



Living Well

DASH your way to lower blood pressure

Trying to lower your blood pressure can be hard. We understand! But by making just a few changes to the way you eat, you can begin to take control. The DASH eating plan—or Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension—is a heart-healthy approach to eating that's proven to help lower blood pressure and cholesterol.

What is DASH?

The DASH plan focuses on foods that are high in calcium, potassium, and magnesium, which can naturally help lower your blood pressure. It also focuses on foods that are low in saturated fat, sodium, sugar, and cholesterol. Be sure to check with your doctor to find out what's right for your nutritional needs.

Will you still be able to enjoy the foods you love with the DASH plan? Of course! DASH isn't all about limits—it's about eating good, heart-healthy food for life. The DASH plan includes food you probably already enjoy eating, such as:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains
- Fish, poultry, and other lean protein
- Beans, seeds, and nuts
- Fat-free or low-fat dairy products

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DASH is part of a heart-healthy lifestyle

The DASH eating plan is one key part of a heart-healthy lifestyle. You can also make other changes to help support your goal to lower your blood pressure, such as:

- Losing weight, if you're overweight
- Being physically active
- Drinking alcohol in moderation
- Taking medicine as prescribed
- Quitting smoking
- Getting plenty of sleep
- Managing stress

The DASH plan is a heart-healthy approach to eating proven to help lower blood pressure.

Getting started with DASH

You're ready to start using the **DASH eating plan** to help get your blood pressure under control. But how? You'll have more success if you make a plan. The plan should include short-term goals (habits you can stick to every day) and long-term goals (goals you might want to reach in 6-12 months).

The checklist below can help you fit the **DASH eating plan** into your life. Making these changes, even one at a time, can help you reach your health goals. Once you take the first step, you'll be on your way!

Check the changes you can make now.

- Add a vegetable or fruit serving** at lunch and dinner. For example, try adding lots of vegetable toppings to a ready-made pizza.
- Take fruit** to work or school as a snack.
- Use half** the butter or margarine you do now.
- Choose whole grain foods**, including whole-wheat bread or whole-grain cereals.
- Add garbanzo beans** (chickpeas) to a salad or make split pea or black bean soup.
- Treat meat as one part of the meal**, instead of the focus, and have two or more meatless meals a week.
- Drink fat-free milk**. A glass has only 80 calories and no fat. It's packed with nutrients that lower blood pressure.
- Other:** _____

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