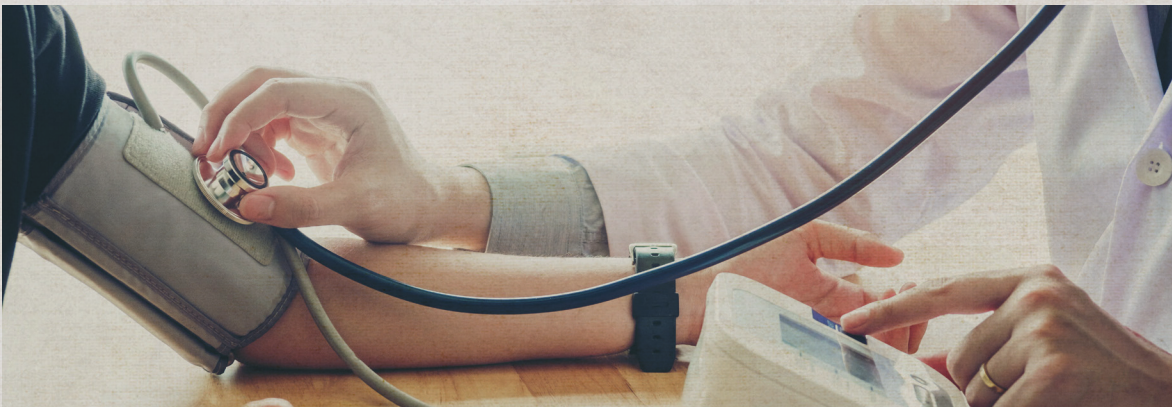


TEACHING TOOL DOWNLOAD

May

5 NUTRITION TIPS TO LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE:



Eating nutritious foods and balanced meals and adopting an overall healthy lifestyle is important for maintaining overall health and aiding in blood pressure control.

In the United States, hypertension, or high blood pressure, is the most common primary health care diagnosis, with over 35 million visits annually (1). While medication can certainly help manage blood pressure and may be necessary for certain individuals, there are also many nutritional and lifestyle changes one can make to help blood pressure as well.

The DASH diet, also known as Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, and the Mediterranean Diet, are two of the most effective strategies for lowering blood pressure. Here are some of the key principles of each and tips for you to incorporate these changes into your eating plan.

1. ***Eat More Fruits and Vegetables*** - Fruits and vegetables are full of essential vitamins and minerals, like potassium, magnesium, Vitamin C, Vitamin A, calcium, B-vitamins and more. Sweetpotatoes, especially, are chockful of Vitamins A and C, as well as fiber and antioxidants, which can help reduce inflammation in the body and reduce the risk of chronic disease.



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- 2. Reduce Saturated Fat Intake** - Foods high in saturated fat are usually also high in cholesterol, like palm oils, fast foods, full-fat dairy products and fatty cuts of meat. Substitute full-fat dairy products with reduced-fat options. Instead of fatty cuts of meat, aim for lean meat sources, like poultry and fish. Plant protein sources, like soy and legumes, can also be great substitutions.
- 3. Increase Intake of Unsaturated Fats** - Monounsaturated fats, like olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, and sesame oil, and polyunsaturated fats, such as fish, nuts and seeds, can help improve heart health by lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease and helping to reduce inflammation in the body (2).
- 4. Increase Your Fiber Intake** - Foods that are recommended in both the DASH and Mediterranean Diets include legumes, whole grains, nuts and seeds, all of which provide great sources of fiber as well. Sweetpotatoes are also a fiber-rich food. Fiber has many health benefits, including helping with fullness and satiety, improving digestion and lowering cholesterol. Soluble fiber may also play a small role in lowering blood pressure (3).
- 5. Limit Sugar-Sweetened Beverages and Sweets** - Sugar-sweetened beverages and foods can be high in saturated and trans fats, and are also poor sources of potassium, magnesium, calcium, fiber and protein. Instead, usually naturally-sweetened sweetpotatoes in meals and snacks can be a healthy alternative to satisfy your sweet tooth, like Whole Wheat Sweetpotato Zucchini Muffins or SweetPotato Waffles.

Resources:

1. Hsiao CJ, Cherry DK, Beatty PC, Rechtsteiner EA. National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey: 2007 summary. Natl Health Stat Rep. 2007;2010(27):1–32.
2. "DASH Eating Plan." National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/dash-eating-plan.
3. Khan K, Jovanovski E, Ho H.V.T., Marques A.C.R., Zurbau A., Mejia S.B., Sievenpiper J.L., Vuksan V. The effect of viscous soluble fiber on blood pressure: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. Nutr. Metab. Cardiovasc. Dis. 2018;28:3–13. doi: 10.1016/j.numecd.2017.09.007.



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