

Right Bite:

Seven Ways to Control High Blood Pressure

► Learn how to cut sodium, fat, and cholesterol from your diet by controlling high blood pressure as part of the Right Bite: Setting the Table for Healthy Eating series. Adults and teens will discover fun ways to make tasty changes to their diet and easy changes to their physical activity.



Eat the DASH Diet

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet can help you control your blood pressure. The DASH diet is rich in grains, fruit, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products. It limits total fat, trans fat, and saturated fat while providing plenty of fiber, potassium, calcium, and magnesium. The DASH diet also limits sodium to between 1,500 and 2,300 milligrams a day.



1. Try DASH tips for gradual change.

Make these changes over a couple of days or weeks to adjust and make them part of your daily routine:

- Eat 8 servings of fruits and vegetables per day = 2 servings per meal (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) plus 2 snacks each day.
- Eat 3 servings of non-fat or reduced fat dairy foods per day = 1 serving per meal (breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- Eat 6 or 7 servings of whole grain breads, cereals, and grains instead of white bread, low-fiber cereals, and refined grains = 2 servings per meal (breakfast, lunch, and dinner).

- Eat only 6 ounces of meat, fish, or poultry per day = 1 serving per meal (breakfast, lunch, and dinner).
- Eat only 2 or 3 small servings per day of soft or liquid margarine and vegetable oils.
- Eat nuts, seeds, and dried beans 4 or 5 times per week.

2. Eat less sodium.

Choose and prepare foods with less sodium and salt. Remove the saltshaker from the table. Be creative—try herbs, spices, lemon, lime, vinegar, wine, and salt-free seasoning blends in cooking and at the table.

- Use the nutrition fact labels to find how much sodium a food has.
- Eat less than 2300 milligrams of sodium per day.
- Eat fresh fruits and vegetables and fewer ready-to-eat foods, such as canned vegetables and soups, salty snacks, and smoked meats.
- Eat out less often because fast food and restaurant foods are usually high in sodium.
- Replace the saltshaker on the table with herbs and spices.



3. Be moderately physically active for at least 2 hours and 30 minutes per week.

- Try splitting the 30 minutes into 10- to 15-minute periods.
- Try these moderately intensive activities: dancing, brisk walking, gardening, and swimming. Moderately intensive exercise will cause your heart to beat faster.



4. Maintain a healthy weight.

If you follow the DASH diet and become more active, you will likely lose weight. You will feel better and put less stress on your heart.

5. Limit alcohol.

Recommendations are for one drink or fewer for women per day and two drinks or fewer for men. Drinking more than one drink per day seems to increase blood pressure. One drink equals 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1½ ounces of liquor.



6. Don't smoke.

Each time you smoke, your heart works harder and your blood pressure rises.

7. Take your blood pressure medication.

If you already have high blood pressure and your doctor has prescribed medicine, take your medicine as directed along diet and exercise.



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