

# 6 Tips to Lower Blood Pressure With Food

## As Much as Medicine! (By 11 mm Hg points!)<sup>1</sup>



**Hypertension** is high blood pressure. Too much pressure in your blood vessels can increase the risk of **heart disease**, **stroke**, and **kidney problems**. The DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) and studies referenced below provide important tips on how your diet can help you lower your blood pressure.

### Eat vegetables & fruits

Eat at least 5 servings of vegetables and fresh fruit per day.<sup>2</sup>

One serving = 1 cup raw

Or = 1/2 cup cooked



### Limit red meat

Limit your intake of red meat (beef, pork, lamb) and processed meats to one serving a week.<sup>3</sup>

One serving = 3.5oz = a deck of cards

### Lower your sodium intake

Lower your sodium intake to 2400mg per day (less than 2 teaspoons of salt) or, for even more health benefits, to 1500mg per day.<sup>4</sup>

1500mg of sodium = = 1 teaspoon salt

SOY SAUCE LABEL	
<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1 tbsp (15mL)	
Servings Per Container about 126	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b>	15
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b>	0g 0%
<b>Sodium</b>	980mg 41%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b>	1g 0%

Remember, food often already has a lot of sodium. So be sure to read nutrition labels for sodium and serving size before you add salt!

### Eat unsaturated fats & plant-based protein

Eat unsaturated fats like extra virgin olive oil, avocados, and nuts.<sup>5</sup> Instead of processed carbs, eat lean meats like chicken, turkey, and fish. Eat protein from legumes like beans and lentils.

**Beans**



**Nuts**



**Lean Meats**



**Healthy Fats**



### Reduce sugar

Drink water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages.<sup>3</sup>

Try flavoring your water with fruit, cucumber, limes, lemons, and mint instead of sugar.



### Consider the Mediterranean diet

Though it is somewhat different from the above dietary tips, the Mediterranean diet is also a delicious and effective way to lower your blood pressure.<sup>6</sup> See the *Mediterranean Diet* handout.

### ACTION PLAN



Which of the tips will you try? Circle them.



When will you start? \_\_\_\_\_



How confident are you that you will accomplish your goal (from 0-100%)? \_\_\_\_\_



Follow-up plan

#### References:

<sup>1</sup> DASH diet - NEJM 1997;336:1117

<sup>2</sup> BMJ 2014;349:g4490

<sup>3</sup> NEJM 2010; 362:2101

<sup>4</sup> DASH-sodium study. NEJM 2001;344(1):3

<sup>5</sup> OmniHeart trial - JAMA 2005;294(19)

<sup>6</sup> Predimed Trial -- BMC Medicine 2013; 11:207

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