



Registered Dietitians

Department of
Veterans Affairs

Leading the way to better health

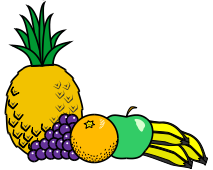




DASH Diet

Lower your blood pressure by changing your eating habits. The DASH diet is based on findings from the "Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension" clinical study that found that high blood pressure levels can be reduced with an eating plan low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol, and rich in fruits, vegetables, and low fat dairy products.

A second study called "DASH-Sodium" looked at the effect on blood pressure of reduced sodium intake. Three sodium levels were chosen: the amount often eaten by many Americans, more than 3300 milligrams (mg); a modest intake of about 2300 mg; and a lower intake of 1500 mg per day. This study showed that lower sodium diets reduced blood pressure. Those on the 1500 mg sodium eating plan as well as on the DASH eating plan also had fewer headaches.

Principles of the DASH Diet

Food Group	Serving Sizes	Examples	Significance to the DASH Diet
Grains & grain products 7-8 servings per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 slice bread• 1 oz dry cereal• ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal	whole wheat bread, English muffin, pita bread, bagel, cereals, grits, oatmeal	major sources of energy and fiber
Vegetables 4-5 servings per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 cup raw leafy vegetables• ½ cup cooked vegetables• 6 oz vegetable juice	tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, peas, squash, broccoli, turnip greens, collards, kale, spinach, artichokes, sweet potatoes, beans	rich sources of potassium, magnesium, and fiber

Food Group	Serving Sizes	Examples	Significance to the DASH Diet
Fruits 4-5 servings per day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 oz fruit juice • 1 medium fruit • ¼ cup dried fruit • ½ cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit 	apricots, bananas, dates, oranges, grapefruit, mangoes, melons, peaches, pineapples, prunes, raisins, strawberries, tangerines	important sources of potassium, magnesium, and fiber
Low fat or nonfat dairy foods 2-3 servings per day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 oz milk • 1 cup yogurt • 1.5 oz cheese 	skim or 1% milk, skim or low fat buttermilk, nonfat or low fat yogurt, part skim mozzarella cheese, nonfat cheese	major sources of calcium and protein
Meat, poultry, and fish No more than 2 servings per day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 oz cooked meats, poultry, or fish 	select only lean meat; trim away visible fats; broil, roast, or boil instead of frying; remove skin from poultry	rich sources of protein and magnesium
Nuts, seeds, and legumes 4-5 per week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 oz or 1/3 cup nuts • ½ oz or 2 Tbsp seeds • ½ cup cooked legumes 	almonds, filberts, mixed nuts, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds, kidney beans, lentils	rich sources of energy, magnesium, potassium, protein, and fiber
Fats and Oils 2-3 servings per day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 tsp soft margarine • 1 Tbsp low fat mayonnaise • 2 Tbsp light salad dressing • 1 tsp vegetable oil 	soft margarine, low fat mayonnaise, light salad dressing, vegetable oil (such as olive, corn, canola, or safflower)	DASH has 27 percent of calories as fat, including fat in or added to foods
Sweets 5 servings per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Tbsp sugar • 1 Tbsp jelly or jam • ½ oz jelly beans • 8 oz lemonade 	maple syrup, sugar, jelly, jam, fruit-flavored gelatin, jelly beans, hard candy, fruit punch, sorbet	sweets should be low in fat and limited by people with diabetes

Tips on Eating the DASH Way



- Start small. Make gradual changes in your eating habits.
- Center your meal around carbohydrates that will also contain fiber, such as whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, beans, or vegetables.
- Treat meat as a small part of the whole meal, instead of the main focus.
- Choose low fat or nonfat dairy products.
- Use fruits or low fat, low calorie foods such as sugar free gelatin for desserts and snacks.
- If you drink alcohol, limit it to one serving per day for women and two servings per day for men of beer, wine, or liquor a day to keep blood pressure from rising. One serving of alcohol is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of hard alcohol.
- Use products that are reduced sodium or have no added salt.
- Buy fresh vegetables when in season. When not in season, buy frozen and canned vegetables with “no salt added”.
- Choose ready-to-eat breakfast cereals that are lower in sodium.
- Cut back on cured and brined food. Use spices instead of salt. Substitute lemon, lime, vinegar, or salt free seasoning blends.
- Choose convenience foods less often. When you do choose convenience foods, focus on choices that are lower in sodium.

Contact your local VA dietitian for more information.

The DASH Diet Sample Menu (based on 2000 calories/day)

2300 mg Sodium Menu	Substitutions to ↓ sodium to 1500 mg	Number of DASH Servings Provided
<i>Breakfast</i>		
¾ cup bran flakes cereal	¾ cup shredded wheat	1 grain
1 slice whole wheat bread		1 grain
1 medium banana		1 fruit
½ cup fruit yogurt, fat free, no sugar added		½ milk product
1 cup low fat milk		1 milk product
1 tsp soft (tub) margarine	1 tsp unsalted margarine	1 fat
<i>Lunch</i>		
Chicken salad	Unsalted chicken salad	1 poultry
2 slices whole wheat bread		2 grain
1 Tbsp Dijon mustard	1 Tbsp regular mustard	
Salad:		
-1/2 cup tomato wedges		1 vegetable
-1/2 cup cucumber slices		1 vegetable
-1 Tbsp sunflower seeds		½ nuts
1 tsp Italian dressing, reduced calorie		
½ cup fruit cocktail, juice pack		1 fruit
<i>Dinner</i>		
3 oz beef, eye of round		1 meat
2 Tbsp beef gravy, fat free		
1 cup green beans, sautéed with ½ tsp canola oil		2 vegetable ½ fat
1 small baked potato:		1 vegetable
1 Tbsp sour cream, fat free		
1 Tbsp grated cheddar cheese, natural, reduced fat	2 Tbsp cheddar cheese, reduced fat, low sodium	
1 Tbsp chopped scallions		
Whole wheat dinner roll		1 grain
1 tsp soft margarine	1 tsp unsalted margarine	1 fat
1 small apple		1 fruit
1 cup low fat milk		1 milk
<i>Snack</i>		
1/3 cup almonds, unsalted		1 nut
¼ cup raisins		1 fruit

1 orange		1 fruit
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