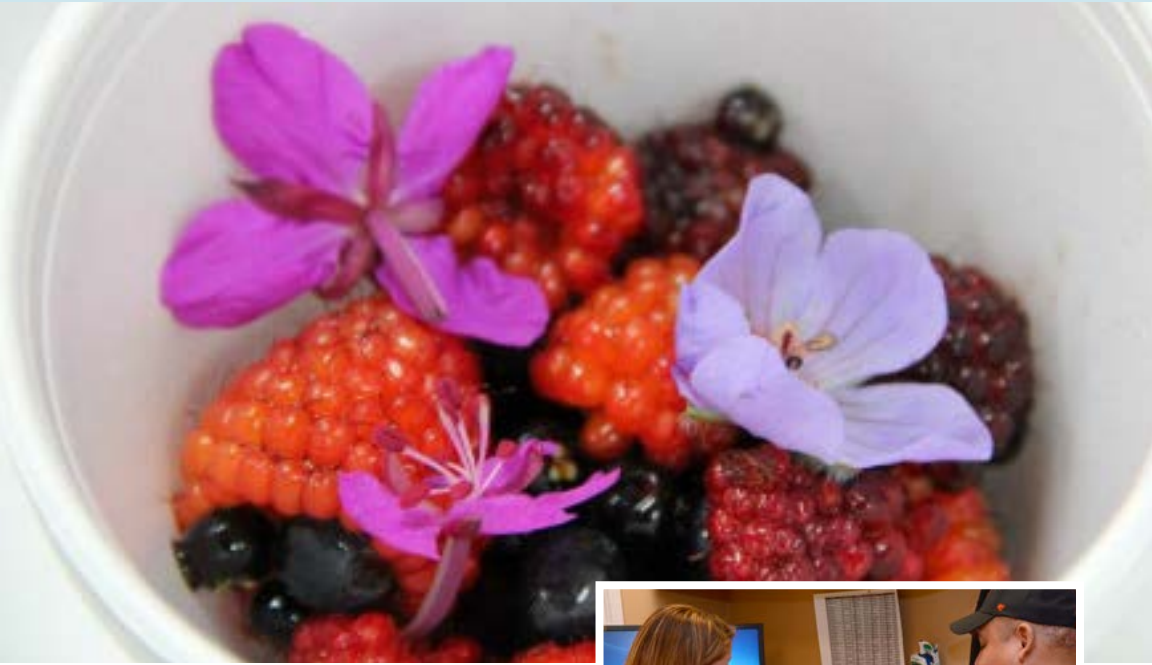


DASH Diet



What is the DASH Diet?

DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. In research, the DASH diet helped people bring their blood pressure and their blood lipids down by making changes to their diet.

When we think about how to best control blood pressure, often we only think about using less salt. Cutting back on salt is an important part of helping reduce blood pressure, but there are many more food changes that can be made that can also help bring blood pressure down. These food changes are described in the DASH diet.



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The DASH diet recommends people:

Eat more plants

Plants are high in potassium and magnesium. Potassium and magnesium are nutrients that can help lower your blood pressure. Plants can be fruits and vegetables from the store or berries, roots, and leafy plants that you gather. Nuts and seeds are plants too. All plants contain potassium and magnesium. Eat plants with every meal, and if you snack, include some type of plant. Potassium and magnesium from plants have been shown to reduce blood pressure, supplements of these nutrients has not and is not recommended.



Eating more whole grains instead of processed grains

Whole grains also contain potassium and magnesium. All plants in nature contain potassium and magnesium. When a grain is refined the potassium and magnesium are removed. Examples



of refined grains are white bread, regular noodles and most store bought muffins or cookies. Choosing whole grain breads, cereals, noodles and flour increases the potassium and magnesium in your diet.



Eat foods that are high in calcium

Calcium is a mineral shown to decrease blood pressure. Foods such as fish head soup, fish canned with the bones and low-fat dairy foods like milk or yogurt are all good sources of calcium.



Eat less unhealthy fats

The DASH diet recommends eating very little unhealthy fats. Fat that is found in foods like whole milk, hamburger, many store bought baked goods, TV dinners or frozen microwavable foods, mayonnaise, butter and store bought salad dressing should be eaten occasionally instead of regularly.



Use less salt and condiments and seasonings with salt

Decreasing sodium is an important part of helping decrease blood pressure for most people. Sodium is a major ingredient in table salt. Salt isn't the only seasoning high in sodium. Many regularly eaten seasonings and condiments are very high in sodium, including soy sauce, garlic salt, onion salt and seasoning salt. Read the label on

your seasoning for sodium content. A good alternative to high sodium seasonings are herbs, spices and low-sodium or no-sodium seasoning blends like Mrs. Dash.

Read the label for sodium. The DASH diet recommends people with diabetes get no more than 1,500mg of sodium a day.



Avoid foods with too much added sugar

Foods with too much added sugar can make weight loss or weight maintenance difficult. Losing weight if you are overweight helps to lower blood pressure. High sugar foods also make controlling blood sugar very difficult. Commonly eaten high sugar foods are: soda, Tang, Kool-Aid, Fruit Punch, candy, pastries and syrup.



Eat more foods cooked at home, and less microwavable and canned frozen food

If there is one thing you can do to make your diet healthier, it would be to cook food yourself instead of eating frozen or canned microwavable food. Food you make yourself will almost always have less unhealthy fat, less sodium and less sugar.

Do you need help coming up with easy to make meals? Ask your dietitian for help.

Are there other lifestyle choices the DASH diet recommends?

Healthy food choices are a very important part of helping to reduce blood pressure and lipids, but their other lifestyle choices that are important as well. Those choices are:

- **Avoid tobacco:** Tobacco damages your blood vessels and every other organ in your body. Talk to your provider about getting help to stop.
- **Stay active:** Regular daily physical activity helps to keep blood pressure, blood lipids and blood sugar in control
- **Lose weight if you are overweight:** Losing weight helps lower blood pressure, blood lipids and blood sugar. Talk to your dietitian about getting help with this.

How long do I need to follow the DASH diet before I see results?

People who have followed the DASH diet in research studies started to see their blood pressure go down after 2 weeks.

More Information

For more information or if you have questions, contact:

Diabetes Educator: _____

Phone: _____



Diabetes Program

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