

Eating for Heart Health

A 3-Day DASH Menu & Swaps Guide



What Is the DASH Eating Plan?

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan owes its rich history to extensive scientific research on high blood pressure. The plan was developed in the 1990s by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and was designed to emphasize nutrient-rich foods that have been shown to lower blood pressure.

The DASH eating plan is particularly beneficial for

individuals with heart conditions, especially those dealing with hypertension. By prioritizing nutrient-dense foods and promoting a well-rounded diet, the plan contributes to improved cardiovascular health. Its flexible nature allows people, including those with busy schedules, to adopt a nutritious and heart-protective diet.

The key components of the DASH eating plan are limiting sodium intake while focusing on a healthful balance of:



Colorful Fruits and Vegetables

A variety of fruits and veggies provides essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.



Dairy Products

There are 13 essential nutrients found in milk, and three of them benefit your heart by helping lower blood pressure: calcium, potassium, and magnesium. Just three daily servings of milk, cheese or yogurt provide heart-healthy essential nutrients!*



Lean Proteins

Poultry, fish, and legumes can help contribute to a balanced and heart-healthy diet.



Whole Grains

Whole grains are a staple in the DASH eating plan, offering fiber, vitamins, and minerals that support heart health.

*Reference: U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov)

What Is MyPlate?

MyPlate is a dietary guidance tool developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that provides a simple visual representation of a balanced and healthy meal. MyPlate is grounded in nutrition science and is based

on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which are updated every five years. Always consult with a health care professional or registered dietitian for personalized advice on dietary changes.

Similar to the DASH eating plan, MyPlate incorporates key principles of a balanced diet and emphasizes portion control, variety, and nutrient density:

✓ **Balanced Proportions**

MyPlate divides a standard dinner plate into four sections, representing fruits, vegetables, grains, and protein. A portion for dairy is depicted alongside the plate to show that dairy is an essential component of a balanced plate.

✓ **Fruits and Vegetables**

MyPlate encourages the consumption of a variety of fruits and vegetables, emphasizing their importance in providing essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

✓ **Grains**

The grain section promotes the consumption of whole grains, such as brown rice, whole wheat, and oats, to ensure a good source of complex carbohydrates and fiber.

✓ **Protein**

The protein section includes lean sources of protein, such as poultry,

fish, beans, nuts, and seeds, promoting a well-rounded intake of essential amino acids.

✓ **Dairy**

The dairy component highlights the importance of incorporating dairy foods like milk, cheese, and yogurt for a wide variety of nutrients that other foods do not provide.





Basic Pantry List

No need to be daunted by the many ingredients found in these recipes; we've compiled them into one list for you – and you probably have many of the ingredients already. Some ingredients are used across multiple recipes, so be sure to grab the correct amount of each.

✓ **Dairy**

- Butter
- Buttermilk
- Blue cheese
- Cheddar jack (shredded)
- Italian-style blend (shredded)
- Kefir (raspberry, strawberry, or blueberry)
- Low-fat milk
- Low-fat Monterey Jack (sliced)
- Pepper jack (shredded or sliced)
- Reduced-fat cheddar (some sliced, some shredded)
- Smoked provolone (shredded)
- Yogurt (Greek, low-fat or nonfat, plain)

✓ **Grains**

- Bread (sourdough)
- English muffins (whole wheat)
- Granola (homemade or store-bought)
- Pasta of choice
- Pita triangles
- Rice (brown)
- Rice cakes (plain, mini)
- Tortillas (8-inch, flour)

✓ **Protein**

- Beef (lean, ground)
- Beef broth (reduced sodium)
- Chia seeds
- Chicken breast tenders (fresh, not breaded)
- Chicken (rotisserie)
- Eggs
- Low-sodium baked ham or turkey
- Walnuts (chopped)

✓ **Fruits**

- Applesauce
- Bananas
- Berries of choice (fresh blackberries, blueberries, or raspberries)
- Grapes
- Melon
- Strawberries



✓ **Vegetables**

Green bell peppers
Multicolored mini bell peppers
Red bell peppers
Broccoli
Cabbage (whole head, chopped)
Carrot (shredded)
Chives (pre-chopped or chop at home)
Green onion
Red onion
White or yellow onion
Portobello mushrooms (large)
Spinach
Sugar snap peas
Cherry or grape tomatoes
Canned diced tomatoes and green chiles
Tomato sauce
Yellow squash
Zucchini

✓ **Herbs and Spices**

Basil or cilantro (fresh)
Black pepper (ground)
Cinnamon
Salt-free seasoning blend
Garlic (fresh)
Italian seasoning
Parsley (optional)

✓ **Sauces and Condiments**

Hot sauce
Hummus (premade)
Marinara sauce
Mayonnaise
Salsa

✓ **Baking and Cooking Staples**

Baking powder
Baking soda
Brown sugar
All-purpose flour
Whole wheat flour
Honey (optional)
Lemon juice
Canola or vegetable oil
Cooking spray
Olive oil
Vanilla extract



Healthy Food Swaps



Choose unsalted foods over foods with added salt.



