

DASH Eating Plan (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)

This guide has been prepared for your use by Registered Dietitians. If you have questions or concerns, please call the nearest Aurora facility to contact a dietitian. Diet counseling is available to address your specific needs.

People with high blood pressure, and those in danger of getting high blood pressure, can benefit from the DASH eating plan. This plan follows heart healthy guidelines. It limits unhealthy fats and sodium. It focuses on foods with nutrients that can help lower blood pressure. These include potassium, calcium, magnesium, protein and fiber.

The DASH eating plan below promotes healthy eating and gradual weight loss. It is based on:

- 2300 mg sodium
- 1600 calories for most women and inactive men
- 2000 calories for most men and very active women

High blood pressure can be controlled or prevented by taking these steps:

- Focus food choices on fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy, lean poultry, fish or meats, nuts and whole grains
- Choose foods lower in salt; read food labels
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Be moderately active most days
- If you drink alcohol, do so moderately
- Stop smoking
- If you have high blood pressure and are prescribed pills, take as directed

To plan meals and your grocery shopping list, use the following chart:

Food Group	Daily Servings		Serving Sizes	Examples and Notes
	1600 calories	2000 calories		
Grains and Cereals	6	7-8	1 slice bread 1 oz. dry cereal ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal	Whole wheat bread, English muffin, pita bread, bagel, cereal, grits, oatmeal, unsalted crackers, unsalted pretzels, and unsalted popcorn
Vegetables	3-4	4-5	1 cup raw leafy vegetables ½ cup cooked vegetables 6 oz. low sodium vegetable juice	Tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, green peas, squash, broccoli, turnip greens, collards, kale, spinach, artichokes, green beans

Food Group	Daily Servings		Serving Sizes	Examples and Notes
	1600 calories	2000 calories		
Fruits	4	4–5	6 oz. fruit juice 1 medium fruit ¼ cup dried fruit ½ cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit	Apricots, bananas, dates, grapes, oranges, orange juice, grapefruit, grapefruit juice, mangoes, melons, peaches, pineapples, prunes, raisins, strawberries, tangerines
Dairy Foods	2–3	2–3	8 oz. milk 1 cup yogurt 1½ oz. cheese	Fat free (skim) or low fat (1%) milk, fat free or low fat buttermilk, fat free or low fat regular or frozen yogurt, low fat and fat free cheese
Meat and Poultry	4–5	6	1 oz. cooked meat, poultry, or fish	Beef, pork, lamb, veal, chicken, turkey, fish. Select lean cuts and trim away visible fat. Remove skin from poultry. Broil or roast instead of frying or deep-frying.
Nuts and Seeds	3 per week	4–5 per week	⅓ cup or 1½ oz. of nuts 2 Tbsp. or ½ oz. of seeds ½ cup cooked dry beans or peas	Almonds, filberts, mixed nuts, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds, dry beans (kidney, navy, lima, pinto, etc.), split peas
Fats and Oils	2	2–3	1 Tbsp. soft margarine 1 Tbsp. low fat mayonnaise 2 Tbsp. light salad dressing 1 tsp. vegetable oil	Soft margarine, low fat mayonnaise, light salad dressing, vegetable oil (such as olive, corn, canola, or safflower)
Sweets	2 or less per week	5 or less per week	1 Tbsp. sugar 1 Tbsp. jelly or jam ½ oz. jelly beans 8 oz. lemonade	Maple syrup, sugar, jelly, jam, fruit flavored gelatin, jelly beans, hard candy, fruit punch, sorbet, ices

Getting started on the DASH plan

- Add extra servings of fruits, vegetables and whole grains slowly
- Center your meal on vegetables, pasta, rice and dry beans or peas
- Use fresh meat, poultry, fish and vegetables rather than canned or processed types
- Treat meat as one part of the meal, not the focus
- Use fruit for desserts and fruit or vegetables as snacks
- Drink low fat milk instead of sweetened beverages
- Cut portion of oil, soft margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressing in half
- Hold the salt in cooking and at the table
- Avoid breaded products

These high sodium foods are best avoided:

- Luncheon meats, bacon, ham and sausage
- Regular canned or dried soups
- Pickles, olives, sauerkraut and salted fish
- Worcestershire, soy, teriyaki, steak, BBQ sauces and marinades
- Foods with salt topping such as crackers, pretzels and chips
- Processed cheese and spreads

Season foods with no-salt options:

- Some salt substitutes can raise your potassium level. Check with your doctor before using.
- Use garlic, celery or onion powder instead of the salt forms
- Try herbs and spices such as basil, bay leaf, dill, and oregano
- Add lemon, lime or flavored vinegars for zip
- Salt free herb mixes are available in many combinations

Use the food label to guide your choices:

- Note the serving size and how it compares to your portion
- Eating a double serving means the calories, sodium, fat and other nutrients are doubled
- “Whole grain” should be the main flour or grain ingredient
- “Low fat,” “fat free” or “low sodium” products are a good choice
- Boxed, bagged, bottles, canned, frozen or dried foods with less than 300 mg sodium per serving are okay
- Select entrees and frozen dinners with 800 mg of sodium or less per serving

Cooking Tips

- Add an herb or spice to a small amount of oil or soft margarine
- Rinse canned foods such as tuna, beans or vegetables
- Prepare potatoes, rice, pasta and cereals without salt
- Use only 1/2 of seasoning packets
- Prepare extra fresh meats to use for sandwiches

**For a list of Aurora facilities with a dietitian, please call
Aurora Health Care toll free at 1 (888) 863-5502.**

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.