

DASH: Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension

Contents

How can the DASH diet help lower my blood pressure?	1
Low fat or no fat dairy foods.....	2
Vegetables and fruits.....	3
Sodium	4
Grains.....	6
Meat and alternatives	7
Fats and oils.....	8
Sweets and added sugars	9
Other foods.....	9
The right DASH eating plan for you	11
Make your own recipes with less salt and fat with a few changes.....	12
Ways to lower your blood pressure	12
Follow Canada’s Food Guide Healthy Eating Recommendations	13
Be mindful of your eating habits	13
Resources	14

DASH: Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension

Hypertension (high blood pressure) causes your heart to work harder. This can harm your arteries and vital organs. High blood pressure can cause heart disease, kidney disease, and stroke.

If you have high blood pressure, eating healthy, balanced meals and lowering your sodium (salt) intake can help.

How can the DASH diet help lower my blood pressure?

Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension are:

- › **Dairy**: high in low fat dairy products
- › **Abundant (high)**: in fruits and vegetables
- › **Sodium (salt)**: restricted
- › **Heat healthy**: low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and trans fat

Note: DASH means you will be eating more potassium, magnesium, calcium, protein, and fibre. If you have kidney disease, talk with your primary health care provider or dietitian before starting this meal plan.

DASH is high in low-fat Dairy products.

Low fat or no fat dairy foods

See the chart on page 11 for suggested number of servings. Choose lower fat dairy foods.

1 serving = 1 cup (250 ml) low fat milk or soy beverage

- › 1 cup (250 ml) yogurt
- › 1 ½ oz (50 g) cheese

Best choices

- › Milk (skim, 0.5%, or 1%)
- › Yogurt with less than 1.4% milk fat (M.F.)
- › Cottage cheese with 1% M.F.
- › Fat free and low fat cheese (less than 10% M.F.); do not use often because of its high salt content
- › Evaporated skim milk
- › Fat free or low fat frozen yogurt

Avoid

- › Processed cheese spreads (like Cheese Whiz[®])
- › Processed cheese slices
- › Blue, feta, Romano, and Parmesan cheese
- › Chocolate milk
- › Malted milk
- › Buttermilk
- › Whipping, coffee, and cereal blend cream
- › Homogenized (3.25%) milk
- › Milkshakes
- › Milk puddings

DASH is Abundant (high) in fruits and vegetables.

Vegetables and fruits

See the chart on page 11 for suggested number of servings.

1 serving = 1/2 cup (125 ml) cooked vegetables

- › 1 cup (250 ml) raw, leafy vegetables
- › 1/2 cup (125 ml) fruit, cut up
- › 1 medium piece of fresh fruit
- › 1/4 cup (60 ml) dried fruit

Best choices

- › Fresh or frozen vegetables
- › Vegetables canned without salt
- › Tomato sauce, tomato paste, or canned tomatoes without added salt
- › V8® Low Sodium 100% Vegetable Juice
- › Fresh fruit
- › Unsweetened, frozen fruit
- › Canned fruit in its own juice or water
- › Unsweetened fruit juice (no more than 4 oz a day)
- › Dried fruit without added sodium

Avoid

- › Canned vegetables
- › Vegetable juices (like tomato, Clamato®, V8® Original 100% Vegetable Juice)
- › Dried potato mixes (like scalloped or mashed)
- › Canned fruit in syrup
- › Sauerkraut, kimchi

DASH is Sodium (salt) restricted.

Sodium

Limit how much sodium you consume (eat or drink) to 1500 mg or less a day. Most of the sodium we eat comes from packaged foods, restaurant meals, and snacks. Always check food labels to see how much sodium is in each serving.

Choose more foods from the ‘Best choices’ lists, and less from the ‘Avoid’ lists.

Best choices

- › Fresh, unprocessed foods
- › Fresh or frozen vegetables and fruit
- › Canned fruit and vegetables without added salt
- › Herb and spice mixes with no salt added
- › Lemon juice, garlic, or pepper

Only use salt substitutes like NoSalt[®], Nu-Salt[®] or Half Salt[™] after talking with your dietitian or primary health care provider.