Swap out sour cream for low-fat Greek yogurt.



Look for fruit canned in water instead of juice.



Replace margarine with real butter.



Choose trail mix over granola “candy” bars.



Try freezing grapes to satisfy a craving for candy.



Try replacing fresh fruit with frozen fruit for smoothies.



Instead of soda, choose a glass of milk.

Plan and Prep in Advance

It helps to stay on track with the DASH eating plan when healthier options are readily available. Meal prepping can also prevent impulsive food choices and allow for better portion control.

Convenience Store Options

When traveling or on the go, be sure to look for these healthy convenience store snacks to help you stay on track.



Carrots or other vegetable sticks



Apples



Greek yogurt or yogurt parfait



Cottage cheese



Bananas or oranges



Low-fat chocolate milk



Lightly salted mixed nuts



Protein bar



String cheese

Other choices: single-serve cheese, protein shake, yogurt smoothie, tuna or salmon pouches

**DAY
1**



BREAKFAST

Morning Farmhouse Pizza Toast

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Ingredients

½ tablespoon oil (canola or other vegetable oil)

¼ cup broccoli florets, chopped

1 green onion, chopped

2 tablespoons red bell pepper, diced

2 large eggs, beaten

1 whole-wheat English muffin,
split in half

¼ cup shredded **pepper jack cheese**
(or 2 slices pepper jack cheese)

2 tablespoons favorite salsa

Salt-free seasoning blend and
freshly ground black pepper,
to taste

Instructions

1. Heat a small nonstick skillet over medium heat; add oil, broccoli, green onion, and red pepper. Cook, stirring for 3 minutes or until vegetables are softened.
2. Stir eggs, salt-free seasoning blend, and pepper into the vegetable mixture. Cook, stirring until eggs are set, about 1 to 2 minutes.
3. Toast English muffin in the toaster. Spoon half of the egg mixture on top of each muffin half and top with cheese.
4. Preheat broiler. Place muffins on a baking sheet and place under the broiler for 1 to 2 minutes or until cheese is melted and bubbly, or bake in preheated 350° F oven for 3 to 5 minutes until cheese is melted.
5. Serve with a drizzle of salsa on top. Season with salt-free seasoning blend and pepper as desired.

Simple Swaps

- Perfect for leftovers — use whatever vegetables you have in your refrigerator!
- Or go Mediterranean with spinach, artichokes, olives, and mozzarella cheese; south of the border with crumbled chorizo, beans, and pepper jack cheese; or Hawaiian with mix of chopped ham, mozzarella cheese, and crushed pineapple.
- Try olive oil, grapeseed oil, or avocado oil as a healthier alternative to vegetable oil.



LUNCH

Roasted Vegetable Quesadillas

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Ingredients

1 red onion, sliced ½-inch thick
1 zucchini, quartered lengthwise
1 yellow squash, quartered lengthwise
1 red pepper, quartered lengthwise
3 cloves garlic
1 tablespoon olive oil

1 tablespoon chopped fresh
cilantro or basil
4 (8-inch) flour tortillas
1 ½ cups (6 ounces) shredded
smoked **provolone** or **cheddar**
jack cheese

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 450° F. Spray a 15x10-inch baking sheet with cooking spray.
2. Arrange vegetables, including garlic, in a single layer on pan. Drizzle with olive oil. Cook for 15 minutes until barely tender. Cut vegetables into cubes or slivers; peel and mash garlic. Mix together in a bowl; toss with cilantro or basil.
3. Sprinkle left side of each tortilla with half of cheese. Place vegetables evenly on top of cheese; top with remaining cheese. Fold right side of tortilla over to close and press on top to slightly flatten. Grill each quesadilla in a large skillet or griddle over medium heat for 3 minutes on each side or until golden and cheese melts. Cut each in half.

