DASH Toward Health!

A healthy eating pattern to lower blood pressure
Do you know your blood pressure reading? High blood pressure (sometimes referred to as hypertension) can creep up slowly over time with no symptoms. Blood pressure is the force of blood against artery walls. Normal blood pressure is generally considered less than 120/80 mmHg. Target blood pressure varies based on individual health considerations, so talk with your doctor to learn what a healthy blood pressure is for you.

Why It Matters
High blood pressure is dangerous because it makes the heart work too hard and can harm arteries and organs like the heart, kidneys, brain, and eyes.

Undetected or uncontrolled, it can lead to heart attack, stroke, heart failure, and kidney disease. Elevated blood pressure also raises risk for vision loss, memory loss, erectile dysfunction, and peripheral artery disease.

According to the CDC, one in three American adults have high blood pressure, while only about half have it under control.

The Good News
Often the first treatment for high blood pressure is medication. But there’s another well-researched, effective treatment that can control high blood pressure in less than four weeks—it’s called the DASH Eating Plan. DASH stands for the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. Not only does this
DASH
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plan lower blood pressure, it also lowers LDL or “bad” cholesterol, a known risk factor for heart disease. The DASH was created by observing the eating habits of people around the world with low blood pressure and then creating something similar that would be acceptable to Americans. Increasing fruits and vegetables alone, as well as eating a low-salt diet have been shown to lower blood pressure independently. However, the DASH eating plan is more effective at lowering blood pressure because not only does it increase fruits and vegetables, but emphasizes several other healthy foods, such as low-fat dairy foods, whole grains, fish, poultry, and nuts. At the same time this eating plan limits sweets and sweetened beverages, saturated fat, and cholesterol.

While the plan is rich in potassium, magnesium, calcium, fiber, and protein, don’t run out and buy these in supplement form; prior to the trials for DASH, researchers looked at supplementing these individual nutrients to lower blood pressure and didn’t find much effect. The most effective eating plan to lower blood pressure is a combination of the DASH and a low-salt eating plan.

The DASH plan recommends a certain number of servings from various food categories based on your individual calorie needs. See the Table, “A Day on the DASH” for more information.

The Bottom Line


A Day on the DASH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Groups</th>
<th>Servings/Day for 1,600 Calorie Plan</th>
<th>1 Serving Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grains (whole grains most often)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 slice whole wheat bread, ½ cup cooked oatmeal, 1 cup leafy vegetable like spinach, kale, lettuce, Swiss chard, collard greens, ½ cup raw or cooked vegetable like broccoli, carrots, green beans, potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>3–4</td>
<td>1 cup leafy vegetable like spinach, kale, lettuce, Swiss chard, collard greens, ½ cup raw or cooked vegetable like broccoli, carrots, green beans, potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 medium fruit, ¼ cup dried: raisins, cranberries, ½ cup fresh fruit like apples, bananas, grapes, oranges, melon, or berries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat-free or low-fat milk products</td>
<td>2–3</td>
<td>1 cup low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt, 1 ½ oz. low-fat cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean meats, poultry, and fish</td>
<td>3–6</td>
<td>1 oz. cooked lean meats, poultry or fish, 1 egg or 2 egg whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts, seeds, and legumes</td>
<td>3/week</td>
<td>2 Tbsp. or ½ oz. seeds, ½ cup cooked legumes (beans, peas, lentils)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fats and oil</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 tsp soft margarine or vegetable oil, 1 Tbsp. mayonnaise, 2 Tbsp. salad dressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweets and added sugars</td>
<td>Less than 5/week</td>
<td>1 Tbsp. sugar or maple syrup, 1 Tbsp. jelly or jam, ½ cup sorbet or gelatin dessert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Putting It All Together: a Sample DASH Menu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meal</th>
<th>1 Serving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast</strong></td>
<td>1 cup cooked oatmeal (cooked with 1% milk instead of water), topped with 2 Tbsp. walnut halves, and ½ cup blueberries</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Snack</strong></td>
<td>1 apple with 1 mozzarella string cheese</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td>Half cup brown rice topped with 2 cups salad greens, ½ cup shredded carrots, ½ cup chopped tomatoes, 3 ounces chopped grilled or baked chicken breast, and 2 Tbsp. salad dressing (made from healthy oils like olive, canola, or soy) 1 orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snack</strong></td>
<td>3 cups popcorn (air popped or cooked with small amount of oil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dinner</strong></td>
<td>½ cup cooked quinoa topped with 4 ounces cod with lemon and caper sauce (recipe this page), and ½ cup fresh steamed zucchini ½ cup fresh pineapple for dessert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### High Blood Pressure Can Be Controlled with These Steps

- Maintain a healthy **weight**.
- Get at least 30 minutes of moderate **physical activity** most days of the week.
- Follow a **low-salt** eating plan. Aim to eat no more than 1500-2300 mg sodium/day.
- Follow a healthy **DASH eating plan**. (See feature article.)
- Limit or avoid **alcoholic** beverages.
- Quit **smoking**.
- Reduce your **stress**.
- Monitor your blood pressure at home and see your doctor regularly. Talk with your doctor about how to start a **home monitoring** program.
- If your doctor has prescribed blood pressure **medication**, take it as directed. Discuss any concerns or side-effects with your doctor to find the best medication for you.

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### Cod with Lemon and Caper Sauce

Adapted from Mayo Clinic Healthy Recipes

Serves 4

**Ingredients:**
- 4 cod fillets, about 4 ounces each
- 1 lemon plus zest
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth (less than 140mg sodium per 1 cup)
- 1 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 4 tsp. capers, rinsed and drained
- Freshly ground black pepper

**Directions:**
1. Preheat oven to 350F and spray 4 squares of foil with olive oil.
2. Place 1 cod fillet on each foil square. Zest one lemon and set aside zest for sauce. Cut 1 lemon in half and squeeze the juice from the lemon half over fish. Sprinkle with fresh ground black pepper. Cut the other lemon half into slices and place over the fish. Seal the foil.
3. Bake fish in the oven for 15-20 minutes. Fish is done when it appears white all the way through.
4. While fish is baking, melt butter in small heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add flour and whisk for about two minutes. Gradually add the chicken broth, and continue to whisk until thickened. Add the capers and lemon zest and remove from heat. Serve over the fish and garnish with some fresh parsley or basil.
Get a Jump on Flu Season!

Did you know it takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against the flu? This is why it’s smart to get your flu shot before winter hits.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), flu season can begin as early as October and last well into May. Flu activity usually peaks in January, February, or later.

While the CDC recommends everyone over six months of age have a seasonal flu vaccination, it’s especially important for people with COPD, asthma, cardiovascular disease, or diabetes.

For more information, visit CDC.gov/flu. Flu benefit information is available at PacificSource.com/flu or by contacting our Customer Service department.