Avoid

- › Salt used in cooking and at the table
- › Canned or pre-cooked foods with salt
- › Soy sauce, teriyaki sauce, oyster sauce, hoisin sauce, MSG, and salsa
- › Processed and convenience foods
- › Pickles, pickled vegetables, pickled eggs, olives, and sauerkraut
- › Potato chips, salted nuts, and other salty snack foods

Do not use more than 1 tsp (5 ml) a day of mustard, ketchup, relish, barbecue sauce, or Worcestershire sauce.

How to read a food label

- Most labels show the mg (milligrams) of sodium and g (grams) of fat, and a % DV (percent daily value).
- Choose foods with less than 120 mg or 5% DV of sodium per serving.
- Avoid foods with more than 360 mg or 15% DV of sodium per serving. See an example of a high sodium food to avoid below.
- Choose foods with less than 15% DV of fat — less than 5% DV is even better.
- Choose foods with 0 g of trans fats.

Example of a high sodium food to avoid

Sample label for macaroni and cheese

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)			
Serving Per Container 2			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110		
% Daily Values*			
Total Fat 12g	18%		
Saturated Fat 3g	15%		
Trans Fat 3g			
Cholesterol 30mg	10%		
Sodium 470mg	20%		
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%		
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%		
Sugars 5g			
Protein 5g	10%		
Vitamin A 4%	• Vitamin C 2%		
Calcium 20%	• Iron 4%		
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.			
	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2400mg	2400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

1. Check serving size and calories

2. Limit fats and watch out for high sodium

3. Get enough of these nutrients

4. Footnotes (more information)

DASH is Heat healthy: low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and trans fat.

Grains

See the chart on page 11 for suggested number of servings.

1 serving = 1 slice of bread

- › 1 oz (30 g) dry cereal
- › 1/2 pita or a small bagel
- › 1/2 cup (125 ml) rice, pasta, hot cereal, or other grain, cooked

Best choices

- › Whole grain products (breads, rolls, pita bread, bagels)
- › Whole grain pasta
- › Brown or wild rice
- › Plain, unsalted, baked crackers
- › Dry cereals made without salt (like shredded wheat, puffed wheat, Kellogg's® Mini-Wheats®)
- › Cooked cereals made without salt

Look for breads, cereals, and crackers with less than 12% DV of sodium per serving.

Avoid

- › Pre-seasoned pasta mixes (like Hamburger Helper™, Kraft Dinner®, Knorr® Sidekicks®)
- › Pre-seasoned rice
- › Canned pasta
- › Instant hot cereals
- › Baking mixes (like pancake and biscuit mixes)
- › Crumb coating (breadcrumb) mixes
- › Store-bought baked goods
- › Cheese bread, egg bread
- › Bread stuffing mixes
- › Salted crackers
- › Granola

Meat and alternatives

See the chart on page 11 for suggested number of servings.

Choose lean cuts of meat and use low fat cooking methods (like baking, barbecuing, broiling, or roasting).

Replace meat, poultry, or fish with nuts, seeds, or pulses (dried beans, peas, and lentils) 4 to 5 times a week.

1 serving = 3 oz (90 g) cooked

- › 1/2 cup (125 ml) tofu or cooked pulses
- › 2 eggs
- › 2 tbsp (30 ml) peanut butter
- › 1/3 cup (75 ml) nuts
- › 2 tbsp (30 ml) seeds

Best choices

- › Fish
- › Poultry with skin taken off
- › Canned tuna or salmon in water, rinsed
- › Lower fat cuts of meat, with fat you can see taken off
- › Eggs (limit to 2 egg yolks a week)
- › Unsalted, dry roasted nuts and seeds (like almonds, mixed nuts, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds)
- › Dried pulses (dried beans, peas, and lentils). **Avoid canned beans and lentils because of their high sodium content.**
- › Unsalted natural peanut butter

Avoid

- › High fat cuts of meat
- › All meat, fish, or poultry that has been smoked, cured, pickled, salted, or dried (like bacon, bologna, corned beef, ham, kosher meats, deli meats, sausage, wieners, sardines, salt cod, smoked herring)
- › Canned meats
- › Frozen dinners
- › Frozen meat pies
- › Frozen, breaded fish or chicken
- › Canned beans and stews
- › Salted seeds and nuts
- › Salted peanut butter

Note: Limit shellfish (like shrimp and scallops), as it naturally contains salt.

