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DASH DIET

The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet is a dietary plan designed to help reduce blood pressure and promote overall heart health.

Here's a general outline of the DASH diet:

- 1. Fruits and Vegetables:** Aim to include a variety of fruits and vegetables in your diet. These are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Try to have at least 4-5 servings of each per day.
- 2. Whole Grains:** Choose whole grains over refined grains whenever possible. Examples include whole wheat bread, brown rice, quinoa, oats, and barley. Aim for 6-8 servings per day.
- 3. Lean Proteins:** Opt for lean sources of protein such as poultry (skinless), fish, beans, lentils, tofu, and nuts. Limit red meat and processed meats. Aim for 2-3 servings of lean protein per day.
- 4. Dairy:** Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy products such as milk, yogurt, and cheese. These provide essential nutrients like calcium and vitamin D without excess saturated fat. Aim for 2-3 servings per day.
- 5. Healthy Fats:** Include sources of healthy fats in your diet, such as olive oil, avocado, nuts, and seeds. These fats are beneficial for heart health when consumed in moderation.
- 6. Limit Sodium:** Reduce your intake of sodium, which can raise blood pressure. Avoid adding salt to your meals and minimize processed foods, which are often high in sodium. Aim for no more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day, and ideally, aim for 1,500 milligrams or less if you have high blood pressure.

7. Limit Sweets and Sugary Beverages: Cut back on sugary drinks like soda and limit desserts and sweets. Instead, satisfy your sweet tooth with fresh fruit or small portions of healthier alternatives.

8. Moderate Alcohol: If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation. This means up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men.

9. Portion Control: Pay attention to portion sizes to avoid overeating, which can contribute to weight gain and other health issues.

10. Stay Hydrated: Drink plenty of water throughout the day to stay hydrated and support overall health.

Remember, the DASH diet is not just about what you eat but also about adopting a healthy lifestyle. Regular physical activity, managing stress, and getting enough sleep are all important components of maintaining good heart health. Additionally, it's always a good idea to consult with a healthcare professional or a registered dietitian before making significant changes to your diet, especially if you have any underlying health conditions.