



## Buzz, Body & Bites

A newsletter for actively aging adults  
Virginia Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences  
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### DASH for Your Heart

If you've ever watched TV or glanced at social media, you've certainly been bombarded with ads promoting the latest and greatest fad diet that's sure to cure all that ails you. Dieting is a multi-billion-dollar industry that preys on people with chronic illnesses or those who have a desire to lose weight, which describes just about every American.

One way of eating for good health that is here to stay is the DASH diet. DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. First introduced in 1997, it is a diet promoted by the National Institute of Health's National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHBLI) for reducing blood pressure. Far from being a fad, the DASH diet has been ranked as one of the top 3 in the Best Overall Diet category by US News & World Report every year since the ranking system started in 2011. The criteria for Best Overall Diet is a meal plan that is relatively easy to follow, nutritious, safe, and effective for weight loss and against diabetes and heart disease. Sounds great, right?

You may be asking yourself: "Where do I begin?" Start by focusing on the foods you SHOULD be eating, rather than those you shouldn't. The DASH way of eating emphasizes vegetables, fruits, and whole grains, which naturally lead to a reduction in sodium intake and an increase in intake of lots of vitamins and minerals that keep our hearts healthy. If you aren't used to eating a lot of fruit or vegetables, start by adding an extra serving to each meal. You can add peppers and onions to your morning eggs, toss a handful of berries into your oatmeal, snack on cucumber slices or baby carrots with hummus, top your sandwich with crispy greens and tomatoes, and pop a bag of steamable green beans in the microwave while you prepare your dinner.

Include three servings of low-fat or fat-free dairy products in your daily plan. Stock up on Greek yogurt, part-skim string cheese, and reduced-fat shredded cheese to add to your meals and snacks. Include a lean protein source with each meal and aim for 1-2 fish meals and at least 2 meatless meals per week. You may opt for dried beans or soy products as meat alternatives.

When it comes to fats, focus on those that will benefit your heart, such as avocado, olive oil, nuts, and seeds, rather than the more artery-clogging trans and saturated fats, such as fatty meat and whole-milk dairy products. And finally, limit your intake of sweets and processed "junk foods." If you shift your attention to all the healthy foods you should be including, you will feel more satisfied and less inclined to search for chips, cookies, cakes, and pies.

Contributed by: Stefanie Rekdal, RDN CDCES

### What to Eat on the DASH Diet

Healthy eating for physical wellness is one of the 8 Dimensions of Wellness. The DASH diet is a healthy eating pattern and does not list specific foods that you should eat. It recommends that your diet include proportional servings from the food groups.

6 - 8 servings a day of whole grains

4 - 5 servings of vegetables

4 - 5 servings a day of fruits

2 - 3 servings a day of dairy products

6 or fewer ounces a day of meat, chicken, and fish

2 - 3 servings a day of fats and oils

5 or fewer servings per WEEK of candy and added sugars

Learn more about the DASH Eating Plan at the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute:

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/education/dash-eating-plan](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/education/dash-eating-plan)

## Apple Nachos for One

### Ingredients:

- 1 medium apple, sliced
- 1/2 cup plain reduced-fat Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp. honey
- 1 Tbsp. almond butter
- 3 Tbsp. water
- 1 Tbsp. salted pumpkin seeds
- 1 tsp. chia seeds
- 1 Tbsp. granola chunks
- 1/8 tsp. cinnamon

### Instructions:

1. Wash hands, equipment, and produce thoroughly.
2. Slice apple into thin slices (about 25 slices) and arrange on a plate.
3. Mix yogurt, honey, almond butter, and water together and drizzle over apples. If the yogurt dip is too thick to drizzle, add more water to thin it out.
4. Sprinkle pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, and granola chunks on top of the yogurt layer.
5. To finish, sprinkle cinnamon over the entire dish and serve immediately.

## Standing Leg Curl

1. Stand behind a sturdy chair, holding on for balance. Breathe in slowly.
2. Breathe out as you slowly bring your heel up toward your buttocks as far as possible.
3. Bend only your knee, and keep your hips still. Keep the leg you are standing on slightly bent. Don't arch your back.
4. Hold the position for one second.
5. Breathe in as you slowly lower your foot to the floor.
6. Complete one set of 10-15 repetitions for each leg.
7. Rest for 15 seconds, and repeat.

## Resources

American Institute for Cancer Research Recipes: <https://www.aicr.org/cancer-prevention/recipes/apple-nachos/>

Penn State Extension. The DASH Eating Plan as Part of a Heart Healthy Lifestyle

<https://extension.psu.edu/the-dash-eating-plan-as-part-of-a-heart-healthy-lifestyle>

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