

Your Guide to

# Eating Well With Hypertension

**Bonus:**  
5 sample  
recipes

**Simple strategies  
to help you thrive**

This content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.



# Welcome!

If you've been diagnosed with hypertension (also known as high blood pressure), you may be wondering what foods you should and shouldn't eat. It's true that food can play a big role in managing high blood pressure. But diet isn't one-size-fits-all. We all have different likes and dislikes, budgets and more.

That's why we created Your Guide to Eating Well With Hypertension. We'll share some of the best practices for eating to manage high blood pressure. We'll also provide tips and tools so you can make a blood pressure-friendly diet your own. Plus, we'll end with five easy and delicious recipes that will leave your mouth watering.

We hope this guide can help you create delicious meals that will help you manage your blood pressure.

Enjoy!

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# Understanding the Basics

Food is made of three basic nutrients that provide fuel to your body: carbohydrates, protein and fats. Knowing how the body uses each nutrient and meeting the goals below will help you build well-balanced meals that are healthy and satisfying.



## Carbohydrates

Carbs are the sugars and starches that your body breaks down into glucose to use for energy. Carbs cause your blood sugar to rise. Too many of the less nutritious kinds, like added sugars, can cause weight gain and increase your risk of diabetes and heart disease. If you have diabetes, it's important to closely monitor carb intake.

**Your goal: Choose moderate portions of the more nutritious carb foods. Avoid added sugars.**



## Non-starchy veggies

Non-starchy veggies are low in carbs and calories and are a great source of fiber, vitamins and minerals.

**Your goal: Fill half of your plate with a variety of non-starchy veggies at each meal. It's not usually necessary to limit portion sizes like you do with other carb-containing foods—in most cases, you can eat as much as you desire. If you have a chronic condition that limits certain nutrients, make sure you consult with your doctor.**



## Protein

Protein helps build and keep muscle. It also helps you feel full. Protein has very little impact on your blood sugar.

**Your goal: Include protein when eating carbs. This slows the rise of blood sugar following a meal or snack. Opt for lean or plant-based protein sources.**



## Fats

Fats help your brain and nervous system work and add great flavor and texture to food. When eaten alone, fats will not raise your blood sugar.

**Your goal: Choose foods that contain healthy fats (poly and monounsaturated). Limit saturated fats and avoid trans fats.**

*Curious about how these nutrients translate into the foods you eat?  
Turn to page 6 to take a look at our detailed Your Food Groups guide.*

# The DASH Eating Plan

The DASH eating plan is a popular strategy for managing blood pressure. DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stopping Hypertension. DASH doesn't require special foods or ask you to count nutrients. It simply gives you goals to aim for each day and week.

DASH focuses on nutrients that help lower blood pressure. These nutrients are potassium, calcium, magnesium, protein and fiber.

In addition, a DASH plan limits nutrients that can be harmful to heart health. These nutrients are sodium, saturated fat and trans fat. It also limits sugar.



## **Foods rich in nutrients that make up a DASH eating plan include:**

- Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains
- Nonfat or low-fat dairy products (yogurt, milk, cottage cheese)
- Fish, poultry, beans, nuts and vegetable oils



## **When following a DASH eating plan, you'll want to minimize:**

- Processed meats (salami, bologna, ham, bacon)
- Canned foods (unless they're reduced sodium varieties)
- Fast food
- Fatty meats
- Full-fat dairy
- Candy and other sweets
- Sugar-sweetened beverages (like soda and sweet teas)

## **Goals to aim for on a DASH eating plan:**

<b>Food group</b>	<b>Servings</b>
Grains	6-8 / day
Meat, poultry, fish	6 or fewer / day
Vegetables	4-5 / day
Fruit	4-5 / day
Low-fat or nonfat dairy	2-3 / day
Fats and oils	2-3 / day
Nuts, seeds, dry beans and peas	4-5 / week
Sweets	5 or fewer / week

See page 5 for more on sodium.

# The Scoop on Sodium

If you have high blood pressure, you've likely heard that you need to watch your salt intake. This is true—but it's not the whole story.

