



DASH Eating Plan

Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)

The DASH eating plan focuses on whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and dairy foods (or dairy alternatives) low in fat or fat-free. Over time, DASH can lower your blood pressure (hypertension) and cholesterol. It can reduce your risks for:

- Heart disease, heart failure, and stroke
- Diabetes
- Kidney stones

Get started with DASH

Start small and make gradual changes. Aim to eventually eat 5 servings of vegetables and fruits every day. Adding even one more vegetable or fruit daily can benefit your health.

You can use these tips:

- ▶ Add another vegetable to your lunch and your dinner, if you already eat 1 or 2 a day.
- ▶ Add fruit to most meals or have it as a snack, if you don't eat fruit now or only have juice at breakfast.
- ▶ Use half as much butter, margarine, and salad dressing as you do now.
- ▶ Have 2 or 3 dairy products (or dairy alternatives) every day. Choose low-fat or fat-free products.
- ▶ Cut back meat. If you eat meat, make it part of your meal, not the main focus. If you're used to large servings of meat, gradually eat $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$ of the usual size. Increase your servings of vegetables, rice, pasta, and dry beans.
- ▶ Enjoy 2 or more vegetarian-style (meatless) meals every week.

- ▶ Eat fruits and other low-fat foods for dessert and as snacks. Fruits offer a wide variety of delicious tastes. Fresh fruit can be eaten "as is" with little or no preparation. Drain the juices before serving canned fruit. Dried fruit is easy to carry with you.
- ▶ Reduce salt (sodium). Read food labels and choose foods that are lower in sodium. Use herbs and spices to flavor food. Try oregano, thyme, paprika, nutmeg, turmeric, and coriander.
- ▶ Limit or avoid high-salt foods. This includes smoked, cured, or processed condiments like catsup, pickles, and salty snacks. Check the labels for sodium content before buying baking mixes, dried soups, and other "instant" products.
- ▶ Marinate foods in fruit juice or vinegar instead of high-salt sauces (such as soy sauce).

Avoid processed foods

Eating processed foods (also known as "fast" or "convenience" foods) can increase inflammation throughout your body.

Many people eat too many processed foods and very few vegetables and fruits. Over time the inflammation this causes can damage blood vessels. Unhealthy eating also leads to high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Together this adds up to higher risk for heart attack and stroke.

Try these taste tips

Looking for something on the sweeter side?

- ▶ Add cinnamon, chopped nuts, and fresh or dried fruit to add taste appeal to plain yogurt, and to cooked cereals such as rice or oatmeal.

- ▶ Transform plain yogurt into a dip for vegetables by adding fresh herbs such as mint, chopped chives, or roasted garlic.
- ▶ Roast vegetables to bring out their rich flavors. Sliced eggplant, peppers, onions, squash, and cabbage have so much to offer. Experiment!
- ▶ Puree frozen berries or bananas with nonfat milk or yogurt for a delicious smoothie. For variety, add a few drops of vanilla or almond extract.
- ▶ Make your own veggie or chicken broth or buy low-sodium broths.

Choose foods that help lower your cholesterol

Grains

- ▶ Eat more whole grains, such as 100% whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, bran cereals, brown rice, corn tortillas.
- ▶ Choose breads, cereals, and crackers that contain 3 or fewer grams of total fat per serving. Check the food label.
- ▶ Limit high-fat baked goods (donuts, croissants, pastries, muffins).

Vegetables

- ▶ Eat a variety of vegetables twice a day.
- ▶ Add vegetables to soups, stews, casseroles, main dishes, and sandwiches.
- ▶ Choose raw vegetables for snacks.

Fruits

- ▶ Eat a variety of fruit at least twice a day. Fruit choices can be fresh, frozen, dried, or canned. Choose fruit for snacks and desserts.
- ▶ Avoid fruit juice if you have high triglycerides or are trying to lose weight.

Fats and oils

- ▶ Use less oil, mayonnaise, margarine, and salad dressings. When using oil, choose mono-unsaturated oils such as olive or canola, or most nut oils.

- ▶ Avoid hydrogenated fat (trans fat) found in most margarines.
- ▶ Try to include plant sterols (cholesterol-lowering foods) in your diet. These include Benecol, Take Control, Canola Harvest, and others.
- ▶ Avoid fried foods.
- ▶ Try low-fat or nonfat salad dressings and spreads in place of regular products.
- ▶ Avoid saturated fats, such as lard, butter, bacon fat, cream cheese, sour cream, shortening, stick margarine, coconut or palm oil, and chocolate.
- ▶ Flavor foods with vinegar, lemon juice, salsa, and spices instead of fat.
- ▶ Try 2 tablespoons of flax seed meal or ground flax seed daily.

Milk and milk products

- ▶ Choose low-fat or nonfat milk and yogurt.
- ▶ Choose low-fat or nonfat cheese or cottage cheese in place of whole milk cheese. Low-fat cheese has less than 3 grams of fat per ounce. Check the food label.

