



# The *DASH Eating Plan* and Weight-loss

## The *DASH Eating Plan* can help achieve your weight loss goals

The *DASH Eating Plan* is an eating pattern that can be maintained throughout life. DASH emphasizes whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole-grains, nuts, and lean protein. It requires no special foods and has no complicated recipes. If the *DASH Eating Plan* is very different from your current diet, then you may lose weight initially by simply following the guidelines of the diet.

However, in addition to eating more healthful foods, it may also be important to aim for a daily caloric level that is less than what you usually eat. Consult a medical professional or registered dietitian to determine an appropriate daily caloric goal that will meet your weight-loss or weight-maintenance needs.

Use the *DASH Eating Plan* to help lower your daily calories by following these tips:

- Eat fruits and vegetables as snacks instead of high calorie cookies or chips.
- Choose grains with “whole grain/wheat” listed as the first ingredient.
- Choose low-fat or non-fat instead of full-fat dairy products.
- Check food labels for fat. Limit saturated fat intake to less than 7% of total daily calories and avoid trans fat.
- Consume less food with added sugar such as desserts, pastries, and candy.
- Drink water instead of beverages that contain added sugar such as soda, sports drinks, energy drinks, or fruit drinks.



## Combine the *DASH Eating Plan* with physical activity

It is best to lose weight *gradually*, by combining physical activity and a balanced diet like the *DASH Eating Plan*.

Moderate-intensity physical activity (brisk walking, swimming, or a casual bike ride) for at least 30 minutes a day on most days of the week is recommended. These activities can also be broken up into three, 10 minute sessions throughout the day. For weight-loss or weight-maintenance, moderate physical activity for 60 minutes a day is recommended.

Research shows that physical activity can help certain medications work more effectively and even keep blood pressure at normal levels. Start off slowly and experiment with different activities until you find a few that you enjoy.

### Help to get started

- Set a weekly schedule and stick to it.
- Have friends and family members join your workouts. This may help with motivation.
- Try different activities each week. This will help work different parts of your body and keep workouts refreshing.
- Set goals for yourself, and record your progress each week.

**Reward yourself** after every month you stay on the exercise program or every time you meet your goals. For example, treat yourself to a massage, a movie, a manicure, or a new piece of fitness gear.

