

The DASH Diet

Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) is an eating plan that originally was created to lower blood pressure but also is “heart healthy” and lowers risk of heart attack and stroke. The DASH plan is high in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and protein that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol.

The plan also focuses on lowering salt intake to less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) per day. Even lower salt intake (1,500 mg per day) can lower blood pressure even more. The DASH eating plan below is based on 2,000 calories per day.

| Food Group | Daily Servings | Serving Size | Examples |
|---------------------------------|----------------|--|---|
| Grains and starches | 6-8 | 1 slice whole grain bread ½ cup cooked oatmeal, oat bran ½ whole grain English muffin 1/2 cup cooked rice, pasta or starchy vegetable | 100% whole wheat bread, 100% whole wheat pasta, old-fashioned or rolled oats, brown and wild rice, barley, quinoa, farro, potatoes, sweet potatoes, peas, corn |
| Vegetables | 4-5 | 1 cup leafy or raw vegetables ½ cup cooked vegetables 4-6 oz low sodium vegetable juice | Brussel sprouts, green beans, carrots, zucchini, tomatoes, broccoli, bell peppers, cauliflower, spinach, snap peas, etc. |
| Fruit | 4-5 | 1 medium fruit 1/2 banana 15 grapes 2 Tbsp dried fruit ½ cup fresh cut or frozen fruit | Berries, melon, apples, oranges, grapefruit, bananas, dried apricots, raisins, peaches, pears, plums, pineapple, mango, prunes, kiwi, etc. |
| Dairy foods, low-fat or non-fat | 2-3 | 8 oz. (1 cup) milk 6 oz. (1 cup) yogurt 1 ½ oz cheese | Skim or 1% milk, non-fat plain or Greek yogurt, part-skim or low-fat cheeses. Those who choose not to eat dairy can substitute non-dairy alternatives like unsweetened soy, pea, or almond milk. |
| Lean meat, poultry, fish | 6 oz or less | 3 oz cooked chicken, turkey, fish, or lean meat 1 egg (no more than 4 yolks per week) | Skinless poultry; white meat Salmon, tuna, sardines, cod, etc. Round or loin cuts of beef, venison, pork, and lamb Roast broil or grill meats. Soy-based options (i.e. tofu and tempeh) can be alternatives to meat. |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|---|---|
| Lean meat, poultry, fish cont. | | | 2 egg whites can be used in place of 1 whole egg. |
| Nuts, seeds, dry beans | 4-5 weekly | <p>¼ cup or 1 oz nuts 2 Tbsp nut butter 2 Tbsp or ½ oz seeds ½ cup cooked beans</p> | <p>Almonds, walnuts, peanuts, pistachios, pecans, mixed nuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, lentils, kidney beans, black beans, chickpeas, split peas, etc. Choose dry beans over canned if possible; otherwise choose “low sodium,” drain, and rinse beans.</p> |
| Fats and oils | 2-3 | <p>1 tsp. vegetable oil 1 tsp. tub margarine or buttery spread 1 Tbsp mayonnaise made with olive oil 1-2 Tbsp oil-based (or yogurt-based) salad dressing ¼ avocado 10 olives</p> | <p>Olive, avocado, peanut, canola oils. Choose spreads and dressings based on these oils.</p> |
| Sweets | <5 weekly | <p>1 Tbsp sugar, jelly, jam, honey, maple syrup, or agave 3 pieces hard candy ½ cup non-fat or low-fat frozen yogurt or ice cream 1/2 cup sorbet or gelatin 1 oz dark chocolate</p> | <p>Fresh fruit is the best choice when you want something sweet. Try frozen fruits such as grapes or homemade frozen fruit sorbet.</p> |

Getting Started

1. Change gradually and focus on small steps to big change.

2. Add more fruit and vegetables to your day.

- Keep fruits and vegetables on hand. Use fresh, frozen, canned, or dried. Try ready-to-eat items such as pre-peeled carrots, baby carrots, prewashed salad mix, individual-sized cans of fruit packed in their own juice.
- If you now eat one or two vegetables a day, add a serving at lunch and another at dinner to reach 4-5 servings per day.

- If you don't eat fruit now or only have juice at breakfast, add a serving of fruit to your meals, snack or dessert.

3. Aim for 3 servings of dairy or non-dairy alternatives per day.

- Slowly switch to fat-free and low-fat dairy products and work your way to three servings a day.
- Non-dairy alternatives (i.e. soy milk, nut milk) should be unsweetened.
- For example, drink milk with lunch or dinner, instead of soda, sugar-sweetened tea, or alcohol.

- Choose low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk to reduce your intake of saturated fat, cholesterol and calories.

4. Treat meat and poultry as one part of the whole meal, instead of the focus.

- Limit portions to 6 ounces a day (2 servings). Three ounces of red meat and poultry is about the size of a deck of cards. If you eat more than this, slowly cut the amount of meat by half or a third at each meal.
- Include two or more vegetarian-style (meatless) meals each week.
- Add fruit and vegetables, whole grains and beans to meals to get full without lots of meat.
- Try casseroles, pastas, stir-fry dishes, with less meat and include more vegetables, beans, or tofu.

