
DASH Eating Plan

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan is a way of eating that helps reduce high blood pressure. It is full of fruits, vegetables, and fat-free or low-fat dairy. This eating plan also includes whole grain foods, fish, poultry, and nuts. This eating plan is rich in potassium, magnesium and calcium, as well as protein and fiber. It is low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol. It is low in red meat, sweets, added sugars, and sugary beverages.

The DASH eating plan is based on your calorie needs. Most moderately-active people need about 2000 calories per day. If you are trying to lose weight or you are not very active, you may need fewer calories and the 1600 calories per day plan might be the better choice for you. If you feel that your calorie needs are higher than 2000 calories per day or less than 1600 calories per day, please schedule an appointment with your registered dietitian.



Tip: Start small and make gradual changes in your eating habits to make it easier to adopt the DASH eating plan.



Grains

Grains are an important source of energy and fiber on the DASH eating plan. As often as possible, choose whole grains because they are an excellent source of nutrients.

Some examples of foods in the grain's category: whole wheat bread, rolls or pasta, English muffin, pita bread, bagel, cereals, grits, oatmeal, brown rice, unsalted pretzels, popcorn

On the 2000 calorie per day plan, aim to eat 6-8 servings of grains per day.

On the 1600 calorie per day plan, aim to eat 6 servings of grains per day.

What is a serving size of grains?

- 1 slice bread
- ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal
- 1 oz dry cereal (Note: because some cereals are denser than others, serving sizes vary from ½ cup to 1 ¼ cup. Please check the serving size on the Nutrition Facts label.)



Vegetables

Vegetables are important to the DASH plan because they are great sources of potassium, magnesium, and fiber. These are all important to maintaining overall health.

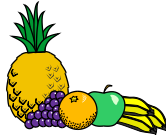
Some examples of vegetables: asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, cucumbers, greens, green beans, peas, potatoes, peppers, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, zucchini

On the 2000 calorie per day plan, aim to eat 4-5 servings of vegetables daily.

On the 1600 calorie per day plan, aim to eat 3-4 servings of vegetables daily.

What is a serving size of vegetables?

- 1 cup raw leafy vegetables such as lettuce or raw spinach
- ½ cup cooked vegetables
- ½ cup low-sodium vegetable juice



Fruits

Fruits, just like vegetables, are important to the DASH plan because they are also great sources of potassium, magnesium, and fiber.

Some examples of fruits: apples, apricots, bananas, blueberries, dates, grapes, grapefruit, mangoes, melons, oranges, peaches, pineapples, prunes, raisins, strawberries, tangerines

On the 2000 calorie per day plan, aim to eat 4-5 servings of fruit each day.
On the 1600 calorie per day plan, aim to eat 4 servings of fruit each day.

What is a serving size of fruit?

- 1 medium fruit
- 1/4 cup dried fruit
- 1/2 cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit
- 1/2 cup fruit juice



Fat-free or Low-fat Dairy

Dairy is important to the DASH diet because it is a major source of calcium and protein. Be sure to choose fat-free or low-fat dairy as often as possible.

Some example of dairy foods: fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk, fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) or buttermilk; fat-free, low-fat, or reduced-fat cheese; fat-free or low-fat frozen yogurt, fat-free or low-fat yogurt

On both the 2000 calorie per day plan and 1600 calorie per day plan, aim to eat 2-3 servings of fat-free or low-fat dairy.

What is a serving size of dairy?

- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup yogurt
- 1 1/2 oz cheese



Lean meat, poultry, and fish

These foods are important to the DASH plan because they are good sources of protein and magnesium. Make sure you choose only lean meats and trim away any visible fat. For poultry, make sure to remove the skin. The best ways to cook your lean meats, poultry, or fish to bake, broil, roast, or boil. Avoid frying your lean meat, poultry, or fish.

Some examples of these foods include: beef sirloin, pork tenderloin, chicken, turkey, game hen, salmon, tuna, eggs, herring, cod, anchovies, mackerel, sardines

On the 2000 calorie per day plan, aim to eat 6 servings or less of lean meat, poultry, or fish each day.

On the 1600 calorie per day plan, aim to eat 3-4 servings or less of lean meat, poultry, or fish each day.

What is a serving of lean meat, poultry, or fish?

- 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish (cooked)
- 1 egg

Tip: Treat meat as a small part of the whole meal, instead of the focus. Have only 3 ounces of meat at a meal, which is about the size of a deck of cards.



Nuts, Seeds, and Legumes

These foods are important to the DASH plan because they are rich sources of energy, magnesium, potassium, protein, and fiber. When choosing nuts and seeds, choose those that are not covered in chocolate or yogurt. If you are trying to reduce your blood pressure even more, choose nuts and seeds that are unsalted.