Dried beans, peas, lentils, tofu, nuts, seeds

- ▶ Choose dried beans (pinto, garbanzo, kidney, peas) or tofu more often in place of meat.
- ▶ Choose legumes, nuts, and seeds as good sources of fiber, protein, and vitamins. Nuts, seeds, and natural peanut butter are healthy in small amounts.
- ▶ Add beans to salads and soups.
- ▶ Eat meatless meals 3 or more times a week. Try beans and rice, tofu stir fry with rice, whole bean burritos, or low-fat bean chili.

Meats, chicken, turkey, fish, and eggs

- ▶ Select lean/low-fat choices most often, such as fish, shellfish, skinless chicken or turkey, lean sandwich meats, and lean, trimmed red meats, such as sirloin, round, flank, or tenderloin.
- ▶ Limit portions to 4 to 6 ounces daily.
- ▶ Bake, broil, steam, or grill instead of frying.

- ▶ Avoid fatty or fried meats, sausages, hot dogs, and most lunch meats.
- ▶ Eat fish at least 3 times per week.
- ▶ Limit egg yolks to 2 or less a week, or use only egg whites or egg substitutes.

Sugar and sweets

- ▶ For snacks, try pretzels, air-popped popcorn, rice cakes, low-fat crackers, or fruit and vegetables instead of cookies, cakes, and chips.
- ▶ Good frozen dessert choices include nonfat frozen yogurt and sorbet.
- ▶ Avoid snacks high in hydrogenated fat (trans fat) found in most packaged cookies, crackers, and bakery items.
- ▶ Eat fat-free cookies, cakes, and frozen desserts in small amounts. Most of these are still high in calories, even though they are low in fat.

Alcohol

- ▶ Limit alcohol to 1 drink per day if you are a woman and no more than 2 drinks per day if you are a man. 1 drink = 4 to 5 ounces of wine or 12 ounces of beer or ½ ounces of liquor.

Salt

Certain people are at higher risk for high blood pressure, as their bodies may respond more strongly to the effects of sodium. The USDA 2010 dietary guidelines recommend that you limit your sodium to less than 1,500 mg daily if you:

- ▶ Are African American (of any age)
- ▶ Are 51 or older
- ▶ Have hypertension (high blood pressure), diabetes, or chronic kidney disease

For all others, limit your sodium to less than 2,300 mg each day.

Additional resources

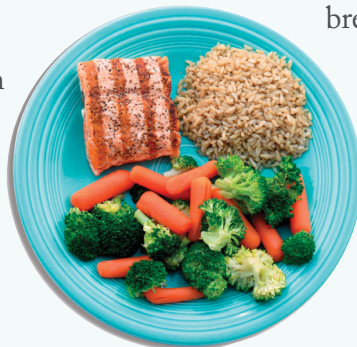
Contact your Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center to learn more about DASH and healthy eating. They can connect you with classes, wellness coaching, books, videos, and other resources.

The healthy plate

Use this plate to help you portion your food in a healthy way and make meal planning easier. Portions are based on a small dinner plate.

- Fill one-quarter of your plate with a healthy protein source, such as fish, chicken, eggs, cooked beans, lentils, or tofu.

- Fill half of your plate with nonstarchy vegetables, such as carrots, broccoli, cabbage, bell peppers, asparagus, or leafy greens, like spinach or kale.



- Fill one-quarter of your plate with healthy grains or starches, such as brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, quinoa, bulgur, corn, peas, one slice of whole-grain bread, or one corn or whole-wheat tortilla.

For good nutrition also choose each day:

- 1 small fruit serving, such as an orange, banana, apple, or 1 cup of berries or melon with each meal.
- 2 to 3 cups of plain milk or yogurt.
- A small amount of healthy fats, such as olive or canola oil, or a small handful of nuts.

Sample healthy plate meals

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Breakfast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooked oatmeal (plain) • Chopped apple • Chopped almonds or walnuts • Raisins • Nonfat milk or light yogurt 	Breakfast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-grain English muffin • Natural peanut butter • Plain or light yogurt • 1 tangerine 	Breakfast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orange juice • Scrambled eggs or egg substitute • Whole-grain toast • Raspberry jam • Nonfat milk or 1% fat milk
Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiced lentils • Fresh or cooked veggies • Brown rice 	Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veggie burger on whole grain bun with lettuce, tomato, and onion • Homemade oven-roasted potato “fries” • Small salad with 1 tsp oil and vinegar dressing 	Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicken quesadilla on whole-wheat tortilla with a few slices of avocado and salsa • Black beans • Side salad • Apple
Snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orange 	Snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 pear • ½ to 1 oz low-fat string cheese 	Snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yogurt, pecans, and strawberries
Dinner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sautéed eggplant with chicken (or tofu) and Thai basil, onions, and bell peppers • Whole-wheat noodles 	Dinner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian-style chickpeas (garbanzo beans) and spinach in tomato and onion gravy with Garam Masala spice • Whole-wheat naan or brown rice • Berries and plain or light yogurt 	Dinner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked salmon • Sweet potato • Green peas • Dinner salad • Plum



This information is not intended to diagnose or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor. If you have questions or need more information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse the medications or products mentioned. Any trade names listed are for easy identification only. Some photos may include models and not actual patients.

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