

HYPERTENSION AWARENESS



Hypertension: The Silent Killer

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What is Hypertension?

Chronic high blood pressure, referred to as hypertension, is defined as a blood pressure reading above 140/90. Hypertension can cause damage to your blood vessels and vital organs. It is crucial to get your blood pressure checked by a professional regularly.

There are no defining symptoms of hypertension which is why it can go years without being noticed and is called the silent killer.

Engaging in healthy behaviors can decrease your risk of developing HBP.

Individuals with intellectual disabilities are at risk of developing HBP. It is imperative to encourage physical activity and healthy diets in this population.

Prevention

There are a few ways you can prevent hypertension:

- 1- Eat a healthy diet.
- 2- Be physically active.
- 3- Maintain a healthy weight.
- 4- Get at least 8 hours of sleep each night.
- 5- Get checked regularly.



Risk Factors

There are a few risk factors for hypertension:

- 1- Increased age: It is critical as you get older, you get your blood pressure checked more frequently.
- 2- Non-Hispanic Black Americans have an increased risk of developing pre-hypertension, and hypertension. This population would benefit from getting more frequent checks.
- 3- Those who smoke tobacco products or regularly drink alcoholic beverages have an increased risk of developing hypertension.
- 4- Adults with developmental disabilities have a high risk of developing hypertension due to low physical activity and unbalanced diets.

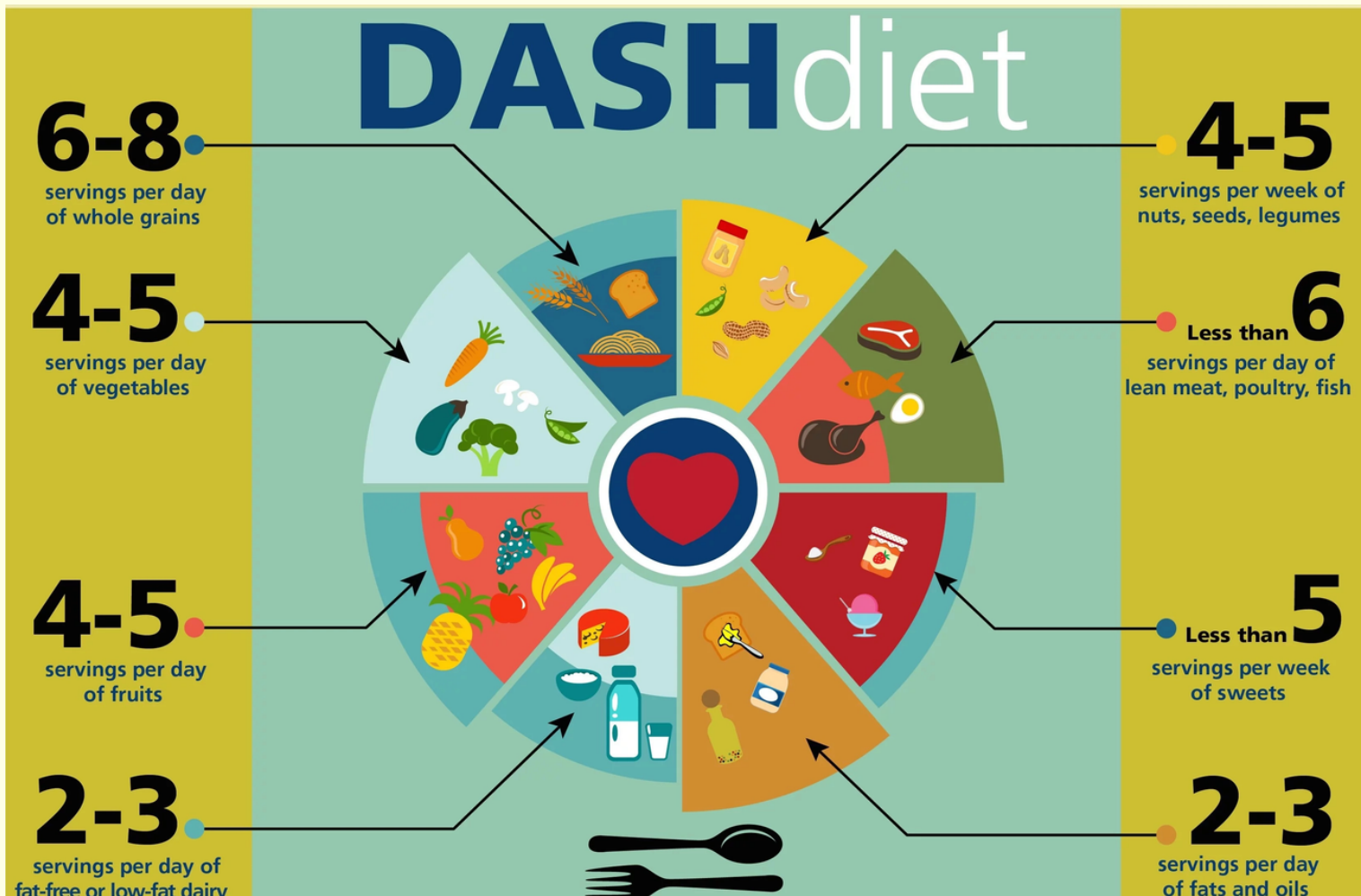
The DASH Diet

The DASH diet also known as the "Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension" is recommended for heart health. DASH diet is rich in fruits and vegetables making up the majority of the diet, and low in saturated fat and sodium. The DASH diet is pictured on the image below, key components are...

- 6 to 8 servings of whole grains per day
- 4 to 5 servings of vegetables per day
- 4 to 5 servings of fruits per day
- 2 to 3 servings of fats and oils per day
- 2 to 3 servings of fat free or low fat dairy
- Less than 5 servings of sweets per week

Studies show that following the DASH diet can help lower your blood pressure.

Image adopted from <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/>



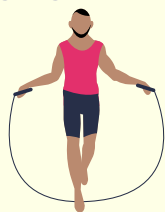
Physical Activity

Cardio exercises like walking, jogging, and swimming have been shown to reduce the risk of developing hypertension.

Engaging in these exercises at least 2.5 hours a week, or 30 min daily to prevent HBP.

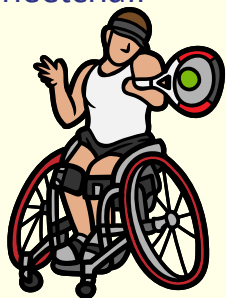
Inclusive Activities for Adults with Disability

- Taking a walk around the neighborhood
- Throwing a ball with a friend
- Jumping jacks in place
- Swimming laps or jogging in a shallow pool
- Light jogging
- Dancing
- Jumping Rope



Activities for Wheelchair bound individuals

- Wheeling oneself around the neighborhood
- Throwing a weighted ball with a friend
- Wheelchair basketball, or other wheelchair sports
- Stacking weighted blocks
- Using light weight dumbbells
- Using resistance bands



How can I get my Blood Pressure checked?

There are a few different ways you can get your BP checked and know your numbers regularly:

- Go to your local pharmacy, places like CVS, and Walgreens have Blood Pressure machines free to the public.
- Go to your local food store, local grocery stores like Shoprite and Walmart have blood pressure cuffs for the public to use.
- You can purchase your own automatic blood pressure cuff for as low as \$19.99 on retailers like Amazon and Walmart.
- Regularly visit your doctor, individuals with BP under 120/80 are advised to get it checked every two years; those who have elevated BP are advised to go more frequently to prevent progression to hypertension.

For more information on Hypertension visit www.Heart.org