Healthy Eating, Proven Results

What you choose to eat can affect your chances of developing high blood pressure, also known as hypertension. Following the DASH—Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension—eating plan and eating less sodium have been scientifically proven to lower blood pressure and have other health benefits.

Developed through research by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), the DASH eating plan emphasizes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, low-fat dairy, and healthy oils. It focuses on reducing sodium and limiting foods that are high in saturated fat, including fatty meats, full-fat dairy products, and tropical oils. It also limits sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages. The eating plan is aimed, in part, at helping Americans with high blood pressure, a leading risk factor for heart disease, stroke, and other health problems.

The DASH eating plan requires no special foods and has easy recipes. It’s flexible and can be adapted for your entire family to meet varied nutritional needs and food preferences.

Daily and weekly nutritional goals are a key part of the DASH eating plan and help you learn about nutrition and keep track of what you eat. Complementing the eating plan with physical activity can help you control high blood pressure and create heart healthy habits for a lifetime.

The DASH Journey

Starting a new way of eating can seem overwhelming, but it doesn’t have to be. DASH provides easy-to-understand guidelines, delicious recipes, and lessons to develop the skills to prepare healthy meals at home or make smart choices when dining out. Where are you on your health journey? Consider these three profiles to help you decide which resources to check out first on your way to a heart healthy way of life. Looking for a specific DASH resource? See the complete collection of Tools for a Healthy Life organized by topic following the DASH journey levels.
You have just been diagnosed with high blood pressure and don’t know where to begin. You are ready to make a change but it all seems so overwhelming. Everywhere you turn there are quick-fix diets and complicated, expensive eating plans with special foods and many restrictions. Perhaps you discovered DASH through a web search because you are pre-hypertensive and want to learn more about prevention, or maybe your doctor told you to learn more about DASH. Understanding what is happening in your body is the first step, with gradual and easy steps to follow.

What is High Blood Pressure?
Learn the basics about high blood pressure—what it is, who is at risk, how to understand the numbers—so that you can take steps to get it under control.

Getting Started on DASH
Learn how to take the first steps to adopt the DASH eating plan—assess where you are, discuss medication, make it part of your everyday life.

Making the Move to DASH
The DASH eating plan is explained in a single page of simple tips to make the plan work for you—gradually, healthfully, and successfully.

Tips to Reduce Salt and Sodium
Complete with tips for dining out and an easy-to-read chart about sodium content in several foods, learn how to further lower sodium and gain even bigger heart healthy benefits.

Tips to Keep on Track
Follow these steps to help you get back on track even if you slip from the DASH eating plan for a few days.

Nutrition Facts Label Guide
Use this graphical insert to learn about the parts of the Nutrition Facts label and other packaging labels so you can make informed choices based on what’s in the food you’re buying.
You are familiar with the basics of DASH, and you're ready to learn more about how to take it to the next level. You want to exercise more, and are eager to manage your high blood pressure. You have seen benefits from a gradual approach to changing your eating habits and want to learn more about meal planning and adding new foods to your diet. You have started by gradually eating more fruits and vegetables and are seeking information about easy recipes to add variety and keep you motivated.

A Week With the DASH Eating Plan
This comprehensive guide provides a complete set of menus to help you plan healthy, delicious meals for a week.

What's on Your Plate?
These worksheets help you track what you eat and drink and describe serving sizes in each of the major food groups. They can help you assess your current eating habits or monitor your efforts with DASH based on your caloric needs ranging from 1,200 to 2,600 calories per day.

Tips to Lowering Calories on DASH
Read about easy food substitutions to help you lose weight and maintain it once you do.

Getting More Potassium
Learn about this heart healthy mineral’s benefits and find a list of potassium-rich foods to help lower high blood pressure.

Get Active With DASH
Being more active bolsters the benefits of the DASH eating plan. Learn how to gradually move more to make physical activity part of your daily routine and your heart healthy life.

Delicious Heart Healthy Eating Website
In this vast online collection of DASH-friendly recipes, you'll find a variety of cuisines and resources for families, educational videos, and meal planning and cooking tips.
You are an expert about DASH from either adopting it in your own life or as a health professional. Perhaps you’re a physician, community health advocate, dietitian, or nutrition coach who discusses DASH with clients. Perhaps you simply want to know all of the details about DASH and why it’s a proven plan. Health professionals are encouraged to use the entire collection of DASH materials based on client needs. “Why the DASH Eating Plan Works” resource provides a summary of the decades of science behind DASH, while the website delves into multiple studies and links to other medical, scientific, and governmental resources.
The DASH Eating Plan is a heart healthy approach that has been scientifically proven to lower blood pressure and have other health benefits. To learn more, go to www.nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH.
THE HEALTHY BASICS OF DASH

Start your journey to healthy living on DASH with these tools to inform, inspire and motivate.

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DASH NUTRITION PLANNING

Learn how to shop for healthy foods and easy tips for dining out and everyday choices on DASH.

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Tools for a Healthy Life
TOOL FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

DASH MENUS AND WORKSHEETS

Take the mystery out of weekly meal planning and monitor your individual progress on DASH.

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MORE INFORMATION

NHLBI Center for Health Information
P.O. Box 30105, Bethesda, MD 20824-0105
nhlbiinfo@nhlbi.nih.gov
1-877-NHLBI4U (1-877-645-2448)
For access to free Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS), dial 7-1-1 on your telephone.

To learn more about high blood pressure, the DASH eating plan, and NHLBI research in this area, visit NHLBI's high blood pressure webpage: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hypertension.