ST. JOSEPH'S · ST. MICHAEL'S · PROVIDENCE
UNITY HEALTH
TORONTO

The DASH diet

Information for patients and families

What is the DASH diet?

- The DASH diet stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension.
- The DASH diet is a healthy way of eating that can help lower your blood pressure.
- The DASH diet is high in magnesium, calcium, potassium and fibre – low in sodium, fat and sugar.

What is included in the DASH diet?

- Lots of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats (like fish and poultry), low-fat dairy products, nuts, seeds, and legumes.
- Limited red meats, refined carbohydrates, fats, oils and sweets.

How to follow the DASH diet

Food group	Servings per day or week	Examples
Whole grains	6 to 8 servings per day	- 1 slice of whole grain bread - 30 grams of whole grain cereal - ½ cup cooked pasta - ½ cup cooked rice, barley or quinoa
Vegetables	4 to 5 servings per day	- 1 cup raw leafy greens - ½ cup cooked vegetable
Fruits	4 to 5 servings per day	- 1 medium fruit - ½ cup fresh or frozen fruit

Food group	Servings per day or week	Examples
Low fat dairy products	2 to 4 servings per day	- 1 cup 1% or skim milk - ¾ cup yogurt - 2 ounces of cheese (less than 20% milk fat)
Meat, poultry and fish	2 to 3 servings per day of lean protein	- 3 ounces of cooked poultry or fish (choose lean or extra lean and cut off the fat) - Have fish 2 to 3 times per week - Limit red meat
Nuts, seeds, and beans	3 to 5 servings per **week**	- ⅓ cup unsalted nuts - 2 tablespoons seeds - ½ cup cooked beans or lentils
Fats and oils	2 to 4 servings per day	- 1 teaspoon soft margarine - 1 teaspoon vegetable oil - 1 tablespoon light mayo - 2 tablespoons light dressing
Limit sweets	5 servings per **week**	- 1 tablespoon sugar - 1 tablespoon jam or jelly

Helpful tips

- Add an extra vegetable to your lunch or dinner.
- Choose whole grain products whenever you can.
- Have low fat cheese or yogurt with fruit as a snack.
- Read food labels to help reduce salt intake. Avoid added salt in meals.
- Limit alcohol, do regular exercise and maintain a healthy body weight.

What does the DASH diet look like?

Here is an example of what you might eat in a day.

Breakfast

- 1 cup hot oatmeal (steel cut or old-fashioned)
- ½ cup blueberries, ½ cup strawberries and 2 tablespoons walnuts
- 1 cup skim milk

Lunch

- 1 cup bean salad: can of mixed beans (rinsed well)
- 1 cup vegetables (tomatoes, green beans, peppers, onions) and parsley
- Dressing – 1 teaspoon olive oil, crushed garlic, lemon juice, salt and pepper
- 2 slices of whole grain bread or 1 whole grain naan
- 1 orange

Snack

- 1 cup plain low fat Greek yogurt
- 1 peach

Dinner

- 3 ounces baked salmon with olive oil and fresh lemon
- 1 cup cooked brown rice or bulgur
- 1½ cups cooked vegetables (zucchini, eggplant, peppers) with 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 apple (raw or baked) with some cinnamon

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This information does not replace the advice you receive from your health care provider. If you have questions, ask your health care team.

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