Cut back on unhealthy fats

- Avoid butter, lard, shortening, and hydrogenated margarine and oils.
- Use non-hydrogenated margarine and oils only in small amounts.
- Choose low fat or fat free milk products.
- Cool gravies, soups, and stews until the fat rises to the top and hardens. Skim off the hardened fat and throw it away.
- Steam, broil, boil, roast, grill, barbecue, or microwave instead of frying.
- If you sauté, use a heart healthy oil like olive, canola, or peanut oil.
- Before cooking, take off all fat from meat and skin from poultry (chicken, turkey, etc.).
- Drain ground meats after cooking to get rid of the fat.
- Check food labels for the amount of fat per serving and the type of fat.

Fats and oils

See the chart on page 11 for suggested number of servings.

1 serving = 1 tsp (5 ml) soft margarine or vegetable oil

- › 1 tbsp (15 ml) low fat mayonnaise
- › 2 tbsp (30 ml) light salad dressing

Best choices

- › Salt-free, soft (non-hydrogenated) margarine like Becel™ Salt Free
- › Cooking oil (canola, olive, or soybean)
- › Salt-free salad dressing
- › Mayonnaise
- › Salt-free, low fat homemade gravy
- › Vegetable oil cooking spray

Avoid

- › Lard, shortening, butter, hard (hydrogenated) margarine, bacon fat, cocoa butter
- › Hydrogenated palm and coconut oils
- › Store-bought salad dressings
- › Canned gravy and gravy mixes

Sweets and added sugars

See the chart on page 11 for suggested number of servings.

1 serving = 1 tbsp sugar, syrup, or jam

- › 1/2 cup sherbet or Jell-O®
- › 1 cup lemonade or fruit punch
- › 3 pieces of hard candy

Best choices

- › Low sugar jams and jellies (like E.D.Smith Triple Fruits® Fruit & Concentrated Fruit Juice Spreads or Smucker's® Double Fruit® Fruit Spreads)
- › Mineral water
- › Sugar-free drinks, candy, and Jell-O® in small amounts

Avoid

- › Water treated with salt-based water softener
- › Sports drinks (like Gatorade®)
- › Regular pop
- › Sugar, honey, corn syrup, maple syrup, molasses, and regular jams and jellies

Other foods

Best choices

- › Postum®, Ovaltine®
- › Ground flaxseed
- › Herbs and spices without salt
- › No salt added seasoning blends (like Mrs. Dash™)
- › Vinegar
- › Tabasco® sauce
- › Unsalted, air-popped popcorn
- › Cocoa
- › Low sodium baking powder
- › Unsalted soups and broths
- › Canned soups with less than 2.5% DV of sodium per serving

Do not use more than 1 tsp (5 ml) a day of mustard, ketchup, relish, barbecue sauce, Worcestershire sauce, or other condiments with less than 2.5% DV of sodium per serving.

Avoid

- › Salt, seasoning salt, sea salt, Ac'cent® Flavor Enhancer
- › Baking soda
- › Flavoured salts (like garlic salt, onion salt, celery salt)
- › Pickles and olives
- › Sauces, like soy (including low sodium), hoisin, teriyaki, and oyster
- › Salsa, picante, taco sauces
- › Poultry and meat coatings
- › Potato and nacho chips
- › Cheezies® and pretzels
- › Salted microwave popcorn
- › Party mix
- › Regular canned soups
- › Dried soup mixes, bouillon (like OXO®), consommé
- › Split pea soup made with ham or ham bone
- › Bean and bacon soup
- › Canned or bottled pasta and pizza sauces

The right DASH eating plan for you

Each person needs a different number of servings from each food group to get the calories they need to keep a healthy weight.

Food group	Recommended daily servings			
	1600 calories per day	2000 calories per day	2600 calories per day	3100 calories per day
Grains	6	6 to 8	10 to 11	12 to 13
Vegetables	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 6	6
Fruits	4	4 to 5	5 to 6	6
Fatfree or low fat milk and milk products	2 to 3	2 to 3	3	3 to 4
Lean meats, poultry, and fish	1 to 2	2 or less	2	2 to 3
Nuts, seeds, and legumes	3 per week	4 to 5 per week	1 per day	1 per day
Fats and oils	2	2 to 3	3	4
Sweets and added sugars	0	5 or less per week	2 or less per day	2 or less per day

How to get started using DASH

- Change your eating habits bit by bit over time.
- Only make 1 or 2 changes at a time.
- Eat more vegetables, fruits, and grains instead of meat.
- Choose fruit or low fat foods for snacks and desserts.
- Cook more foods at home from scratch.

