DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. The DASH diet is a lifelong approach to healthy eating that’s designed to help treat or prevent high blood pressure (hypertension). The DASH diet encourages you to reduce the sodium in your diet and eat a variety of foods rich in nutrients that help lower blood pressure, such as potassium, calcium and magnesium.

### Fruits
Choose a variety of fresh fruits, such as apples, oranges and bananas. Add variety by looking beyond the ordinary to apricots, dates and berries. Select fruit canned in its own juice, not in heavy syrup, and frozen fruit without added sugar.

### Vegetables
Buy fresh, frozen or canned vegetables, such as tomatoes, carrots, broccoli and spinach. Choose frozen vegetables without added salt or butter or sauces, and opt for canned vegetables low in sodium.

### Low-fat dairy products
Look for lower fat dairy options when buying milk, buttermilk, cheeses, yogurt and sour cream.

### Grains
Aim for whole-grain and low-fat varieties of bread, bagels, pitas, cereal, rice, pasta, crackers and tortillas. Compare labels and choose the items lower in sodium.

### Nuts, seeds and legumes
Almonds, walnuts, kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas (garbanzos) and sunflower seeds are among the healthy options. But get the unsalted or low-salt varieties.

### Lean meats, poultry and fish
Opt for lean selections, such as fish, skinless chicken and turkey, pork tenderloin, extra-lean ground beef, and round or sirloin beef cuts. Avoid canned, smoked or processed meats, such as deli meats.

### Condiments, seasonings and spreads
Herbs, spices, flavored vinegars, salsas and olive oil can add zest to your meals without the salt overload. Choose low- or reduced-sodium versions of condiments.

### Standard DASH diet
You can consume up to 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium a day.

### Lower sodium DASH diet
You can consume up to 1,500 mg of sodium a day.

### Fats – not heart healthy
- Saturated fats, including coconut oil, palm oil, and foods containing them
- Trans fats / partially hydrogenated fats and foods containing them

### Beverages
- Saute onions, mushrooms or other vegetables in water or a little low-sodium broth. But because even low-sodium broth can add lots of unnecessary sodium, sometimes a healthy oil may be the best option.

### Make lower fat substitutions
Use lower fat dairy products, such as reduced-fat cream cheese and fat-free sour cream, instead of their higher fat counterparts.

### Cut back on meat
Prepare stews and casseroles with only two-thirds of the meat the recipe calls for, adding extra vegetables, brown rice, tofu, bulgur or whole-wheat pasta instead.

### Caffeine
Avoid caffeine containing medications such as Anacin, Dristan, Excedrin Extra Strength, Midol, NoDoz and Vivarin.

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