

AMERICAN HEART MONTH: “DASH”ing Your Way to a Healthier Heart



Welcome and Happy Valentine’s Day! Did you know that a joke a day could potentially keep the heart doctor away? Happiness and laughter have been shown to improve heart health by lowering stress and relaxing blood vessels! So...

What did the butter say to the bread on Valentine’s Day? - *You are the “loaf” of my life!*

WHAT IS DASH?

In addition to laughter and happiness, there is also “DASH” or Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. DASH is an eating plan that incorporates increased fruits, vegetables, and whole grains while reducing sodium and limiting unhealthy fats. The goal of DASH is to lower or prevent high blood pressure as well as potentially lower cholesterol levels, also known as, the major and primary risk factors of developing heart disease (in addition to smoking, of course).

Interpreting Your Labs*...

Cholesterol			
	Total (mg/dL)	HDL (mg/dL)	LDL (mg/dL)
High	≥ 240	< 40 (M), < 50 (F)	≥ 160
Borderline	200-239	40-59 (M), 50-59 (F)	100-159
Desirable	< 200	> 60 (M/F)	<100

Blood Pressure		
	Systolic (mm Hg)	Diastolic (mm Hg)
Normal	< 120	< 80
Elevated	120-129	≤ 80
High	> 130	≥ 80

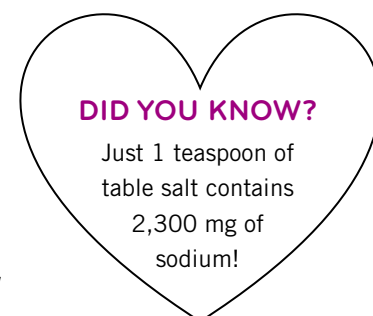
DIETARY APPROACHES

1. Choose fiber-rich whole grains.
2. Consume a variety of colorful vegetables.
3. Pick fruits without added sugars or syrups.
4. Go for low-fat or fat-free dairy products.
5. Select lean sources of protein.
6. Choose healthy fats and oils (*see below*).
7. Limit foods that are high in cholesterol.
8. Restrict sodium to 1,500-2,300 mg/day.
9. Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
10. Participate in physical activity, regularly.

Type of Fat	Examples	Heart Healthy?
Unsaturated	Liquid Oils (Canola, Olive, Peanut, Soybean, or Sunflower), Avocados, Nuts, Seeds	Yes
Omega-3	Fatty, Cold-Water Fish (Salmon, Tuna, Mackerel, Sardines), Flaxseed, Chia Seeds	Yes
Saturated	Foods With Animal Fats (Fatty Meats, Whole Milk, Butter), Solid Oils (Coconut)	No
Trans	Foods Containing Hydrogenated Oil (May be Found in Fried Foods, Crackers, Chips)	No

TIPS FOR REDUCING SODIUM

1. Avoid adding salt when cooking.
2. Avoid processed foods - opt for more fresh foods.
3. Look for products that are “sodium free” or “low sodium.”
4. Try herbs or salt-free seasoning blends to add flavor to your food.



AND FINALLY...

What type of flowers should you not give on Valentine’s Day? - *Cauliflower!*