

## 6 Foods That Lower Blood Pressure



May is High Blood Pressure Education Month.

If your health care provider says you need to change how you eat to control your blood pressure, check your grocery list. Make sure it has these foods:



**1. Fatty fish such as salmon and trout:**

Aim for 2 to 3 portions each week to get omega-3 fats, which help improve blood pressure, lowering the risk of heart attack and stroke.

**2. Leafy greens:** Kale, spinach and other vegetables in this group are nutritious, low in calories and add beautiful color to stir-fries, salads and soups. Enjoy green vegetables daily.

**3. Low-fat dairy:** Aim for 2 daily servings of milk and yogurt (without sweetener) for added calcium and magnesium.

**4. Beans:** With a winning combination of fiber, potassium and magnesium, enjoy beans such as edamame, navy beans and chickpeas. Enjoy them in soups, on salads or as a dip.

**5. Nuts and seeds:** Snack on an ounce of nuts and seeds instead of salty chips or pretzels. They provide a satisfying crunch with potassium and other nutrients, and less sodium.

**6. Berries:** People who eat more antioxidant-rich berries have a lower risk of high blood pressure. Eat them by the handful daily.



And did you know — the **Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)** eating plan uses these foods. Studies show it can lower blood pressure by up to 14 points, and protect heart health.

*Remember — it's the combination of all foods that helps lower and control blood pressure.*

## Oral Allergy Syndrome



By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

**Oral allergy syndrome occurs when people with pollen allergies react to foods that contain proteins similar to those in pollen.** Certain raw fruits, vegetables, spices and nuts are the most common offenders.

**For example,** if you are allergic to birch tree pollen, you may get oral symptoms when eating apples, peaches, parsley, celery, coriander or hazelnuts. Ragweed pollen allergies may cross react with melons, zucchinis, cucumbers, kiwis and bananas. Likewise, grass pollen can react with melons, tomatoes, chard and peanuts.

**Signs and symptoms:** The food causes itching of the mouth or throat soon after putting it in the mouth. The syndrome may also trigger tingling or a slight swelling of the mouth, throat or lips. These symptoms usually go away within a few minutes after swallowing the food. A small number of people develop serious allergic reactions such as chest tightness, difficulty breathing, vomiting or loss of consciousness; call 911 immediately if this occurs.

**Even if your symptoms are mild,** see your health care provider to ensure you don't have a more serious food allergy.



Talk to your health care provider.

**Treatment and self-care:** Avoiding the raw or dried food that causes the symptoms is sufficient for most people. The same foods, when cooked, canned or peeled, are often better tolerated. If you have severe allergies, you must avoid the food, and talk to your provider about carrying an epinephrine autoinjector.

The **best way** to make your **dreams** come true is to **wake up.**

— Paul Valery

**Question: How can I become more resilient?**

>> Turn over for the answer.

>> Continued from front.

## Q: How can I become more resilient?

**A:** Resilient people, like anyone else, may encounter stress, adversity or dark moods. What sets them apart is learning strategies that help them bounce back and move on when trouble strikes. They:

- **See difficulties as a challenge.** Failures or mistakes are opportunities to learn and grow.
- **Are committed and persistent.** Realistic goals, relationships, values and beliefs motivate them.
- **Accept that some things are out of their control.** They spend their energy on things they can change and see themselves as the authors of their life stories.
- **Prep for success.** Get enough rest, exercise and connection with others.
- **Do not see setbacks as personal, pervasive or permanent.** They monitor their thoughts, replacing negative messages with more productive ones (e.g., by remembering past successes).
- **Are optimistic** about their abilities and the future, and see each morning as a new start.

– Eric Endlich, PhD



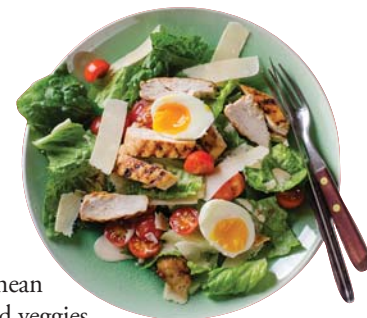
## Eating the Mediterranean Way

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

**Off the shores of the Mediterranean, dinner tables are brimming with fresh fish, vegetables, wholesome beans and olive oil.** These are some of the staples of the Mediterranean diet, which research shows can help prevent heart disease, cancer, dementia and diabetes, and can help reduce blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

**It's easy to fix a Mediterranean plate. Try these for great flavor and nutrition:**

- 1. Fruits and vegetables:** Fill half of your plate with them. Make sure you add berries, leafy greens and orange vegetables like carrots.
- 2. Olive oil:** This heart-healthy oil is a Mediterranean diet staple and is perfect to drizzle on salads and veggies. And yes, you can cook and bake with it.
- 3. Nuts and seeds:** Try a variety including almonds, walnuts, flaxseeds and pumpkin seeds. Snack on about 1 to 1.5 ounces a day, to replace less healthy treats such as chips or pastries.
- 4. Beans:** Dry, canned or frozen, make sure you add some beans to your meals. Try edamame (green soy beans), chickpeas, lentils and kidney beans.
- 5. Whole grains:** Ditch the white flour in favor of quinoa, oats, brown rice and products made from whole-grain wheat.
- 6. Herbs and spices:** Cut back on salt by seasoning food with basil, cumin, thyme, cinnamon or your other favorites.
- 7. Fish, seafood, dairy foods, eggs and chicken:** These protein-rich foods are also on the Mediterranean menu.



**What's missing?** Foods high in salt, sugar and bad fats. Learn more at [oldwayspt.org](http://oldwayspt.org); search for **Mediterranean Diet**.

## Keep Your Grip



**Our hands are indispensable.** We need them nearly every waking moment. Hand grip and strength may also indicate general health, future mobility or risk for heart attack.

**A 2015 study** measured the grip strength of 140,000 adults ages 35 to 70 for 4 years. Those who had a declining grip strength had a 17% increased risk of dying from a heart attack. It seems a stronger grip suggests more muscle mass in general, perhaps resulting from increased activity and overall health. Another study of 20,000 older men linked weak grip strength to lack of mobility, as seen in slow walking.

**To improve your grip, exercise your hands and wrists. Examples:**

### HAND SQUEEZING:

- 1** Squeeze a soft stress ball between the fingers and thumb of 1 hand; hold it for 30 to 60 seconds. Repeat with your opposite hand.
- 2** Wet a small towel and wring out the water using both hands. Repeat several times.

### WRIST STRETCHING:

- 1** Hold the fingers of 1 hand with your other hand, pulling the hand back gently until you feel the stretch; hold 5 to 10 seconds. Repeat by switching hands.
- 2** Begin with hands up and thumbs positioned outward. Keeping your fingers and thumb straight, move thumbs across your palms and then back to the starting position. Repeat movement several times.



Reach your personal best with Smart Moves at [www.personalbest.com/extras/18V5tools](http://www.personalbest.com/extras/18V5tools).

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