

*If you have any questions, please talk to your physician or care team.*

## Diet Plans for Weight Management

The Mediterranean diet and DASH diet are healthy ways of eating that support health. These diets can also help people lose weight.

Many different diet plans have become popular over the years, yet there is no one “best” diet plan to reduce calories and lose weight. Many ways of eating can help people lose weight. To lose weight, a person needs to eat and drink less calories than they burn, no matter what kind of diet they follow.

When changing your diet to help lose weight, it is important to think about a way of eating that is healthy. A healthy eating plan should include foods with lots of nutrients that will keep you healthy and not hungry. The diet should fit your budget and include foods you like and need. The diet plan should also be one that you can enjoy and follow for a long time.

### ***Mediterranean diet***

The Mediterranean diet focuses on eating a mostly plant-based diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans and heart-healthy fats every day. Despite the fact that there is no one “best” diet for weight loss, studies show that a Mediterranean-style eating plan can improve your overall health. Studies show that people who follow Mediterranean eating patterns tend to have less illness and chronic disease, like heart disease and cancer. They may also live longer and say they have a better quality of life.

In general, if you follow a Mediterranean diet, you’ll eat:

- Mostly vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans and heart healthy fats
- Moderate amounts of fish, seafood, poultry, eggs, cheese and yogurt
- Little saturated fat, added sugars and salt
- Limited or no red meat

The diet guides you to eat fish and seafood at least 2 to 3 times each week. Eating fish may improve your brain health and lower the risk of heart disease and stroke.

### ***DASH diet***

The DASH diet stands for “dietary approaches to stop hypertension (high blood pressure).” Studies show this is another diet plan that may improve hypertension and overall health. It can also help you lose weight.

Like the Mediterranean diet, the DASH diet focuses on a mostly plant-based diet. The DASH diet guides you to eat foods that are good for lowering blood pressure. These foods have important nutrients like potassium, magnesium, calcium and fiber. In general, if you follow a DASH diet, you'll eat:

- Mostly vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean protein and low-fat dairy
- Little or no fatty meats and other food high in saturated fats, full-fat dairy and sugar-sweetened beverages
- No more than 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium (salt) each day

### **A note about weight loss:**

It is important to know that even though the Mediterranean and DASH diets focus on healthy foods, eating too many calories can still lead to weight gain. For weight loss, it is still important to pay attention to portion sizes and eat the right amount of calories.

## **Choose the right diet for you**

Talk to your doctor to find out if the Mediterranean or DASH way of eating would be right for you. You can adapt the Mediterranean and DASH diets to fit your budget and diet needs. If you need to, you can choose foods in these plans that are also vegetarian or gluten-free diet.

### **Here are 5 steps to start incorporating a more Mediterranean- or DASH-style diet:**

#### **1. Choose healthy beverages**

Do not drink sodas. Regular sodas have too many added sugars and too few nutrients. Instead of drinking regular sodas, choose healthy unsweetened beverages without added sugars such as water, infused waters, sparkling water, unsweetened tea and unsweetened coffee.

#### **2. Choose lean protein**

Processed meats, such as sausages, hot dogs and bacon are high in saturated fat and salt. Red meats, such as beef and pork, are also high in saturated fats. Instead, choose more often lean proteins such as fish, sea food, poultry, beans, chickpeas and lentils. Also, make sure your lean protein is not deep fried.

#### **3. Choose healthy fats**

Butter, lard and full-fat dairy products are high in saturated fat. Instead, choose more often fats that are high in healthy fats, such as olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds.

#### **4. Choose healthy grains**

Refined white carbohydrates are low in fiber. Instead, choose more often fiber-filled whole grains such as quinoa, brown rice, oats and bulgur.

#### **5. Eat your fruits and vegetables**

Fruits and vegetables are filled with vitamins, minerals, fiber and antioxidants. Aim to eat 2 servings of fruits and 3 servings of vegetables per day. Choose fruits and vegetables from all colors and include them in your meals and snacks.