

Healthy Eating for a Happy Heart

Have you been feeling stressed out lately? When you experience chronic stress, it can trigger a chain reaction that can lead you to eat unhealthy comfort foods, lose sleep, exercise less, and drink more alcohol.

Prolonged stress on the body can be hard, especially for your heart. The new year is the perfect time to make healthy lifestyle changes and set healthy eating goals. It'll make your heart happier, and maybe trim your waistline, too.

Don't know where to start? Check out the Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension, or DASH for short, eating plan. DASH requires no special foods, and it helps you set daily and weekly nutritional goals using the guided plans provided. The DASH eating plan is proven to help lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. When you add physical activity to the mix and monitor your calorie intake while following DASH, it can also help you achieve your weight loss goal. To make it easier to follow the DASH for life, these tips can help:

- Change gradually. Add one more serving of vegetables a day. Read nutrition labels



to choose the food lowest in saturated fat, sodium or salt and added sugar.

- Vary foods high in proteins. Try a mix of lean cuts of meat. Remove the skin from chicken. Eat fish once or twice a week. Eat two or more meals with plant-based proteins each week.
- Select healthy, tasty snacks. Have a piece of fruit, a few unsalted snacks such as rice cakes, fat-free or low-fat yogurt or raw vegetables with a low-fat dip.
- Find substitutes. Try whole-wheat bread or brown rice instead of white bread or white

rice. Try beans or seeds such as flax or sunflower seeds, if you're allergic to nuts.

- Follow the U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommendations.

Combining healthy eating habits with other self-care activities can help you reduce stress and take care of your heart. Top of the list: move more throughout the day, get 7 to 8 hours of sleep, and try relaxation exercises such as meditation or yoga. If you smoke, try quitting, and develop a strong social support system to help keep you motivated. Learn more about DASH, heart health, and more at <https://healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov/>.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

FREE Blood Pressure Monitoring Program

The YMCA of Southern Nevada: is offering a FREE 16-week Self-Monitoring Blood Pressure Program. Take action to improve your heart health. Participation includes a free YMCA membership for

the duration of the program! (\$250 value) To see if you qualify or for additional information, please contact (702) 832-4901 or email lacosta@lasvegasyymca.org or jjimenez@lasvegasyymca.org.

To learn more about the Southern Nevada Health District's **BarberShop Health Outreach Project** and **Beauty Shop Health Outreach Project**, contact Amineh Harvey at harveya@snhd.org.