5. Shake the salt habit.

- Add no salt at the table and use half the usual amount (or less) when cooking and baking.
- Buy vegetables fresh, plain frozen, or canned with “no added salt” or “low-sodium.”
- Use fresh poultry, fish and lean meats, rather than canned, smoked, cured or processed meats.
- Be spicy instead of salty. Flavor foods with herbs, spices, lemon, lime, vinegar, or salt-free seasoning blends.
- Cut back on frozen dinners, pizza, sub sandwiches, salty snacks (jerky, chips, pretzels, etc.), and canned soups/broths.
- When eating out, order foods without sauces (or sauces on the side) and ask that no salt, soy sauce, or other salty seasonings be used.

6. DASH your way to healthy weight.

Simple Ways to Save Calories

- Have fruit or raw vegetables for a snack instead of chips, crackers, or sweets.
- Eat 1/4 cup of dried apricots instead of a 2-ounce bag of pork rinds.
- Have a lean hamburger that weighs 3 ounces instead of 6 ounces. Add a 1/2 cup serving of carrots and a 1/2 cup serving of cucumbers instead of chips or fries.
- Instead of 5 ounces of chicken, have a stir fry with 3 ounces of chicken and add an extra cup of cooked vegetables. Use a small amount of vegetable oil.
- Add an extra serving of vegetables to your meal to make 1/2 of your plate vegetables instead of having large portions of grains, starches, or meat.
- Try fresh fruit for dessert instead of a cookie, cake, pie, or ice cream.
- Consider using low fat or fat-free dairy products instead of higher fat dairy products.

More Calorie-Saving Tips

- Use food labels to compare packaged foods. Items marked low-fat or fat free are not always lower in calories than their regular versions.
- Use low-fat salad dressings or favorite vinegar to replace high calorie salad dressing.
- Eat smaller portions—cut back gradually.
- Limit foods with lots of added sugar, such as pies, flavored yogurts, some cereals and bars, candy, ice cream, sherbet, regular soft drinks, and fruit drinks.
- Eat fruits canned in their own juice instead of syrup.

- Snack on fruit, vegetable sticks, unbuttered/unsalted popcorn, or handful of nuts.
- Drink water or club soda. Add citrus to enhance flavor.

Ideas for Meals and Snacks

Breakfast

- Oatmeal, 100% rolled oats or steel-cut, 1 cup cooked with 1% milk (4-6 oz.) with 2 Tbsp. walnuts, 1 tsp honey, and ½ cup blueberries
- 1 hard-boiled egg, 1 slice whole wheat toast with 1 tsp jam and 1 orange
- 1 cup whole grain cereal with 4-6 oz. low-fat milk, 1 Tbsp flax, and ½ cup fruit
- 1 slice of whole wheat toast with 1 Tbsp. natural peanut butter and ½ cup sliced strawberries or banana
- 2 egg whites scrambled with 1 cup fresh spinach, seasoned with black pepper or salt-free seasoning, whole grain English muffin

Lunch and Dinner

- 3 oz. chicken salad with mayonnaise and mixed greens and 1 slice of 100% whole wheat pita bread, ½ cup fruit salad and 1% milk or yogurt
- 1 whole grain tortilla roll-up with 3 oz. low sodium turkey, 1 oz. Swiss cheese, and 1 Tbsp. mustard, 1 cup raw snow peas and 1 cup frozen grapes
- 3 oz. tuna salad in a whole wheat pita pocket with shredded carrots, cucumber, tomato slices, and a medium apple
- 3 oz. roasted turkey with ½ cup sautéed peppers and onions, a lettuce salad with 1 Tbsp. olive oil and vinegar dressing

- ¾ cup marinara sauce with lean ground turkey or lean ground beef over spaghetti squash, romaine salad with 1 Tbsp. olive oil and vinegar dressing, and 1 cup fresh fruit salad
- 4 oz baked cod, ½ cup brown rice with scallions, and 1 cup roasted beets
- 4 oz baked salmon, ½ cup wild rice, and 1 cup roasted brussels sprouts with 1 oz pine nuts
- 2 cups spring mix or spinach with cherry tomatoes, sliced carrots, sliced radishes, cucumber slices, 1 oz almonds, 3 oz grilled chicken, and 2 Tbsp oil/vinegar salad dressing with 1 cup fresh fruit
- 1 cup garbanzo bean and potato curry, a side salad with 1 Tbsp oil/vinegar or yogurt-based dressing

Snacks

- 1 medium apple + 1 string cheese
- 2 Tbsp nuts + 2 Tbsp dried fruit
- 1 cup vegetable sticks + 3 Tbsp hummus
- 1 oz. peanuts in a shell + 1 medium orange
- 1 cup bell pepper strips + 1/3 cup guacamole
- 1 medium nectarine + 1 oz. almonds
- 1 light Laughing Cow® cheese + 5 high fiber crackers
- 6 oz greek yogurt + ½ cup sliced fruit
- 1 slice whole grain bread + 2 Tbsp avocado spread
- 1 medium apple, sliced + 1 Tbsp natural peanut butter

Teach Back

What is the most important thing you learned from this handout?

What changes will you make in your diet/lifestyle, based on what you learned today?

Questions

If you are a UW Health patient and have more questions, please call UW Health at one of the phone numbers below. You can also visit our website at www.uwhealth.org/nutrition.

Nutrition clinics for UW Hospital and Clinics (UWHC) and American Family Children's Hospital (AFCH) can be reached at **(608) 890-5500**. Nutrition clinics for UW Medical Foundation (UWMF) can be reached at **(608) 287-2770**.

The Spanish version of this *Health Facts for You* is #379s

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 1/2019 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#379.