Salt is an ingredient that you use in cooking or to season food at the table. Sodium is the main nutrient in salt. Sodium pulls water into your bloodstream. This increases the volume of blood in your blood vessels.

While some sodium is important, too much sodium puts extra pressure on your blood vessels—in other words, it increases your blood pressure.

If you've stopped adding table salt to your food, that can make a dent in your sodium intake. But more than 70% of the sodium we eat comes from restaurants, takeout and packaged foods, not from the saltshaker.

The American Heart Association recommends that adults with high blood pressure take in no more than 1,500 mg of sodium per day. That's less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a teaspoon of salt!

## Here are some strategies for cutting back on the sodium you eat:



Cook at home as much as possible



Favor fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables



Season with low-sodium flavors like herbs, spices, lemon juice and vinegar



When buying canned foods like beans, look for "low sodium" options



Read labels! The Nutrition Facts panel will tell you how much sodium is in each serving



Balance high-sodium foods with low-sodium whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and more

# Your Food Groups

Figuring out what to eat? Below you'll find examples of foods that fall into each group. Depending on your health needs, you may be able to eat more than one serving at a meal. Use this as a guide to build a variety of satisfying meals that help you reach your goals.



## Carbohydrates (starches)

*One serving contains 15 grams of carbs and around 80 calories*

<b>Bagel</b>	<i>1/4 large bagel (1 oz)</i>
<b>Barley</b>	<i>1/3 cup cooked</i>
<b>Beans and pulse</b> (cannellini beans, chickpeas, lentils, fava beans, etc.)	<i>1/2 cup cooked, also = 1 protein serving</i>
<b>Bread</b>	<i>1 slice (1 oz)</i>
<b>Bulgur</b>	<i>1/2 cup cooked</i>
<b>Corn</b>	<i>1/2 cup kernels or 1/2 large cob</i>
<b>Couscous</b>	<i>1/3 cup cooked</i>
<b>English muffin</b>	<i>1/2 muffin</i>
<b>Farro</b>	<i>1/2 cup cooked</i>
<b>Green peas</b>	<i>1/2 cup</i>
<b>Millet</b>	<i>1/3 cup cooked</i>
<b>Oatmeal</b>	<i>1/2 cup cooked</i>
<b>Pasta</b>	<i>1/3 cup cooked</i>
<b>Plain potato</b>	<i>1/2 cup cooked</i>
<b>Polenta</b>	<i>3/4 cup cooked</i>
<b>Rice</b> (brown or white)	<i>1/3 cup cooked</i>
<b>Winter squash</b> (acorn, butternut)	<i>1 cup</i>

# Your Food Groups



## Carbohydrates (fruits)

*One serving contains 15 grams of carbs and around 60 calories*

<b>Apple</b>	<i>1 small (4 oz)</i>
<b>Apricot</b>	<i>4 fresh</i>
<b>Banana</b>	<i>1 extra small or ½ large</i>
<b>Blueberries</b>	<i>¾ cup</i>
<b>Cherries</b>	<i>¾ cup</i>
<b>Clementine</b>	<i>2 small</i>
<b>Dried fruit</b> (raisins, dates, apricots)	<i>2 Tbsp</i>
<b>Figs</b>	<i>2 medium</i>
<b>Grapes</b>	<i>17 small</i>
<b>Grapefruit</b>	<i>½ large</i>
<b>Melon</b>	<i>1 cup, diced</i>
<b>Nectarine or peach</b>	<i>1 medium</i>
<b>Orange</b>	<i>1 medium</i>
<b>Persimmon</b>	<i>½ fruit</i>
<b>Pomegranate</b>	<i>½ cup arils</i>
<b>Plum</b>	<i>1 small</i>
<b>Raspberries or blackberries</b>	<i>1 cup</i>
<b>Strawberries</b>	<i>1¼ cups whole</i>
<b>Watermelon</b>	<i>1¼ cups diced</i>



