

Basic Approaches to Hypertension

- **DIET:**
 - Lower weight if this is realistic
 - Decrease salt intake- start by eliminating salty foods and stop adding salt to meals
 - Have cholesterol checked and lower cholesterol if appropriate
 - Consider starting the DASH diet (sample attached)

IDEAL BODY WEIGHT

<u>HT</u>	<u>IDEAL</u>	<u>HIGH RISK</u>
5'	<135	>150
5'2"	<140	>160
5'4"	<150	>170
5'6"	<160	>180
5'8"	<170	>190
5'10"	<180	>205
6'	<190	>215

- **EXERCISE:**
 - If you can- with the approval of your primary care doctor- perform aerobic exercise for at least 20 minutes 3X/week.

TARGET HRT RATE FOR EXERCISE

<u>AGE</u>	<u>TARGET</u>
20	120-160
25	117-156
30	114-152
35	111-148
40	108-144
45	105-140
50	102-136
55	99-132
60	96-128
65	93-124
70	90-120

- **SELF BP MONITORING:**
 - Get a cuff at a pharmacy or medical supply store. Make sure that the size is correct for your arm (mostly a problem if your weight is over 200 pounds). Do not get a wrist cuff or finger cuff.

- **If you are uncertain how to use it, bring it in to our office and we will check your technique.**

Brief Overview of the DASH Diet*

Based on a 2,000 calorie a day diet the DASH diet recommends the following number of servings from the listed food groups:

- *7-8 servings of grain and grain products
- *4-5 servings of vegetables
- *4-5 servings of fruits
- *2-3 servings of low-fat or nonfat dairy products
- *2 or fewer servings of meat, poultry, or fish
- *4-5 servings of nuts, seeds and legumes per week
- *limited intake of fats and sweets

Remember that anything in moderation is acceptable. Do not feel as though you need to completely eliminate all of the foods you love to eat. That would not make this diet realistic or enjoyable.

You may notice that the DASH diet is high in fruits and vegetables and lower in meats. This may be a big change for you in your diet. The **key to success** is to gradually change your eating habits.

Change your eating habits gradually. Most people find it hard to change their diet if they try to change too much too soon. Start out making small changes and change gradually. Set small, attainable goals for yourself that you can successfully meet. This will give you confidence that you can be successful and will motivate you to continue making positive changes in your life. You are more likely to develop lifelong healthy eating habits if you make small changes that you can realistically maintain.

Here are some simple steps you can use to help you gradually change your eating habits to those of the DASH diet:

- If you eat 1 or 2 servings of vegetables a day, try to add 1-2 more each day, perhaps one at lunch and one at dinner.
- If you do not eat fruit often, try eating it as a snack if you are hungry in between meals.
- Reduce the butter, margarine or salad dressing by 1/2 of the amount you currently use. It is easier than you think.
- Try low-fat or fat-free condiments, such as fat-free salad dressing. Salad dressings can be a huge source of fat, so you can substantially reduce your fat intake just by using fat-free salad dressing.
- Drinking low-fat (1%) or skim milk (fat-free) is an easy way to reduce your total fat intake. It might seem like a big change, but once you get used to it, it will taste

the same as other types of milk. Give it a try!

The DASH diet uses less meat than most diets. Meat in general contains more fat than non-meat items, so by reducing your intake of meat, you will be able to reduce your fat intake. Here are some simple steps you can use to help you decrease your intake of meat:

- Treat meat as one part of your whole meal, not as the focus of the meal. While meat can be a quick and easy meal, there are many other non-meat alternatives that are simple and quick for meals.
- Buy less meat, as with everything else, if it is not there, you will not eat it.
- Try to slowly reduce the size of the portions of meat you eat.
- Try to have 1 or 2 meatless meals each week.
- Increase the servings of vegetables, rice, pasta, and dry beans in meals to compensate for less meat. Try casseroles and stir-fry dishes, having less meat and more vegetables, grains and dry beans in them.

The DASH diet promotes a high intake of fruit and low-fat items as well, which may be more than you are used to. To help you increase your intake of fruits and low-fat foods, try to use them as snacks or desserts. Dried fruits are easy to carry with you and are great snacks. (Be careful because some dried fruits contain a great deal of sugar, which may not be good if you are diabetic or need to watch your sugar intake). Other snack ideas include: unsalted pretzels or nuts mixed with raisins, graham crackers, low-fat and fat-free yogurt and frozen yogurt, plain popcorn with no salt or butter added and raw vegetables-perhaps with a low-fat or low-calorie dip.

*The information for this section was provided by the following sources:

(1) Facts About the DASH Diet. National Institutes of Health. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institutes. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 1998.

(2) Official World Wide Web Site for the DASH Diet. <http://dash.bwh.harvard.edu/>