

Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension

The DASH Eating Plan

The *DASH* (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet is a low sodium eating plan to reduce the risk of developing hypertension or help reduce already elevated blood pressure. Salt is made up of sodium and chloride, the sodium in salt is what contributes to hypertension. The DASH eating plan consists of no more than 2400mg of sodium per day although some patients may need as low as 1500mg of sodium per day.



What Is The DASH Diet?

- Allows a certain number of servings daily from various food groups
- The servings you require vary depending on your overall total daily calories
- Encourage foods rich in magnesium, potassium, calcium, protein, and fiber
- Includes whole grain products, poultry, fish and nuts.
- Foods low in saturated fat, total fat, and cholesterol

How To Start The DASH Diet

1. Change Gradually
 - Increase by 1 to 2 servings of vegetables a day (add one to lunch and one to dinner)
 - Add a serving of fruit to meals or as a snack
 - Increase your use of fat free and low fat dairy products to 3 servings a day
 - Substitute milk for soda, sugary tea, or alcohol at a meal
 - Make sure to choose low fat or fat free products (1% or skim milk)
 - Read food labels to choose those low in saturated and trans fat (especially on items like margarines and salad dressings)
2. Treat meat as part of your whole meal, instead of the focus of the main meal
 - Six ounces a day (2 three ounce servings) is all that is needed
 - Cut back the amount you eat gradually if you currently eat more (By 1/2 to 1/3 at each meal)
 - Eat 2 or more “meatless” meals per week such as vegetables, pastas and beans
3. Eat fruits and vegetables or foods low in saturated fat, cholesterol and calories as desserts and snacks
4. Remove the salt shaker from the table
 - “Out of sight, out of mind” This may decrease the chance of adding extra sodium to your food
5. Other tips...
 - Choose whole grain foods for additional nutrients
 - Use fresh, frozen or canned vegetables with no salt added
 - Experiment with other seasonings and herbs (oregano, basil, thyme, garlic, pepper)

What Do Food Labels Actually Mean?

Sodium Free or Salt Free	Less than 5 mg per serving
Very Low Sodium	35mg or less of sodium per serving
Low Sodium	140mg or less of sodium per serving
Low Sodium Meal	140mg or less of sodium per 3½ oz serving
Reduced or Less Sodium	At least 25% less sodium than regular version
Light in Sodium	50% less sodium than regular version
Unsalted or No Salt Added	No salt added to product during processing

Where Is The Sodium In Your Food?

Sodium is added to many foods! It is helpful to read food labels, you may start to find “hidden sources” of sodium in your foods. Look at the list below for examples of foods that are high in sodium

- Ketchup
- Kraft® Macaroni and Cheese
- Betty Crocker® Hamburger Helper
- Oscar Mayer® Ready to Serve Bacon
- Kraft® Easy Cheese
- Canned Goods
- Worsteshire Sauce
- Canned Tuna
- Pancakes
- Pre-made Seasoning Mixes
- Balsamic Vinegar
- Sauerkraut
- Smoked Salmon
- Hot Dogs
- English Muffins
- Mustard
- Salami
- Buttermilk
- Cheddar Cheese
- Margarine
- Salad Dressings
- Canned Chicken Broth

Only a small amount of sodium occurs naturally in foods. Most sodium is added during processing. This table gives examples of the varying amounts of sodium in some food.

Low Sodium Foods		High Sodium Foods	
Frozen Mixed Vegetables (1 cup)	64mg	Dill Pickle (one)	928mg
Banana (one)	1mg	Tomato Sauce Canned (1 cup)	1482 mg
Chicken Breast (3 ounces)	64mg	Cottage Cheese (1 cup)	911 mg
Oatmeal Cooked (1 cup)	2mg	Apple Pie (1 slice)	476 mg
Peanuts Unsalted (1 cup)	22 mg	English Muffin (one)	378 mg
Baked Salmon (3 ounces)	55 mg	Parmesan Cheese (1 cup)	1861 mg

There are many ways to spruce up your eating plan!

Instead of eating.....

- Table Salt
- Canned Vegetables
- Bagel
- Processed Salad Dressing
- Margarine
- Cornflakes® Cereal
- Microwave Popcorn

Try a healthier option.....

- Mrs. Dash® or other salt substitutes
- Frozen Vegetables
- Cooked Oatmeal
- Homemade Salad Dressing
- Unsalted Margarine
- Shredded Wheat® Cereal
- Air popped Popcorn

The DASH Diet is an eating plan valuable to your health. With time and patience you will adopt this eating plan into an everyday routine. For more information: The DASH Eating Plan. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Institutes of Health. National Heart Lung and Blood Institute. www.nhlbi.nih.gov

Compiled By: Stacy Smith Pharm D Candidate 6/05