Tips and Tricks

- To cook ahead, or when grilling outdoors, cook extra vegetables until lightly charred and barely tender. Refrigerate until needed.
- Change the flavor with the choice of herb.



DINNER

Inside-Out Cabbage Rolls

Ingredients

1 pound lean ground beef	1 cup reduced-sodium beef broth
1 large white or yellow onion, chopped	1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
1 large green bell pepper, chopped	1 cup cooked brown rice
1 small head cabbage, chopped	½ cup shredded reduced-fat
1 can (10 ounces) diced tomatoes and green chiles	cheddar cheese

Instructions

1. In a Dutch oven, cook the beef, onion, and green pepper over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain.
2. Stir in the cabbage, tomatoes, broth, and tomato sauce. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 20-25 minutes or until cabbage is tender, stirring occasionally.
3. Stir in the rice; heat through. Remove from the heat. Sprinkle with cheese. Cover and let stand until cheese is melted.

Health Tip

- For added protein, add a tablespoon of plain Greek yogurt as a topping!

**DAY
2**



BREAKFAST

Power Breakfast Parfait

Ingredients

½ cup low-fat or nonfat plain

Greek yogurt

¼ cup **kefir** (any flavor – try
raspberry, strawberry, or blueberry)

1 ½ tablespoons chia seeds

¼-½ cup granola of choice
(homemade or store-bought)

Fresh berries (blackberries,
blueberries, raspberries,
or strawberries)

Drizzle of honey, optional

Instructions

1. In a small bowl, mix together Greek yogurt, kefir, and chia seeds. Place in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes.
2. In a small mason jar or glass, layer yogurt with granola. Top with fresh berries of choice and drizzle with honey, if desired.

Health Tip

- Sensitive to lactose? Try lactose-free dairy products. Many grocery stores offer lactose-free milk, cheese, and yogurt!



LUNCH

On-The-Go Meal Box

Ingredients

2 ounces rotisserie chicken slices

1 ounce **cheddar cheese** slices, cut into star shapes

1 mini kabob with grapes, melon, strawberries

¼ cup premade hummus

¼ cup blanched sugar snap peas

3 multicolored mini bell peppers

5 mini rice cakes or pita triangles

Instructions

1. Fill each compartment of a bento or lunch meal box with the various items.

Tips and Tricks

- For ingredient ideas, think of variety and color – savory, sweet, and crunchy foods!
- Combine dairy products with whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins for a balanced meal. For instance, pair low-fat cheese with apple slices or whole-grain crackers for a nutritious snack.
- Add a favorite dip, such as guacamole, salsa, hummus, or nut butter!
- Separate crunchy ingredients from fruits and veggies to prevent sogginess.

Simple Swaps

- Use leftovers! Let your imagination go wild!
- Take shortcuts with store-bought items like pasta salads, hard-boiled eggs, or stuffed grape leaves.
- Use fresh, canned, and dried fruit as your sweet treat.
- Vary your proteins – cheeses, nut butter, leftover meat, edamame or roasted chickpeas.



Inspired by the first-place winning recipe submitted by George Baley, LaPorte, IN, in the American Dairy Association of Indiana's Best Grilled Cheese Contest.

DINNER

LaPorte-Obello Grilled Cheese Sandwich

Ingredients

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 4 small slices sourdough bread | Olive oil cooking spray |
| 2 large portobello mushrooms | 2 tablespoons blue cheese |
| 1 red bell pepper | 2 slices low-fat Monterey Jack cheese |
| 1 white or yellow onion | |

Instructions

1. Slice mushrooms, red pepper, and onion into large strips.
2. Spray bottom of nonstick frying pan with olive oil cooking spray and sauté vegetables until tender, about 2 minutes.
3. Assemble the sandwiches by spraying the outside of each slice of bread with olive oil cooking spray. Place 1 slice of low-fat Monterey Jack cheese on top of the bottom slice of sandwich bread. Add the mushroom, pepper, and onion mixture. Top with 1 tablespoon of crumbled blue cheese and the second slice of bread.
4. Grill sandwiches in a nonstick frying pan over moderate heat until golden brown, about 2 minutes per side.

Simple Swaps

- Not a fan of blue cheese? Try adding Gouda or an herbed cream cheese to your sandwich instead!

