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Healthy Eating To Control Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the artery wall as the heart pumps blood around the body. High blood pressure over a period of time can be dangerous as it makes the heart work too hard and can cause damage to your arteries as well as lead to kidney disease, stroke, loss of vision and even heart attack^{1,2}.

Some people may be at higher risk of developing high blood pressure than others. These include older people, people with a family history of high blood pressure and people who are overweight. High blood pressure can also be caused by kidney disease or endocrine (hormone) problems. It is also known that people who smoke, have high cholesterol, eat too much fat and salt, drink too much alcohol and do little physical activity are at risk of high blood pressure².

Research has shown that diet plays an important role in lowering and controlling your blood pressure. One particular diet, the DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension diet) has been proven to be particularly successful. The DASH diet recommends foods that are high in magnesium, potassium, calcium, protein and fibre. It is also low in sodium (salt) and saturated fat.

As well as eating the recommended amounts of food to control your blood pressure, it is also recommended that you:

- Achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.
- Be physically active.
- Consume only moderate amounts of alcohol.
- Take medication as prescribed by your doctor.

References:

¹Your Guide to Lowering Blood Pressure with DASH; The DASH Eating Plan. US Department of Health and Human Services. National Institutes of Health. National Heart Lung and Blood Institute. [www.dash.bwh.harvard.edu]

²Kidneys & Blood Pressure (handout). *Kidney Health Australia*. [www.kidney.org.au]



DASH Diet Guidelines

The DASH eating plan is based on a 2000 calorie diet. The number of servings for each food group may vary depending on your calorie needs. Use these guidelines to help plan your meals.

FOOD GROUP	DAILY SERVINGS (except as noted)	SERVING SIZES	EXAMPLES AND NOTES
Grains & grain products	7-8	1 slice bread 1 bowl dry cereal ½ cup cooked rice, pasta or cereal	Whole wheat bread, English muffin, pita bread, bagel, cereals, oatmeal, crackers, unsalted pretzels & popcorn
Vegetables	4-5	1 cup raw leafy vegetables ½ cup cooked vegetables 180ml vegetable juice	Tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, Green peas, squash, broccoli Turnip, spinach, green beans, Lima beans, sweet potatoes
Fruits	4-5	180ml fruit juice 1 medium fruit ¼ cup dried fruit ½ cup fresh, frozen or canned fruit	Apricots, bananas, dates, Grapes, Oranges, orange juice, grapefruit, mangos, melons, peaches, pineapples, prunes, raisins, strawberries
Low fat or fat Free dairy foods	2-3	250ml milk 200g yoghurt 40g cheese	Fat free (skim) or (1%) milk, Fat free or low fat regular or Frozen yoghurt, Low fat and fat free cheese
Meats, poultry And fish	2 or less	90g cooked meats, poultry or fish	Select only lean; trim away visible fats; broil, roast, or boil instead of Frying; remove skin from poultry
Nuts, seeds And legumes	4-5 per week	1/3 cup or 40g nuts 2 Tbsn or 15g seeds ½ cup cooked, dried beans	Almonds, mixed nuts, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds, kidney Beans, lentils, peas
Fats & Oils	2-3	1tsp soft margarine 1 Tbsn low fat mayonnaise 1 Tbsn salad dressing 1 tsp vegetable oil	Soft margarine, low fat mayonnaise, light salad dressing, Vegetable oil (such as olive, Canola or safflower)
Sweets	5 per week	1 Tbsn sugar 1 Tbsn jam 15g jelly beans 250ml lemonade	Maple syrup, sugar, jelly, Jam, jelly beans, hard candy, sorbet, iceblocks

Other tips to help you control high blood pressure are:

- Choose 'low salt' or 'salt reduced' foods from the supermarket and leave the salt shaker off the table.
- Walk for 30 minutes daily.
- If you drink alcohol, have 2 alcohol free nights per week.

If you require further information regarding your specific dietary needs, please make an appointment to see the Dietitian.