CAN WHAT YOU EAT DROP YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE 11 POINTS?

IN 8 WEEKS. IN A MAJOR RANDOMIZED TRIAL.

11.4 points lower top number (systolic) in 8 weeks for people with high blood pressure on the DASH diet, compared with a typical American diet (randomized).

Appel et al. · New England Journal of Medicine · 1997 [1]

WHAT DID THEY CHANGE?

- More fruits and vegetables
- More whole grains, beans and nuts
- Less fat and red meat
- Low-fat dairy (so not vegan)

DASH moves strongly toward plants. Adding low salt worked even better.

WHAT SHOULD YOU ASK YOUR DOCTOR?

1. **Could changing my diet lower my blood pressure?** [1,2]
2. **How much salt should I aim for each day?** [3]
3. **Should I check my blood pressure at home? What numbers should make me call you?**
4. **If my blood pressure drops, how will we adjust my medication safely?**

4.8 points lower top number on vegetarian diets, averaged across 7 clinical trials, vs. diets that included meat.

Yokoyama et al. · JAMA Internal Medicine · 2014 [2]

! **Work with your doctor, not around them. Never stop a medication on your own.**

BOTTOM LINE Some of the strongest proof in nutrition: your plate moves your blood pressure. Big randomized trials.

MORE OF THE EVIDENCE

- In the DASH trial, people with high blood pressure who ate a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, with less fat, lowered their top number 11.4 points more than people on a typical diet, in 8 weeks. [1]
- In DASH-Sodium, the DASH diet with low salt lowered the top number 11.5 points in people with high blood pressure, compared with a typical high-salt American diet. [3]
- Across 7 clinical trials, vegetarian diets lowered blood pressure by an average of 4.8 points (top number) and 2.2 points (bottom number) compared with diets that included meat. [2]

Keep in mind: The DASH diet included low-fat dairy. It is not vegan, but it moves strongly toward plants and away from salt.

WE TAKE ZERO PRESCRIPTIONS.

That's our choice, not a rule for you. Some prescriptions save lives, like antibiotics for an infection. If you are not changing your diet, stay on the medications your doctor prescribes. If you go plant-based, keep up with your blood work. That way your doctor can safely reduce your medications or take you off them altogether.

I'm not anti-medicine. I'm pro-health.

Don't take my word for any of this. Check it with your favorite AI, read the original studies, then bring them to your doctor.

NOTES FROM MY APPOINTMENT

DATE AND DOCTOR

WHAT WE AGREED TO TRY

WHEN WE WILL RECHECK

SOURCES

[1] Appel LJ, et al. New England Journal of Medicine, 1997. A clinical trial of the effects of dietary patterns on blood pressure (DASH). https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9099655/

[2] Yokoyama Y, et al. JAMA Internal Medicine, 2014. Vegetarian diets and blood pressure: a meta-analysis. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24566947/

[3] Sacks FM, et al. New England Journal of Medicine, 2001. Effects on blood pressure of reduced dietary sodium and the DASH diet (DASH-Sodium). https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11136953/

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