“DASH” Diet (Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension)

Have you heard the saying, “you are what you eat”? That rings true when it comes to preventing or controlling hypertension, also known as high blood pressure.

Many people are aware that limiting their salt intake is an important lifestyle step for managing blood pressure. But did you know that you can lower your blood pressure with the “DASH” (dietary approach to stop hypertension) diet? The “DASH” diet works when you consistently incorporate the daily recommended servings of fruits, vegetables, and dairy in your diet. Even if you don’t have high blood pressure, this is an important, preventive measure that will keep your blood pressure in check.

The DASH Diet parallels the nutrition recommendations of MyPyramid (www.mypyramid.gov) with a focus on fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy. Most Americans do not eat enough of those foods each day. These focus foods are rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, and other minerals that have a beneficial impact on your blood pressure. Studies have shown that you can lower your blood pressure by consistently consuming five combined cups of fruits and vegetables each day, along with three cups of low-fat dairy each day.
You may want to try ...

- Fruit and yogurt smoothies make a great snack or breakfast on the go.
- Skip the maple syrup. Top your whole grain waffles or pancakes with fruit instead.
- Low-fat peanut butter and fruit make for a great snack, or even a light meal. Perhaps you’ve tried bananas or apples with peanut butter. Here is another tasty idea: chop up a variety of dried fruits and mix them with peanut butter. It makes a wholesome spread for whole grain crackers or sandwiches.
- Consider adding fruit to a vegetable salad for variety and flavor.
- Add different vegetables to sandwiches and wraps. Lettuce and tomatoes are common condiments. Why not try sliced cucumbers, sweet pepper rings, or shredded carrots or cabbage on your sandwich?
- Soups, casseroles, and stews are an easy way to incorporate more vegetables and low-fat cheese into your diet.
- Low-fat pudding and fruit parfaits are a low-calorie, sweet treat.