

## ASK THE Doctor

### Q. What foods lower blood pressure?

**A.** Foods that are high in potassium (aim for 4,700 mg/day) and low in sodium (no more than 1,500 mg/day is ideal) are best for lowering blood pressure. As a group, all of the fresh fruits and vegetables fall in this category. That's why the National Institutes of Health (NIH) DASH Diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) recommends eating as many as 8-10 servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

Examples of vegetables high in potassium include: broccoli, beet greens, carrots, collards, green beans, kale, lima beans, lentils, peas, potatoes, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes. All fresh vegetables are good as are most frozen vegetables. Canned vegetables, especially tomatoes, tomato juice, and canned beans, are very high in sodium. Read labels.

Examples of fruits high in potassium include: apples, apricots, avocados, bananas, dates, grapes, grapefruit and grapefruit juice, mangoes, melons, oranges and orange juice, peaches, pineapples, raisins, strawberries, and tangerines. All fruits are good. Other foods high in potassium include:

- Nuts, especially pumpkin seeds, almonds, peanuts, cashew nuts, filberts, pistachios, and sunflower seeds. Choose options that are also low in salt or sodium.



## Lower Blood Pressure with Potassium

- Soybeans, tofu, and soy nuts.
- Low-fat milk and yogurt.
- Salmon, sardines, and other fish.

Other recommended foods in the DASH Diet to help lower blood pressure include:

- Whole grains (they also high in fiber) such as oatmeal, whole-wheat bread and cereals, whole-wheat pasta, and brown rice.
- Healthy fats and oils such as olive oil, canola oil, and soft margarine (trans-fat-free).
- Low intake of red meats. Choose low-saturated-fat entrees including fish, skinless poultry, soy, tofu, legumes, Gardenburgers®, etc. to reduce saturated fat and cholesterol.

This is a pretty healthy list of foods. Choosing these foods along with keeping calories

moderate to maintain a healthy weight, getting regular physical activity, and limiting alcohol (if consumed), can significantly lower blood pressure, reducing your risk of heart disease and stroke.

### What kind of salt do you use?

Morton® Lite Salt™ is a mixture of sodium and potassium chloride. So when you use it in place of regular table salt, you lower your sodium intake by 40% and increase your potassium intake by 60%. Both changes are beneficial to blood pressure. As with any salt, use it sparingly.

