

The DASH Diet

What is the DASH diet?

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet is a dietary pattern recommended to improve cardiovascular health and manage hypertension (high blood pressure). The diet emphasizes the intake of minimally-processed, blood pressure-lowering foods and nutrients, and limits the intake of foods and nutrients that may contribute to hypertension.

What are the health benefits of the DASH diet?

Research has shown that the DASH diet may provide a number of health benefits and improve various cardiovascular and metabolic conditions, including:

- Improves blood pressure, blood sugar, lipid, and high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP) levels
- Reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), stroke, and CVD-related mortality
- May benefit individuals with hyperlipidemia, overweight/obesity, and insulin resistance
- Reduces the risk of kidney disease, gout, colorectal cancer, and all-cause mortality



Foods to Include

The following table summarizes foods to enjoy on the DASH diet.

Food group	Servings	Examples
Whole grains	6-8/day	Oats, wheat, millet
Vegetables	4-5/day	Green leafy vegetables (e.g., broccoli, collards, kale, mustard greens, spinach)
Fruit	4-5/day	Apples, berries, citrus fruit, peaches, plums
Low-fat dairy	2-3/day	Cheese, milk, yogurt
Good quality fat	2-3/day	Avocado, flax seeds or flaxseed oil, hemp seeds, olive oil, omega-3-rich fish
Animal protein	Maximum 6/day	Lean meats (e.g., poultry and fish), low-fat dairy, eggs
Plant-based protein	4-5/week	Beans, legumes, nuts, seeds

Foods to Limit

The following table outlines foods to limit on the DASH diet.

Food group	Servings	Examples
Processed and cured meats	Avoid entirely	Cold cuts, corned beef, hot dogs, sausages
Poor quality fat	Avoid entirely	Margarine, partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, shortening
Saturated fat	Less than 10% of total daily caloric intake	Red meat (e.g., beef, pork, high-fat dairy products)
Sodium	Less than 2,300 mg/day; ideally less than 1,500 mg/day	Processed and prepackaged food (e.g., canned and frozen foods, lunch meats, pre-made sauces and dressings, white bread)
Added sugars	Less than 10% of total daily caloric intake	Baked goods, candy, sugar-sweetened beverages, syrups, table sugar
Alcohol	Women: 1 drink/day maximum	Beer, spirits, wine
	Men: 2 drinks/day maximum	