



We promote the DASH diet lifestyle: Healthy eating to lower your blood pressure

The DASH diet emphasizes portion size, eating a variety of foods and getting the right amount of nutrients. Discover how DASH can improve your health and lower your blood pressure.

DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. The DASH diet is a lifelong approach to healthy eating that's designed to help treat or prevent high blood pressure (hypertension). The DASH diet encourages you to reduce the sodium in your diet and eat a variety of foods rich in nutrients that help lower blood pressure, such as potassium, calcium and magnesium.

By following the DASH diet, you may be able to reduce your blood pressure by a few points in just two weeks. Over time, your systolic blood pressure could drop by eight to 14 points, which can make a significant difference in your health risks.

Because the DASH diet is a healthy way of eating, it offers health benefits besides just lowering blood pressure. The DASH diet is also in line with dietary recommendations to prevent osteoporosis, cancer, heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

DASH diet: Sodium levels

The DASH diet emphasizes vegetables, fruits and low-fat dairy foods — and moderate amounts of whole grains, fish, poultry and nuts.

In addition to the standard DASH diet, there is also a lower sodium version of the diet. You can choose the version of the diet that meets your health needs:

- **Standard DASH diet.** You can consume up to 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium a day.
- **Lower sodium DASH diet.** You can consume up to 1,500 mg of sodium a day.

Both versions of the DASH diet aim to reduce the amount of sodium in your diet compared with what you might get in a typical American diet, which can amount to a whopping 3,400 mg of sodium a day or more.

The standard DASH diet meets the recommendation from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans to keep daily sodium intake to less than 2,300 mg a day.

The American Heart Association recommends 1,500 mg a day of sodium as an upper limit for all adults. If you aren't sure what sodium level is right for you, talk to your doctor.