



# DASH Diet Fact Sheet

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What you choose to eat affects your chances of developing high blood pressure, also called hypertension. In an effort to help Americans reduce blood pressure, the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet is leading the way with a combination eating plan and reduced sodium intake.<sup>2</sup> The DASH\* Diet approach to hypertension presents a meal plan generous in fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, whole grains, poultry, fish and nuts. It de-emphasizes fats, red meat, sweets, sodium and sugar-containing beverages.<sup>3</sup> The DASH Diet is low in total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol, while high in potassium, calcium, magnesium, fiber and protein.<sup>2</sup>

Following the DASH Diet has been clinically proven to successfully lower blood pressure. And, the DASH Diet adheres to the goals of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.<sup>4</sup>

Here is a summary of the daily nutrient goals used in DASH studies (for a 2,100 calorie diet), along with tips to achieve these goals:

## TIPS TO TAKE TO THE SUPERMARKET

<i>Nutrient</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Shop for...</i>
Total Fat	27% of calories	Low or no fat dairy, poultry without skin (avoid dark meat) and low or no fat salad dressings, spreads and condiments that add flavor without fat
Saturated Fat	6% of calories	Vegetable oil spreads over butter, cook with olive or canola oil, choose lean cuts of meat and low or no fat dairy
Protein	18% of calories	Poultry, fish, nuts and beans
Carbohydrate	55% of calories	Whole grain breads, pastas, rice and cereals
Cholesterol	150 mg	Lean meats, poultry, fish, low or no fat dairy
Sodium	2,300 mg	Salt alternatives, spices and avoid processed and canned foods
Potassium	4,700 mg	Dried apricots, avocados, bananas, figs, kiwi, melon, beans, broccoli, carrots, brussel sprouts, potatoes, winter squash and spinach
Calcium	1,250 mg	Milk, yogurt, cheese and fortified foods and beverages
Magnesium	500 mg	Artichokes, barley, oat bran, almonds, spinach and tomatoes
Fiber	30 g	Pears, whole wheat pasta, whole grain cereals, lentils, black beans, lima beans, peas and baked potato with the skin

1,500mg sodium per day can further reduce blood pressure and is the amount recommended by the Institute for Medicine. Studies have found that the DASH Diet menus with 2,300mg sodium can lower blood pressure and menus with 1,500mg sodium can further reduce blood pressure. Most American men currently consume 4,200mg and women 3,300mg of sodium per day.

High blood pressure is dangerous because it can harm arteries and organs such as the heart, kidney, eyes and brains. If left uncontrolled, high blood pressure can lead to heart and kidney disease, stroke and blindness. High blood pressure often has no signs or symptoms, and once it occurs it usually lasts a lifetime.

Adapted from: *Your Guide to Lowering your Blood Pressure with DASH*  
[http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new\\_dash.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new_dash.pdf)

\*The title "Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension" and the acronym DASH are used by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute for an anti-hypertension eating plan. Mrs. Dash® is a 20-year old federally registered trademark which can be used in connection with food or beverage products, ingredients, diets, recipes and related products, only with permission of its owner, Alberto-Culver Company.

## Reference List

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- (3) Appel LJ, Brands MW, Daniels SR, Karanja N, Elmer PJ, Sacks FM. Dietary approaches to prevent and treat hypertension: a scientific statement from the American Heart Association. *Hypertension* 2006 February; 47(2):296-308.
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