## Carbohydrates (milk & yogurt)

*One serving contains 6-12 grams of carbs and around 80-160 calories*

<b>Cow's milk</b> (whole, reduced fat, skim)	<i>1 cup</i>
<b>Kefir</b> (plain, unsweetened)	<i>1 cup</i>
<b>Rice milk</b> (plain, unsweetened)	<i>1 cup</i>
<b>Almond milk</b> (plain, unsweetened)	<i>1 cup</i>
<b>Soy milk</b> (plain, unsweetened)	<i>1 cup</i>
<b>Yogurt, Greek or regular</b> (plain, unsweetened)	<i>6 oz</i>

*Note: If food/drink is flavored or sweetened, read the label for more details.*



# Your Food Groups



## Protein

*One serving contains 7 grams of protein and around 35-100 calories*

<b>Beans and pulses</b> (chickpeas, lentils, white beans; dried or low-sodium canned)	<i>½ cup cooked also = 1 carb serving</i>
<b>Chicken, turkey, fish, shellfish, beef, lamb, goat, pork</b>	<i>1 oz</i>
<b>Eggs</b>	<i>1 egg</i>
<b>Egg substitute</b>	<i>¼ cup</i>
<b>Egg whites</b>	<i>2 egg whites</i>
<b>Low-fat cheese</b>	<i>1 oz</i>
<b>Low-fat Greek yogurt</b>	<i>⅓ cup</i>
<b>Nuts and seeds</b> (almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, peanuts, pistachios, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts)	<i>1 Tbsp</i>
<b>Nut spread, no sugar added</b> (almond butter, tahini)	<i>1 Tbsp</i>
<b>Ricotta cheese</b>	<i>¼ cup</i>
<b>Tempeh</b> (check label for carb counts)*	<i>¼ cup</i>
<b>Tofu*</b>	<i>½ cup</i>



## Fats

*One serving contains 5 grams of fat, around 45 calories, usually 0 carbs, but always check the label*

<b>Almonds or cashews*</b>	<i>6 nuts</i>
<b>Avocado</b>	<i>2 Tbsp</i>
<b>Bacon</b>	<i>1 slice</i>
<b>Butter</b>	<i>1 tsp</i>
<b>Mayonnaise</b>	<i>1 tsp regular or 1 Tbsp reduced fat</i>
<b>Nut butters</b> (almond, cashew, tahini, etc.)	<i>1½ tsp</i>
<b>Oil</b> (olive, canola)	<i>1 tsp</i>
<b>Olives</b>	<i>8 black or 10 green</i>
<b>Pecans and walnuts</b>	<i>4 halves</i>
<b>Pistachios*</b>	<i>16 nuts</i>

\*Plant-based protein foods provide quality protein, healthy fats and fiber. They vary in how much fat and carbohydrates they contain, so make sure to read labels.



# Your Food Groups



## Non-starchy veggies

*One serving contains about 5 grams of carbohydrates and around 25 calories.  
1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw for one non-starchy vegetable choice below:*

<b>Arugula</b>	<b>Garlic</b>
<b>Artichokes</b>	<b>Greens</b> (lettuce, chicory, collard greens, dandelion greens, kale)
<b>Asparagus</b>	<b>Leeks</b>
<b>Bell peppers</b> (red, green, yellow)	<b>Onions</b> (green, red, sweet, yellow, shallots)
<b>Broccoli</b>	<b>Okra</b>
<b>Brussels sprouts</b>	<b>Peppers</b>
<b>Cabbage</b>	<b>Radishes</b>
<b>Carrots</b>	<b>Rutabaga</b>
<b>Cauliflower</b>	<b>Spinach</b>
<b>Celery</b>	<b>Tomatoes</b>
<b>Cucumbers</b>	<b>Turnips</b>
<b>Eggplant</b>	<b>Zucchini</b>
<b>Fennel</b>	



## Don't forget about... herbs and spices

*Seasonings can add minimal calories and sodium but pack loads of flavor.  
Use freely:*

