

The 'DASH' Diet

'The Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension'

<p>Grains & Grain products</p> <p>7 to 8 a day</p>	<p>1 slice bread, ½ a cup dry cereal, ½ a cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal</p>	<p>7 or 8 servings a day seem like a lot, but they're small</p>
<p>Vegetables</p> <p>4 to 5 a day</p>	<p>1 cup raw leafy vegetable, ½ cup cooked vegetable, ¾ cup vegetable juice</p>	<p>8 -10 servings a day of fruits and vegetables tops the 5 - 9 servings recommended by the National Cancer Institute's "5 A Day" program. The average American is stuck at just over 3.</p>
<p>Fruits</p> <p>4 to 5 a day</p>	<p>¾ cup fruit juice, 1 medium fruit, ¼ quarter cup dried fruit, 1 cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit</p>	
<p>Dairy food - Low-fat or non-fat</p> <p>2 to 3 a day</p>	<p>1 cup skim or 1% milk, 1 cup low-fat yogurt, 1 ½ oz. part-skim or non-fat cheese</p>	<p>3 servings a day is better to help reduce the risk of osteoporosis</p>
<p>Meats, Poultry, & Fish</p> <p>2 or less a day</p>	<p>3 oz. broiled or roasted lean meats, skinless poultry, or fish</p>	<p>We now average more than 2 servings a day, and they're often fatty: hamburgers, fried chicken or fish, or chicken with the skin.</p>
<p>Nuts, seeds, & beans</p> <p>4 to 5 a week</p>	<p>⅓ cup nuts, 2 Tbs. sunflower seeds, ½ cup cooked beans</p>	<p>Most people eat only 2 servings of beans a week. They're missing out on delicious lentil soups, Cuban black-beans-and-rice, Middle Eastern hummus, Mexican bean burritos, etc.</p>
<p>Added fats, Oils, & Salad dressing</p> <p>2 to 3 a day</p>	<p>1 tsp. oil or soft margarine, 1 tsp. regular mayonnaise, 1 Tbs. low-fat mayonnaise, 1 Tbs. regular salad dressing, 2 Tbs. light salad dressing</p>	<p>The "control" diet had 6 servings a day. Add your fats to vegetables, beans, breads, or other foods for flavor.</p>
<p>Snacks & Sweets</p> <p>5 a week</p>	<p>1 medium fruit, 1 cup low-fat yogurt, half cup low-fat frozen yogurt, three quarter cup pretzels, 1 Tbs. maple syrup, sugar, jelly, or jam, ½ cup Jell-O, 3 pieces hard candy, 15 jellybeans</p>	<p>The healthier, the better. If you're more likely to go for the jellybeans than the fresh fruit, keeping your snacks to less than 1 a day minimizes the damage. The "control" diet had 4 snacks a day.</p>

Hypertension

Don't have high blood pressure?

Don't assume you never will.

One out of four American adults does. Among people 60 or over, it's one out of two (see "Older and Higher").

But that doesn't mean everyone else is in the clear.

Say your doctor says that your blood pressure is "high normal," or even "normal." Sounds good, huh? Not so good.

Hypertension is not the same as feeling anxious or "high strung". Hypertension in adults means that three measurements of blood pressure in the arm average more than 140/90. The first number 'systolic pressure' is caused when the heart pumps; the second number 'diastolic pressure' is the pressure when the heart is relaxed.

Even so-called normal blood pressure raises the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Smokers with high blood pressure are at the greatest risk for heart disease and hardening of the arteries which is caused by hypertension.

How can you keep your blood pressure from creeping up from optimal to normal to high?

For years, experts have recommended four proven strategies. The Big Four: cut back on salt; lose excess weight; exercise; and, if you drink, limit alcoholic beverages to two drinks a day.

Now we can make it the Big Five. A landmark study called DASH -- Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension -- shows that eating the right foods also works. It can lower blood pressure as much as taking a drug.

Better yet: It's the same diet that may help cut your risk of cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis, and diabetes.

The Bottom Line

If your blood pressure is optimal, following all of these Big Five proven strategies will help keep it from climbing as you get older. If your blood pressure is normal or high-normal, the Big Five may help lower it. If your pressure is high, the Big Five may enable you to use less or get off the medication.

- 1. Lose weight if you're overweight. Dropping as few as ten pounds can make a difference.**
- 2. Cut sodium to less than about 2,400 mg a day. Check labels for the lowest-sodium brands. Limit foods with 480 mg of sodium or more per serving. That's 20 percent of the Daily Value.**
- 3. Walk briskly, jog, swim, cycle, or do other aerobic exercise for 30 to 45 minutes a day at least three times a week.**
- 4. If you drink, keep it to no more than two servings of beer, wine, or liquor a day to keep blood pressure from rising. Women should limit themselves to one drink a day. Consuming more may increase the risk of breast cancer.**
- 5. Try a DASH-like diet. It should help reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, osteoporosis, and diabetes.**

In addition, practice a simple Relaxation technique like 'Focusing on your Breathing' to reduce stress and keep you relaxed throughout the day. Pick up the hand-out from the waiting room. You can also ask my father 'CS' to demonstrate it to you Or visit his web site countingbreaths.com.

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