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Eating Heart-Healthy Food: Using the DASH Plan



Eating for your heart doesn't have to be hard or boring. You just need to know how to make healthier choices. The DASH eating plan has been developed to help you do just that. DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. It is a plan that has been proven to be healthier for your heart and to lower your risk for high blood pressure. It can also help lower your risk for cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis, and diabetes.

Choosing from each food group

Choose foods from each of the food groups below each day. Try to get the recommended number of servings for each food group. The serving numbers are based on a diet of 2,000 calories a day. Talk with your healthcare provider if you're not sure about your calorie needs. Along with getting the correct servings, the DASH plan also advises less than 2,300 mg of salt (sodium) per day. Lowering sodium intake to 1,500 mg per day lowers blood pressure even more. (There's about 2,300 mg of sodium in 1 teaspoon of salt.)

<p>Grains</p> <p><i>Servings: 6 to 8 a day</i></p> <p>A serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice bread • 1 ounce dry cereal • Half a cup cooked rice, pasta or cereal <p>Best choices: Whole grains and any grains high in fiber.</p>	<p>Vegetables</p> <p><i>Servings: 4 to 5 a day</i></p> <p>A serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup raw leafy vegetable • Half a cup cut-up raw or cooked vegetable • Half a cup vegetable juice <p>Best choices: Fresh or frozen vegetables prepared without added salt or fat.</p>
<p>Fruits</p> <p><i>Servings: 4 to 5 a day</i></p>	<p>Low-fat or fat-free dairy</p> <p><i>Servings: 2 to 3 a day</i></p>

<p>A serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 medium fruit • One-quarter cup dried fruit • Half a cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit • Half a cup of 100% fruit juices <p>Best choices: A variety of fresh fruits of different colors. Whole fruits are a better choice than fruit juices.</p>	<p>A serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup milk • 1 cup yogurt • One and a half ounces cheese <p>Best choices: Skim or 1% milk, low-fat or fat-free yogurt or buttermilk, and low-fat cheeses.</p>
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<p>Lean meats, poultry, fish</p> <p><i>Servings: 6 or fewer a day</i></p> <p>A serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 ounce cooked meats, poultry, or fish • 1 egg <p>Best choices: Lean poultry and fish. Trim away visible fat. Broil, grill, roast, or boil instead of frying. Remove skin from poultry before eating. Limit how much red meat you eat.</p>	<p>Nuts, seeds, beans</p> <p><i>Servings: 4 to 5 a week</i></p> <p>A serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-third cup nuts (one and a half ounces) • 2 tablespoons nut butter or seeds • Half a cup cooked dry beans or legumes <p>Best choices: Dry roasted nuts with no salt added, lentils, kidney beans, garbanzo beans, and whole pinto beans.</p>
<p>Fats and oils</p> <p><i>Servings: 2 to 3 a day</i></p> <p>A serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 teaspoon vegetable oil • 1 teaspoon soft margarine • 1 tablespoon mayonnaise • 2 tablespoons salad dressing <p>Best choices: Nut and vegetable oils (nontropical vegetable oils), such as olive and canola oil.</p>	<p>Sweets</p> <p><i>Servings: 5 a week or fewer</i></p> <p>A serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 tablespoon sugar, maple syrup, or honey • 1 tablespoon jam or jelly • 1 half-ounce jelly beans (about 15) • 1 cup lemonade <p>Best choices: Dried fruit can be a satisfying sweet. Choose low-fat sweets. And watch your serving sizes!</p>

For more on the DASH eating plan, visit:
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dash

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