



DASH Eating Plan (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)

This guide has been prepared for your use by registered dietitians. If you have questions or concerns, please call the nearest Aurora facility to contact a dietitian. Diet counseling is available to address your specific needs.

People with high blood pressure, and those in danger of getting high blood pressure, can benefit from the DASH (dietary approaches to stop hypertension) eating plan. This plan follows heart-healthy guidelines. It limits unhealthy fats and sodium. It focuses on foods with nutrients that can help lower blood pressure. These include potassium, calcium, magnesium, protein and fiber.

The DASH eating plan below promotes healthy eating and gradual weight loss. It is based on:

- 1,600 calories for most women and inactive men
- 2,000 calories for most men and very active women
- It is recommended most people reduce sodium to less than 1,500 milligrams (mg) per day. Younger, healthy people without risk for hypertension should reduce to 2,300 mg.

Who needs 1,500 milligrams (mg)?

- People age 51 and older
- People with high blood pressure or hypertension
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease
- African Americans

To plan meals and your grocery shopping list, use the following chart:

High blood pressure can be controlled or prevented by taking these steps:

- Focus food choices on fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, lean poultry, fish or meats, nuts and whole grains
- Choose foods lower in salt; read food labels
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Be moderately active most days
- If you drink alcohol, do so moderately
- Stop smoking
- If you have high blood pressure and are prescribed pills, take as directed

| Food group | Daily servings | | Serving sizes | Examples and notes |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|---|---|
| | 1,600 calories | 2,000 calories | | |
| Grains and cereals | 6 | 7 to 8 | 1 slice bread 1 oz. dry cereal ½ cup cooked rice, pasta or cereal | Whole-wheat bread, English muffin, pita bread, bagel, cereal, grits, oatmeal, unsalted crackers, unsalted pretzels and unsalted popcorn |
| Vegetables | 3 to 4 | 4 to 5 | 1 cup raw leafy vegetables ½ cup cooked vegetables 6 oz. low-sodium vegetable juice | Tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, green peas, squash, broccoli, turnip greens, collards, kale, spinach, artichokes and green beans |

Continued

| Food group | Daily servings | | Serving sizes | Examples and notes |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| | 1,600 calories | 2,000 calories | | |
| Fruits | 4 | 4 to 5 | 6 oz. fruit juice 1 medium fruit ¼ cup dried fruit ½ cup fresh, frozen or canned fruit | Apricots, bananas, dates, grapes, oranges, orange juice, grapefruit, grapefruit juice, mangoes, melons, peaches, pineapples, prunes, raisins, strawberries, tangerines |
| Dairy foods | 2 to 3 | 2 to 3 | 8 oz. milk 1 cup yogurt 1½ oz. cheese | Fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk, fat-free or low-fat buttermilk, fat-free or low-fat regular or frozen yogurt, low-fat and fat-free cheese with less than 300 mg sodium per ounce |
| Meat and poultry | 4 to 5 | 6 | 1 oz. cooked meat, poultry or fish | Beef, pork, lamb, veal, chicken, turkey and fish – Select lean cuts and trim away visible fat. Remove skin from poultry. Broil or roast instead of frying or deep-frying. |
| Nuts and seeds | 3 per week | 4 to 5 per week | ⅓ cup or 1½ oz. of nuts 2 Tbsp. or ½ oz. of seeds ½ cup cooked dry beans or peas | Almonds, filberts, mixed nuts, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds, dry beans (kidney, navy, lima, pinto, etc.) and split peas |
| Fats and oils | 2 | 2 to 3 | 1 Tbsp. soft margarine 1 Tbsp. low-fat mayonnaise 2 Tbsp. light salad dressing 1 tsp. vegetable oil 1 Tbsp. sugar | Soft margarine, low-fat mayonnaise, light salad dressing, vegetable oil (such as olive, corn, canola or safflower) |
| Sweets | 2 or less per week | 5 or less per week | 1 Tbsp. jelly or jam ½ oz. jelly beans 8 oz. lemonade | Maple syrup, sugar, jelly, jam, fruit-flavored gelatin, jelly beans, hard candy, fruit punch, sorbet and ices |

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Getting started on the DASH plan

- Add extra servings of fruits, vegetables and whole grains slowly
- Center your meal on vegetables, pasta, rice and dry beans or peas
- Use fresh meat, poultry, fish and vegetables rather than canned or processed types
- Treat meat as one part of the meal, not the focus
- Use fruit for desserts and fruit or vegetables as snacks
- Drink low-fat milk instead of sweetened beverages
- Cut portion of oil, soft margarine, mayonnaise salad dressing in half
- Hold the salt in cooking and at the table
- Avoid breaded products

These high-sodium foods are best avoided:

- Luncheon meats, bacon, ham and sausage
- Regular canned or dried soups
- Pickles, olives, sauerkraut and salted fish
- Worcestershire, soy, teriyaki, steak, barbecue sauces and marinades
- Foods with salt topping, such as crackers, pretzels and chips
- Processed cheese and spreads

Season foods with no-salt options:

- Some salt substitutes can raise your potassium level. Check with your doctor before using.
- Use garlic, celery or onion powder instead of the salt forms.
- Try herbs and spices, such as basil, bay leaf, dill and oregano.
- Add lemon, lime or flavored vinegars for zip.
- Salt-free herb mixes are available in many combinations.

Use the food label to guide your choices:

- Note the serving size and how it compares to your portion.
- Eating a double serving means the calories, sodium, fat and other nutrients are doubled.
- “Whole grain” should be the main flour or grain ingredient.
- Low-fat, fat-free, no-sodium or low-sodium products are a better choice.*
- Boxed, bagged, bottled, canned, frozen or dried foods with less than 300 mg* sodium per serving are OK.
- Select entrees and frozen dinners with 800 mg** of sodium or less per serving.

Cooking tips

- Add an herb or spice to a small amount of oil or soft margarine.
- Rinse canned foods such as tuna, beans or vegetables.
- Prepare potatoes, rice, pasta and cereals without salt.
- Use only half of seasoning packets.
- Prepare extra fresh meats to use for sandwiches.

* Less than 140 mg per serving if limiting total sodium intake to 1,500 mg per day

** 500 mg per serving if limiting sodium intake to 1,500 mg per day

For a list of Aurora facilities with a dietitian, please call Aurora Health Care toll free at 888-863-5502.