PLANK 5

TOOL: Nutrition and Blood Pressure (Henry Ford Health System)

Using the DASH Diet to Lower Blood Pressure

The DASH diet stands for “Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension.” It is a pattern of eating foods with less salt and more magnesium, potassium, and calcium. It is designed to help lower blood pressure within two weeks of starting the plan. DASH focuses on eating fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy, while decreasing processed foods and added salt.

Daily Plan

- **Fruits**: 4 – 5 servings
- **Vegetables**: 4 – 5 servings
- **Whole grains**: 6 servings
- **Low-fat dairy**: 2 – 3 servings
- **Meat, poultry, fish**: 1 – 2 servings
- **Nuts, seeds, dry beans**: 3 – 4 servings per week
- **Sweets**: no more than 5 small servings per week

Serving Sizes

- **Fruits**: 1 medium fruit the size of a tennis ball, ½ cup of fresh or frozen fruit, ¼ cup of dried fruit
  - apricots, bananas, dates, grapes, oranges, grapefruit, mangoes, melons, peaches, pineapples, prunes, raisins, and strawberries
- **Vegetables**: 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables, ½ cup of raw or cooked vegetables
  - tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, green peas, squash, broccoli, artichokes, green beans, sweet potatoes, and bell peppers
- **Whole grains**: 1 slice of bread, ½ bagel, ½ cup cooked pasta or rice or cereal or grains
  - Whole wheat bread and english muffins, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, barley, quinoa, oatmeal
- **Low-fat dairy**: 1 cup milk, 1 ounce of cheese, ½ cup yogurt
- **Meat, poultry, fish**: a piece the size of a deck of cards or computer mouse
  - Lean cuts, trim away visible fat, remove skin from poultry, bake or roast instead of frying
- **Nuts and seeds**: ¼ cup of nuts or seeds, 2 Tbsp peanut butter, ½ cup cooked dry beans or lentils
- **Sweets**: 1 Tbsp sugar or jelly, 1 small cookie, 2-inch square brownie or cake
- **Salt**: no more than a total of 1 teaspoon of table salt (2,300 milligrams), including added salt and the salt found in foods or used for cooking
Tips to Get Started

- Plan meals and snacks ahead of time
- Write down what you eat.
- Plan your meals starting with a fruit and vegetable at each meal.
- Drink milk for lunch and dinner instead of pop or juice.
- Choose whole grains, like whole wheat bread and pasta and quinoa.
- Use reduced-salt or no-salt-added condiments and food products.
- Buy fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables.
- Use spices and herbs instead of salt for cooking.
- When eating out, avoid adding salt to foods.
- Eat a serving of nuts, seeds, or beans every other day.

If you have any questions, call your doctor’s office or ask to speak with a registered dietitian.

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