Some examples: almonds, hazelnuts, mixed nuts, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds, peanut butter, kidney beans, lentils, split peas, pinto beans, black eyed peas, garbanzo beans

On the 2000 calorie per day plan, aim to eat 4-5 servings of nuts, seeds, or legumes each week.

On the 1600 calorie per day plan, aim to eat 3-4 servings of nuts, seeds, or legumes each week.

What is a serving of nuts, seeds, or legumes?

- 1/3 cup or 1 1/2 oz nuts or seeds
- 2 Tbsp peanut butter
- 1/2 cup cooked legumes (dry beans and peas)

Fats and Oils

Some fat and oils are necessary to absorb certain vitamins. The DASH eating plan is heart healthy because it contains less than 30% of its calories from fat. The fats included in the DASH plan are unsaturated fats which are healthier for you.

Some examples: Soft margarine, low fat mayonnaise, light salad dressing, vegetable oil, olive oil, canola oil, safflower oil, avocado oil

On the 2000 calorie per day plan, aim to eat 2-3 servings of fats or oils each day.

On the 1600 calorie per day plan, aim to eat no more than 2 servings of fats or oils each day.

What is a serving of fat or oil?

- 1 tsp soft margarine
- 1 Tbsp low fat mayonnaise
- 2 Tbsp low-fat salad dressing
- 1 Tbsp full-fat salad dressing
- 1 tsp vegetable oil

Tip: Fat-free salad dressing does not count toward your fat intake for the day.

Sweets and Added Sugars

Sweets and added sugars should be low in fat and used in moderation.

If you are on the 2000 calorie per day plan, aim to eat no more than 5 servings of sweets per week.

If you are on the 1600 calorie per day plan, aim to eat no more than 3 servings of sweets per week.

Some examples: maple syrup, sugar, jelly, jam, fruit-flavored gelatin, jelly beans, hard candy, fruit punch, sorbet

What is a serving size of sweets?

- 1 Tbsp sugar
- 1 Tbsp jelly or jam
- ½ cup sorbet
- ½ cup gelatin desert
- 1 cup lemonade



Sodium and the DASH Eating Plan

Lower sodium diets also may reduce blood pressure. People on the DASH eating plan who also lower their sodium intake improve their blood pressure even more.

On the DASH eating plan, the goal is to limit sodium to 2300 mg per day. However, if your blood pressure is high, you might need to limit sodium to 1500 mg per day.

Some tips to help you lower your daily sodium:

- Use products that are low in sodium or have no added salt.
- Buy fresh or frozen vegetables. Use canned vegetables that are labeled “no salt added” or “low sodium”.
- Choose ready-to-eat breakfast cereals that are low in sodium.
- Cut back on cured and brined foods such as pickles.
- 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 low in sodium.

Talk with your dietitian for more tips to lower your sodium intake.

More Tips to Help You Eat the DASH Way

- Center your meal around foods that contain fiber, such as whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, beans, or vegetables.
- Use fruit or sugar-free gelatin as desserts and snacks.
- If you drink alcohol, limit your alcohol to one serving per day for women and two servings per day for men 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.

DASH Eating Plan Sample Menu for 2000 calories/day

This sample one-day menu is based on the 2000 calories per day plan while staying below 2300mg of sodium. If you feel you have different calorie or sodium needs, please schedule an appointment with your dietitian.

Breakfast:

½ cup instant oatmeal
1 slice whole wheat toast topped with 1 tbsp peanut butter and 1 medium banana
1 cup low-fat milk
Unsweetened tea or unsweetened coffee

Lunch:

Chicken breast sandwich
2 slices (3 oz) chicken breast, skinless
2 slices whole wheat bread
1 slice (¾ oz) reduced-fat cheddar cheese
2 large leaves romaine lettuce
2 slices tomato
1 tbsp low-fat mayonnaise
1 cup cantaloupe pieces
1 cup fresh pineapple

Dinner:

Spaghetti
1 cup cooked whole wheat spaghetti noodles
¾ cup low-salt vegetarian spaghetti sauce
3 tbsp Parmesan cheese
2-3oz lean ground turkey
Spinach salad
1 cup fresh spinach leaves
¼ cup fresh carrots, grated
¼ cup fresh mushrooms, sliced
1 tbsp vinegar and oil dressing
½ cup corn, cooked from frozen
½ cup canned pears in 100% fruit juice

Snacks:

1/3 cup almonds (unsalted), ¼ cup dried apricots; 1 cup fat-free, no sugar added fruit yogurt