<b>Basil</b>	<b>Lemon juice</b>	<b>Rosemary</b>
<b>Black pepper</b>	<b>Lime juice</b>	<b>Sage</b>
<b>Cinnamon</b>	<b>Marjoram</b>	<b>Saffron</b>
<b>Coriander</b>	<b>Mint</b>	<b>Savory</b>
<b>Cumin</b>	<b>Nutmeg</b>	<b>Sumac</b>
<b>Dill</b>	<b>Oregano</b>	<b>Tarragon</b>
<b>Garlic</b>	<b>Paprika</b>	<b>Thyme</b>
<b>Ginger</b>	<b>Parsley</b>	<b>Turmeric</b>
<b>Herbes de Provence</b>	<b>Ras el hanout</b>	<b>Vinegar</b>
<b>Lavender</b>	<b>Red pepper flakes</b>	<b>Za'atar</b>

# Balance Your Plate

The balanced plate model can be an easy way to put a DASH eating plan into practice. It naturally emphasizes lots of fresh produce, along with lean proteins, some carbohydrates and healthy fats.

The balanced plate model is an easy, delicious way to fuel your body. Following this format will help you fill your plate with healthy foods in the right proportions.

It's as simple as eyeballing it. A balanced plate has 50% non-starchy veggies, 25% lean proteins and 25% carbs. It may also include a little healthy fat.

Start with a **9-inch plate**. Measure your usual plates to see how wide they are. If they're bigger than 9 inches, try using smaller plates. You can also fill your regular plates to the 9-inch mark.

Use the Your Food Groups guide on the previous pages to help you fill your plate. You'll find lots of tasty options to help create a variety of balanced and satisfying meals. Plugging different foods into the sections of the plate can even inspire creativity and get you out of a rut.

## 50%

**Non-starchy veggies = half of your plate**

Options include: lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, eggplant, mushrooms, onions, zucchini

## 25%

**Carbs = a quarter of your plate**

Options include: pasta, pita bread, rice, potatoes (choose whole grain choices when possible)

## 25%

**Proteins = another quarter of your plate**

Options include: beans and lentils, poultry, lean meat, fish, eggs, tofu

✱

**Healthy fats = just a bit**

Options include: olive oil, nuts, seeds, olives, avocado



# Healthy Portion Sizes, Any Time

Now that you know how to balance your plate, it's important to consider how much you eat. Portion sizes have a huge impact on our ability to reach and maintain a healthy weight. Staying at a healthy weight can be an important tool in your blood pressure management journey.

When it comes to portion sizes, it can feel like the world is working against us. Restaurant servings for one can be big enough for a family to share. Even the plates we use at home have gotten bigger!

Luckily, you can retrain your eyes—and your stomach—to recognize what “enough” looks and feels like. Use your hand as a guide to estimate portions that will satisfy and help you reach your goals.



## Fist

Whole grains, starchy vegetables, whole fruits, milk, yogurt ( $\frac{3}{4}$  of your fist)



## Palm of hand

Meat, fish, tofu, tempeh



## Thumb

Dressings, dips, desserts



## Two flat hands side by side

Total amount of food per meal



## Flat hand

Non-starchy vegetables



# How to Build a Healthy, Blood Pressure-Friendly Meal

Knowing what to eat is only the first step. Here are some strategies you can use to enjoy healthy foods that fit your nutrition needs:



## Plan and shop

- Make a meal plan and shop for only foods that are on your plan.
- Don't be fooled by discounts. "Good deal" doesn't mean "good for you"!



## Prep ahead

- Wash, cut, and store produce in containers right after grocery shopping.
- Cook once, eat twice: Prepare more than you need so you can enjoy leftovers, too.



## Get cooking

- **Cut the fat:**
  - Cook foods in water or vegetable stock instead of frying in oil.
- **Slash the sodium:**
  - Skip the salt in recipes. Replace it with your favorite herbs and spices.
  - Try lemon juice and vinegar to tone down bitterness and sharpen flavors.
- **Bump up the veggies:**
  - Double the amount of non-starchy veggies in a recipe.
  - Grill, roast or steam veggies to mellow bitterness and help bring out their flavor.
- **Include lean proteins:**
  - Make sure your meals contain lean meat, fish, eggs, beans or tofu.
  - Cook using healthier methods: Grill, roast or sauté.
- **Choose whole grains:**
  - Experiment with brown rice and whole grain noodles instead of white rice and refined-grain pasta.
  - Remember that grains are also sources of carbs and calories. Portion size matters!



