

# Hypertension and the DASH Diet

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*You can have high blood pressure without knowing it. Often it has no symptoms. This is why it is called the “silent killer.”*

## What Is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of the blood pressing against the blood vessel walls. There are two types of reading for blood pressure. Systolic (sis-TOL-ik) is the pressure when the heart beats while pumping blood. Diastolic (di-a-STOL-ik) is the pressure when the heart is at rest.



Normal blood pressure is 120/80 or less. See the table for categories of blood pressure reading.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Systolic (top number)</i>	<i>Diastolic (bottom number)</i>
<b>Normal</b>	Less than 120	Less than 80
<b>Prehypertension</b>	120-139	80-89
<b>High Blood Pressure</b>		
<b>Stage One</b>	140-159	90-99
<b>Stage Two</b>	160 or higher	100 or higher

## Prevention of Hypertension

High blood pressure can be prevented with lifestyle changes. Some of the lifestyle changes you should consider are eating a healthy diet, decreasing salt intake in your diet, maintaining a healthy weight, increasing physical activity, limiting alcohol, quitting smoking, managing stress, monitoring your blood pressure at home, and practicing stress management techniques.

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## What Can I Do to Lower My Blood Pressure?

- Lose weight, if needed, or maintain a normal body mass index
- Do some regular physical activity such as walking briskly for 30 minutes a day
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Reduce salt intake
- Adopt the DASH eating plan

### Sample Label for Macaroni and Cheese

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>			
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)			
Servings Per Container 2			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110		
% Daily Value*			
Total Fat 12g	18%		
Saturated Fat 3g	15%		
Trans Fat 1.5g			
Cholesterol 30mg	10%		
Sodium 470mg	20%		
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%		
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%		
Sugars 5g			
Protein 5g			
Vitamin A	4%		
Vitamin C	2%		
Calcium	20%		
Iron	4%		
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:			
	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Limit these Nutrients

Get Enough of these Nutrients

Footnote

Quick Guide to % DV

5% or less is low

20% or more is high

## Nutrition Facts Label Activity

Being aware of what you are eating is the best way to be sure you are making healthy food choices.

When reading a Nutrition Facts Label, follow these simple guidelines:

- Look at the sodium content in milligrams and the Percent Daily Value.
- Aim for foods that are less than 5% of the Daily Value for sodium.
- Remember that foods containing 20% or more of the Daily Value are high-sodium foods.

Look at the Nutrition Facts Label on the left and answer the following questions to test your knowledge of reading a food label.

1. What is the serving size?
2. Why is this the most important number on the Nutrition Facts Label?
3. How many servings are in this container?
4. How much total fat is in one serving?
5. Is this number high for the serving size?
6. How much saturated fat is in one serving?
7. Is this number high for the serving size?
8. How much trans fat is in one serving?
9. Is this number high for the serving size?
10. How much sodium is in one serving?
11. Is this number high for the serving size?
12. Is this food item rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, fiber, and protein which are important with the DASH Diet?

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