Make your own recipes with less salt and fat with a few changes

- Do not add salt to homemade soups, sauces, and casseroles.
- Replace salt with different herbs and spices.
- Use low sodium baking powder.
- Use low sodium or homemade broth or bouillon in soups.
- Replace canned vegetables with fresh or frozen vegetables.
- Use less salt in baking recipes or do not use it at all. You will probably not taste the difference.
- Using less salt in yeast bread recipes shortens the rising time. Make the dough a little drier than normal. Watch the dough as it rises. When it has doubled in size, move on to the next step.
- Use non-hydrogenated margarine instead of butter, shortening, or lard.
- If a recipe calls for 3/4 of a cup of fat, use only 1/2 or 1/3 of a cup of fat.
- In muffin recipes that call for more than 1/2 cup of oil, replace **half** of the oil with fruit juice, puréed fruit, or low fat yogurt.
- Refrigerate juices from roast meats and poultry until the fat rises to the top. Skim and remove the fat before making gravy.
- Sauté with water, juice, broth, vegetable oil cooking spray, or wine instead of fats.
- Use less meat, eggs, or cheese than a recipe calls for.

Ways to lower your blood pressure

- Keep a healthy weight.
- Limit alcohol to:
 - › no more than 2 *standard drinks a day for males.
 - › no more than 1 *standard drink a day for females.
- Do not smoke.
- Be active for 30 minutes or more every day.
- Limit caffeine (like coffee, tea, diet or sugar-free cola) to no more than 3 drinks a day.

*A standard drink is:

- › 12 oz (350 ml) of beer (5% alcohol) **OR**
- › 5 oz (150 ml) of wine (12% alcohol) **OR**
- › 1.5 oz (45 ml) of liquor (40% alcohol)

Follow Canada's Food Guide Healthy Eating Recommendations

- **Eat a variety of healthy foods each day.**
- Eat a lot of vegetables and fruits.
- Eat protein foods.
 - › Choose protein foods that come from plants more often.
- Choose whole grain foods.
- Limit highly processed foods.
- Make water your drink of choice.
 - › Replace sugary drinks with water.

Be mindful of your eating habits

- Take time to eat.
- Notice when you are hungry and when you are full.
- Cook more often.
 - › Plan what you will eat.
 - › Involve others in planning and preparing meals.
- Enjoy your food.
 - › Culture and food traditions can be a part of healthy eating.
- Eat meals with others.

Resources

For more tips on how to follow DASH:

- Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
 - › www.heartandstroke.ca
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
 - › www.nhlbi.nih.gov

There are many cookbooks to help you add variety to your meals. You can find these in most libraries and bookstores. Some examples include:

- › *Hold the Salt*, and *Hold that Hidden Salt*, Maureen Tilley, 2011
- › *Delicious DASH Flavors*, and *Low Salt DASH Dinners*, Sandra Nowlan, 2008
- › *The DASH Diet Mediterranean Solution*, Marla Heller, 2018

For information on using more plant-based proteins:

- Better with Beans™ (for recipes using beans) - Ontario Bean Growers
 - › <https://ontariobeans.on.ca>

For nutrition counselling:

- Do an internet search for: “ns health nutrition counselling” to see what services are available in your community.
- Registered dietitians work in some grocery stores. They offer many services, including store tours. Check your local grocery store for help from a registered dietitian. Do an internet search for: “dietitian and (name of your grocery store)”.
- Nova Scotia Health Nutrition Education and Counselling (Dietitians):
 - › [www.nshealth.ca/service-details/Nutrition%20Education%20and%20Counselling%20\(Dietitians\)](http://www.nshealth.ca/service-details/Nutrition%20Education%20and%20Counselling%20(Dietitians))

It can be hard to make changes to your eating habits. If you have questions, please ask to talk with a dietitian.

We are here to help you.

Dietitian: _____

Phone: _____

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

Nova Scotia Health promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

www.nshealth.ca

Prepared by: Nutrition and Food Services

Illustration by: LifeART Super Anatomy 1 Images, Copyright © 1994, TechPool Studios Corp. USA

Designed by: Nova Scotia Health Library Services

The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.

The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.