## Eat and enjoy

- **Be mindful when eating:**
  - Avoid distractions like the TV, your phone or your tablet.
  - Slow your pace by putting down your fork between bites. Chew and savor!

# Smarter Snacks

Having a snack between meals can curb hunger throughout the day. Well-planned snacks can also keep you from eating too much at meals. Snacks that contain both produce and fat or protein are your best bet. That combo will help fill you up and keep you satisfied until mealtime.

Here are a few dynamic snack duos:



**Cucumber + hummus**



**Melon + no-salt cottage cheese**



**Pear + peanut butter**



**Dried apricots + pistachios**



**Clementine + almonds**



**Bell pepper spears + hard-boiled egg**



**Strawberries + Greek yogurt**

If you're craving a snack, check in with your body. Are you low on energy? Is your stomach empty? Avoid eating when you're bored or stressed. Instead, save snacking for when you need extra fuel to make it to the next meal.

## 5 Sample Recipes

### BREAKFAST

# Peanut Butter and Berries Overnight Oats

Makes 1 serving | Prep: 5 min



#### NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING (1 cup oat mixture + toppings)

Calories	Total fat	Sat. fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
384	20 g	4 g	26 mg	1 mg	38 g	10 g	7 g	16 g	499 mg

#### INGREDIENTS

- ⅓ cup rolled oats
- ⅓ cup nonfat milk
- ⅓ cup nonfat Greek yogurt
- 2 tsp chia seeds
- 1 Tbsp no-salt peanut butter
- ½ cup sliced strawberries

#### PREPARATION

In a glass jar or bowl with a lid, combine oats, milk, yogurt and chia seeds. Mix well and cover. Refrigerate overnight or at least 4 hours.

Remove lid and top with peanut butter and strawberries.



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# 5 Sample Recipes

## LUNCH

## Colorful lentil salad

Makes 4 servings | Prep: 15 min | Cook: 30 min



### NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING (Around 1.5 cups salad)

Calories	Total fat	Sat. fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
261	8 g	1 g	50 mg	0 mg	36 g	16 g	5 g	14 g	678 mg

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup uncooked green lentils
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 medium English cucumber, chopped
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, quartered
- 1 yellow bell pepper, chopped
- ½ cup parsley, finely chopped
- 1 medium shallot, chopped

### PREPARATION

Pour dry lentils into a strainer and rinse. Add rinsed lentils to a medium pot with 3 cups water. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to low flame. Cover and simmer for around 20 minutes, until lentils are tender.

While lentils are cooking, add olive oil, vinegar, mustard and honey to a medium bowl and whisk together.

Place chopped vegetables and cooked, cooled lentils into a large bowl. Toss well, drizzle with dressing, and toss again. Refrigerate until served.



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## 5 Sample Recipes

### DINNER

# Sheet pan halibut with vegetables

Makes 6 servings | Prep: 10 min | Cook: 15 min



#### NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING (1 halibut fillet and 1 heaping cup vegetables)

Calories	Total fat	Sat. fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
395	29 g	4 g	93 mg	45 mg	7 g	3 g	2 g	31 g	915 mg

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 lemons, zested and juiced
- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 cups green beans, trimmed (around 1 pound)
- 3 cups grape tomatoes (around 1 pound)
- 1 large fennel bulb, cut into thin slices
- 6 halibut fillets (4 oz)

#### PREPARATION

Preheat the oven to 425°F.

In a large bowl, whisk together lemon zest, lemon juice, olive oil, oregano and garlic. Add the green beans, tomatoes and sliced fennel to the bowl, and toss until coated with liquid. Using tongs, remove the vegetables from the bowl and place on one side of a large baking sheet. Add the halibut to the bowl and coat with sauce. Use tongs to place halibut on the other side of the baking sheet. Pour any remaining sauce over the fish and vegetables.

Place the baking sheet in the oven and cook for 15-20 minutes, tossing vegetables halfway through. Cook until fish is no longer translucent and can easily flake with a fork, or measures an internal temperature of 145°F.

Serve each fillet with a heaping cup of vegetables.