**DAY
3**



BREAKFAST

Buttermilk Banana Muffins

Ingredients

2 tablespoons butter , room temperature	½ cup whole-wheat flour
⅔ cup canola or vegetable oil	¾ teaspoon baking soda
1 cup brown sugar	1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
2 ripe bananas, smashed	¾ teaspoon salt
½ cup applesauce	1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	1 cup buttermilk
3 eggs	1 cup chopped walnuts
1 ½ cups all-purpose flour	

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400° F.
2. Line muffin tins with wrappers or spray with cooking spray. In a large bowl, cream butter, oil, brown sugar, bananas, applesauce, and vanilla with an electric mixer. Add eggs one at a time, mixing after each.
3. In a separate bowl, mix together all the dry ingredients. Add flour mixture and buttermilk to the butter-banana mixture, alternating flour and buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour. Mix just until blended. Stir in walnuts.
4. Scoop mixture into muffin tins, filling each to the top. Bake 18 to 20 minutes.

Tips and Tricks

- No buttermilk? Mix 1 tablespoon of white vinegar to 1 cup of skim milk, allowing it to sit for 5 to 10 minutes.
- These muffins are great as a make-ahead breakfast and an easy on-the-go mealtime solution.
- Pair your breakfast with a glass of milk for added protein, calcium, and other essential nutrients.



LUNCH

Salad in a Jar

Ingredients

DRESSING:

- ¼ cup each [buttermilk](#) and [plain yogurt](#)
- 3 tablespoons reduced-fat mayonnaise
- ¼ teaspoon hot sauce
- ¼ teaspoon salt-free seasoning blend
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon chopped chives

SALAD:

- 1 cup cherry or grape tomatoes
- ¼ cup shredded carrot
- ¼ cup low-sodium baked ham or turkey
- 1 ½ cups (6 ounces) shredded [colby jack](#) or [cheddar jack cheese](#)
- 2 cups torn spinach

Instructions

FOR THE DRESSING:

1. In a medium bowl, combine buttermilk, yogurt, and mayonnaise until blended.
2. Stir in remaining dressing ingredients. Refrigerate until ready to assemble salads. Dressing may be prepared up to 2 days ahead and stored in a covered container in the refrigerator.

FOR THE SALAD:

1. Divide dressing among 4 pint-size jars with lids such as Mason jars. Layer tomatoes, carrot, low-sodium baked ham or turkey, cheese, and spinach. Cover and refrigerate.
2. Shake to coat salad before eating.

Variations

- Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup crumbled blue cheese to dressing. Layer dressing, tomatoes, 2 chopped hard-boiled eggs, low-sodium baked ham or turkey, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup crumbled blue cheese, and spinach.
- Add 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar to dressing. Layer dressing, tomatoes, 6 ounces fresh mozzarella balls or cubes, torn basil, and spinach.

Simple Swaps

- Use Greek yogurt instead of regular yogurt in the dressing for less lactose and more protein. It also makes a great substitute for sour cream!
- Use rotisserie chicken instead of deli meats to infuse this recipe with savory flavor.



DINNER

Cheesy Italian Chicken Pouches

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Ingredients

Cooking spray

3 small zucchinis, sliced into rounds

1 pound chicken breast tenders,
approximately 8 tenders or
chicken breasts, cut into 8 strips

1 teaspoon Italian seasoning

1 cup marinara sauce

1 cup shredded **Italian-style
cheese blend**

Cooked pasta, if desired

Salt-free seasoning blend and
pepper, to taste

Parsley, optional

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Cut 4 pieces of heavy-duty aluminum foil about 12x15 inches and coat with cooking spray. Equally divide the zucchini slices between the foil pieces. Place 2 chicken tenders on top of the zucchini slices, then sprinkle with Italian seasoning.
2. Top each with equal amounts of marinara sauce, followed by equal amounts of cheese.
3. Bring 2 sides of the foil together and fold down, then roll up the short ends and seal tightly so that the chicken steams inside the pouch while in the oven. Place the pouch on a rimmed baking sheet and repeat with remaining pouches.
4. Bake for 35 minutes or until cooked through. Carefully open each pouch to allow steam to escape and peel back the foil. Sprinkle each pouch with additional cheese, if desired. Return to the oven until the cheese has melted, 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Slide the pouches onto 4 dinner plates and serve with additional marinara sauce and cooked pasta, if desired.

Simple Swaps

- Try substituting small chicken breasts or provolone cheese. You can also replace the pasta with spaghetti squash.

Notes From Your Doctor

When aiming to improve your overall health or make changes to dietary patterns, always consult with a health care professional or registered dietitian for personalized advice on dietary changes.



Find more heart health science and recipes at
DairyDiscoveryZone.com/Heart-Health



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