

Controlling your blood pressure

Your physician has told you that your blood pressure is at the limit or too high. You can take action!



EAT HEALTHY



BE ACTIVE 30 min.
ON MOST DAYS



MAINTAIN OR REDUCE YOUR WEIGHT



DO NOT SMOKE

Find out in this leaflet how **EATING HEALTHY**, one of the “4 winning strategies”, can help improve your blood pressure and avoid or reduce medication.

1 Make winning choices

The DASH eating plan (Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension) is recognized as particularly effective for the control of high blood pressure, given its high **potassium, magnesium, calcium, fibre and protein** content.

This diet is based on vegetables and fruit, whole grain cereal products, lower fat milk products, poultry, fish, legumes, tofu and nuts. It limits the consumption of red meat, fat and sweets (cake, cookies, chocolate, soft drinks, sugar, honey, syrup, etc.).

This type of diet can help lower blood pressure. The results are even more interesting when you limit the intake of salt and alcohol.

2 Limit salt intake

Although we need salt (composed of sodium and chlorine), we eat far too much of it, which may increase high blood pressure in certain individuals.

Most of the salt we eat (77%) does not come from the salt shaker but rather from processed foods that often contain large quantities of hidden sodium.

For example, six chicken nuggets with barbecue sauce or a ham and cheese sandwich **each** contain about 1,000 mg of sodium, the equivalent of 2 mL (1/2 tsp.) of salt. That is significant if one considers the maximum daily recommendation of 2,300 mg of sodium a day!

Cutting back on salt

Limit your consumption of foods rich in sodium such as:

- Restaurant food, fast-food and ready-to-eat meals: pizza, quiche, Chinese food, frozen dishes, etc.
- Smoked or salty meat: bacon, ham, deli, sausages, pâtés, canned meat, etc.
- Smoked or salty fish
- Canned or dehydrated soup, sauce or broth
- Seasoned rice or pasta in a pouch or a can
- Salted crackers, chips or nuts
- Condiments: ketchup, mustard, soya sauce, chili sauce, anchovies, etc.
- Tomato or vegetable juice
- Pickle, olives, capers, etc.
- Cheese spread, cheese slices, blue and feta cheese
- Seasoning salt: celery or onion salt, monosodium glutamate, etc.

Look for low-salt, no added salt, or reduced-sodium products. Read the labels and choose foods that contain less than 300 mg of sodium per serving (or less than 720 mg for ready-to-eat meals).

Reduce the use of salt (regular, sea salt or flower of salt) in cooking and avoid using the salt shaker at the table.

Bring out the flavour of your foods with herbs (e.g. chives, basil, oregano), spices (e.g. cumin, nutmeg), garlic, ginger, pepper or citrus juice and zest.

Try commercial seasonings made from herbs (make sure they do not contain salt!). If you choose salt substitutes made from potassium chloride, talk to your pharmacist or physician since they may interfere with your medication.



Choosing the right foods



Vegetables and Fruit

At meal time, snack time, anytime!

- ✓ potassium
- ✓ magnesium
- ✓ fibre

- Eat your vegetables and fruit, **fresh, raw or cooked, frozen or canned**. In the case of canned vegetables, drain and rinse them to reduce the amount of salt.
- Enjoy the **best sources of potassium** regularly: bananas, oranges, kiwis, melons, dried fruit (dates, apricots, figs), tomatoes, potatoes, carrots and broccoli.
- Garnish your bowl of cereal, oatmeal or yogourt with plenty of fruit.
- Add vegetables here and there: in sandwiches, rice, pizza, spaghetti sauce, soups, etc.

For a health drink, mix in the blender:

- 125 ml (1/2 cup) of orange juice
- 1/2 banana
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) of fresh or frozen strawberries

Can also be used to make delicious frozen pops!

Grain Products

Go for whole grain!

- ✓ potassium
- ✓ magnesium
- ✓ fibre

- Choose **whole wheat or multigrain** bread (sliced, pita, baguette, tortilla) and crispbread
- Choose cereals with 2 g or more of fibre per 30 g portion (or 4 g per 55 g). Read the labels. Don't forget oatmeal!
- Regularly add to your menu **whole wheat pasta** and **brown rice**.
- **Wheat bran** and **oat bran** are rich in potassium, magnesium and fibre. Add small quantities to your favourite breakfast cereal or to yogourt.
- Replace muffins, sweet breads and commercial cookies, all high in fat, by healthier home-made versions. Use nutritious ingredients such as oats, bran, whole wheat flour, fresh or dried fruit, unsalted nuts, etc.

Milk and Alternatives

Choose lower fat versions!

- ✓ calcium
- ✓ potassium
- ✓ protein

- **Include a serving of milk products in most of your meals:** a glass of milk or enriched soy beverage, a bowl of yogourt or a piece of cheese with 20% M.F. or less (however, cheese is salty). Impossible at every meal? Have it as a snack!
- Start your day off with a milkshake, by mixing milk, fruit and a dash of vanilla in the blender.
- Eat cereal with milk regularly, either for breakfast or as a snack. Use milk instead of water when preparing hot cereal.
- Make **your own frozen yogourt**, by mixing equal parts of vanilla yogourt and frozen fruit in the blender. Serve immediately.
- For added calcium, choose **milk beverages enriched with calcium** (33% or 35% more calcium).

Meat and Alternatives

Vary your sources of protein!

- ✓ magnesium
- ✓ potassium
- ✓ protein

- Have **2 to 3 meals of fish per week**.
- Think of meat or poultry as one component of the meal, not the main element.
- Discover **legumes**, such as red kidney beans or lentils, by adding them to soups, salads, casseroles, etc. Once drained and rinsed, canned legumes are ready to use.
- Replace part of the meat in spaghetti sauce, meatloaf or shepherd's pie with lentils or bits of tofu.
- **Jazz up your sandwiches** by varying your garnishes: chicken, fresh pork or beef roast, chickpea (hummus) or tofu spread, veggie pâté, etc.
- Snack on non-salted nuts or seeds. Go easy, however, because they are high in calories!

and for more fibre