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## 5 Sample Recipes

SNACK

### Orange sorbet

Makes 4 servings | Prep: Freeze overnight, 10 min



#### NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING (Small scoop; ¼ of recipe)

Calories	Total fat	Sat. fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
105	0 g	0 g	2 mg	0 mg	27 g	4 g	20 g	2 g	393 mg

#### INGREDIENTS

12 medium/large seedless clementines

Sprig of mint leaves

#### PREPARATION

Spread clementine slices out on a baking sheet and place in freezer overnight.

Add frozen clementine slices to food processor. Pulse until texture is dry and crumbly. Scrape down sides and process until texture is creamy and sorbet-like.

Scoop into 4 small bowls and garnish with mint leaves.



## 5 Sample Recipes

SNACK

# Strawberries and “cannoli” cream

Makes 4 servings | Prep: 10 min



### NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING (3-4 strawberries; ¼ cup “cannoli” mixture)

Calories	Total fat	Sat. fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
224	4 g	2 g	43 mg	5 mg	48 g	10 g	31 g	6 g	716 mg

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup low-fat ricotta cheese
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 Tbsp honey
- ½ tsp orange zest
- 2 Tbsp mini chocolate chips
- 16 oz strawberries, washed and halved

### PREPARATION

In a small bowl, whisk together ricotta, vanilla extract, honey, orange zest and chocolate chips. Chill until serving.

To serve, distribute strawberries and ricotta mixture evenly onto 4 plates.

# Using the Nutrition Facts Label to Identify Blood Pressure-Friendly Foods

Learning how to read food labels can help you make healthier choices. These choices can help you manage your blood pressure. Use this guide to help you make the most of the Nutrition Facts label. **Keep in mind that the healthiest foods, like fruits and veggies, don't have food labels.**

## Step 1: what's in a serving?

- Read the number of servings per container.
- Learn the size of each serving.
- Remember, the numbers below are for ONE serving.
- If you're eating more than one serving, multiply the numbers below by that amount.

## Step 2: aim for less:

- Saturated fat
- Trans fats
- Sodium (below 1,500 mg per day)
- Sugar
- Added sugars

## Step 3: aim for more:

- Fiber
- Protein
- Potassium—it helps balance blood pressure
- Nutrients like vitamin D, iron, potassium, and calcium.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	<b>5%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>14%</b>
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	<b>20%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%

## Step 4: check the ingredients list (separate from the nutrition facts panel)

- Ingredients are listed by quantity, from highest to lowest.
- Avoid food additives like sodium nitrate and food coloring. These are likely processed foods.
- Avoid items with ingredients that contain the word "hydrogenated"—this means trans fat. Avoid added sugars, often listed as "high fructose corn syrup," "dextrose," "sucrose," "honey" and "molasses."

# Dining Out Tips and Tricks

Going to restaurants is a part of life. While it can be a challenge to dine out and manage your blood pressure, it can be done! You can order a meal that helps you reach your health goals. Here's how you can set yourself up for success:

Restaurant meals are notoriously high in sodium. Enjoy your meal, but try and balance it out with meals you make at home the rest of the time.

## Before you go

- Review the menu online to help make better choices when it's time to order. Keep an eye on preparation: Opt for red vs. cream sauces; braised, broiled or grilled vs. fried.
- Eat normally. Skipping meals just sets you up to be overly hungry when you sit down to order.
- Have a produce and protein snack an hour before the meal to curb hunger.

## At the restaurant

- Choose the treat that you like best—drink, starter, bread or dessert—to go along with your meal. Enjoy it!
- Pick out a veggie-forward starter like minestrone soup or a green salad with vinaigrette.
- Opt for a protein- vs. starch-based entrée. For instance, choose a seafood dish rather than pasta.
- Cut your entrée in half. Pack up the rest to bring home as leftovers.
- Ask for lower-calorie options like salad dressing on the side, light oil on pasta and veggies, and grilled chicken instead of crispy!
- Stick with balanced plate portions: 50% non-starchy veggies, 25% lean protein, 25% carbs.
- Chew food well and wait until you have swallowed your current bite to take another one.

It's OK if one meal isn't "perfect." But by planning, you'll be able to stay closer to your wellness goals!

