarian-style (meatless) meals each week.

Eat fruits or other low-fat foods as desserts and snacks.

- Fruits offer great taste and variety. Use fruits canned in their own juice. Fresh fruit needs little or no preparation. Dried fruit is easy to carry with you.

Reduce salt and sodium.

- Read food labels to select foods lower in sodium.

- To flavor foods when cooking, use herbs and spices (like oregano, thyme, paprika, nutmeg, turmeric, and coriander) instead of salt.
- Limit or avoid high-sodium foods (like smoked, cured, or processed foods; convenience foods or fast foods; high-sodium condiments; highly salted snacks; and sauces, mixes, and “instant” products).
- Use fruit juice or vinegar to marinate foods.

Additional resources

Visit kp.org/mydoctor to:

- View most lab results and check your preventive health reminders
- Email your doctor
- Use interactive online tools to help keep you and your family healthy

Contact your Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center or Department for books, videos, classes, and additional resources.

If you are hit, hurt, or threatened by a partner or spouse, this can seriously affect your health. There is help. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or connect to ndvh.org.

The DASH Diet—Sample Menu		
DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
Breakfast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooked oatmeal (plain) - Chopped apple - Chopped almonds or walnuts - Raisins - Nonfat milk or light yogurt 	Breakfast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whole grain English muffin - Natural peanut butter - Plain or light yogurt - 1 tangerine 	Breakfast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orange juice - Scrambled eggs or egg substitute - Whole grain toast - Raspberry jam - Nonfat milk or 1% fat milk
Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tuna sandwich on whole grain bread with light Swiss cheese, lettuce, and tomato - Vegetable soup - Kiwi or nectarine 	Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Veggie burger on whole grain bun with lettuce, tomato, and onion - Homemade oven-roasted potato “fries” - Small salad with 1 tsp oil and vinegar dressing 	Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chicken quesadilla on whole wheat tortilla with a few slices of avocado and salsa - Black beans - Side salad - Apple
Snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orange 	Snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 pear - ½ to 1 oz low-fat string cheese 	Snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yogurt, pecans, and strawberries
Dinner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baked chicken - Baked potato - Steamed green beans - Chopped tomatoes and cucumbers with parsley, oil, and vinegar 	Dinner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chili - Green salad and tangerines with oil and vinegar salad dressing - Berries and plain or light yogurt 	Dinner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baked salmon - Sweet potato - Green peas - Dinner salad - Plum

TASTE TIPS

Looking for something on the sweeter side? **Cinnamon, chopped nuts, and fresh or dried fruit** can add taste appeal to both **plain yogurt** OR **cooked cereals** such as rice or oatmeal.

Transform **plain yogurt** into a **dip for vegetables** by adding **fresh herbs, chopped chives, or roasted garlic**.

Roasting vegetables brings out rich flavors you may never have known were there. **Sliced eggplant, peppers, onions, squash, and cabbage** have so much to offer. Experiment!

Puree frozen berries or bananas with **nonfat milk** or **yogurt** for a delicious smoothie. For variety, add a few drops of **vanilla** or almond extract.

Nutrient-rich foods are for everyone—regardless of your size or how many calories you may need each day. If your needs are on the low end of the spectrum, eat half a sandwich or half an English muffin instead of a full one; choose smaller pieces of fruit; go easy on the nuts and starches and limit meat, chicken, or fish to no more than 3 ounces at a meal. If you have higher calorie needs, you can be more liberal with your portions and slip in a few more “extras” here and there. Still, the foundation is the same for all—basic wholesome foods.

This information is not intended to diagnose or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.