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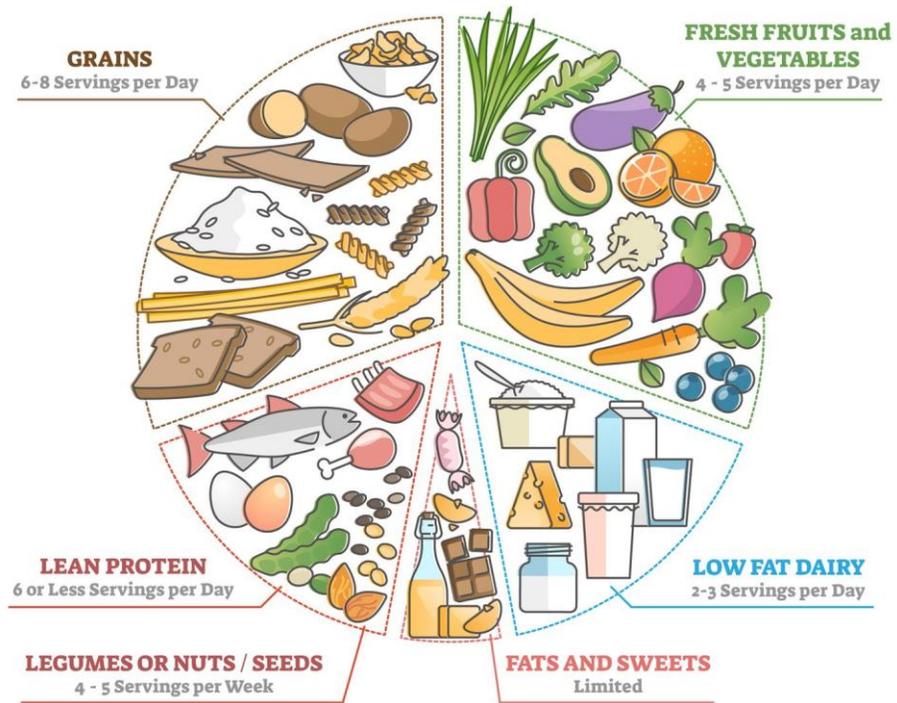
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The DASH Diet

DIETARY APPROACHES TO STOP HYPERTENSION



DASHing into a Healthier Life

Vergennes Family Practice

Megan Eubank

November 2021

Dr. Cate Ayers

Hypertension

- ▶ 47% of US adults have diagnosed hypertension
- ▶ Only 24% of those diagnosed have their hypertension under control (under 130/80)
- ▶ Hypertension was a primary or contributing cause of death for over half a million Americans in 2019
- ▶ In Vermont specifically, 30.2% of adults have diagnosed hypertension
- ▶ Hypertension can be controlled with a combination of diet, exercise, and medications
- ▶ The DASH (dietary approaches to stop hypertension) diet has been shown to lower blood pressure in as little as two weeks

Public Health Cost and Implications of Hypertension

- ▶ Hypertension puts patients at higher risk for heart disease and stroke, the first and fifth leading cause of death in the US
- ▶ Currently, hypertension costs the US approximately \$131 billion per year
- ▶ It is estimated that by 2035, the total direct costs of hypertension could reach \$220.9 billion

Community Perspectives

- ▶ “ The DASH diet is a straightforward, easy to understand diet that includes all the important nutrients for patients. I’ve had good success increasing patients’ heart health on it.” -Anonymous Dietician
- ▶ “For the majority of patients, a change in diet can make a big difference in their health. For patients with hypertension, I usually recommend the DASH diet or Mediterranean diet.” -Dr. Cate Ayers, Family Medicine

Intervention

- ▶ Created a pamphlet that can be given to patients with hypertension. It contains information about the DASH diet, the benefits of following the diet, general eating plan, and healthy food swaps
- ▶ Also created an Epic Smartphrase that can be inserted into patient's charts for them to view later online
- ▶ The goal is to help patients with hypertension make healthier food choices

Results / Responses

- ▶ Created a pamphlet detailing what the DASH diet is, what the benefits of the diet are, foods included in the diet, a sample three day meal plan, and healthy swaps for common foods
- ▶ The pamphlet was converted into an Epic Smartphrase (.DASH) so providers could easily insert it into notes for patients to read after the visit on MyChart
- ▶ The pamphlet focused on simplifying the DASH diet, hopefully making it seem more accessible for patients
- ▶ This made it easy to give patients information regarding the DASH diet in real time, allowing them to ask their provider questions before leaving the office

Effectiveness and Limitations

- ▶ I would love to get feedback from patients and determine if the information helped them to achieve a healthier diet
- ▶ It would be interesting to give patients this information and then track their blood pressure over time
- ▶ One limitation for this project is that many patients have been eating the same way for many years, so a large change could be overwhelming. Hopefully, any healthy diet change would be better than nothing

Recommendations for future projects

- ▶ It would be great to expand this project by making exercise guides for patients as well, since reducing hypertension is a combination of diet, exercise, and medications
- ▶ It would also be nice to make more weekly meal plans for patients as they may feel limited by the three day plan I provided in the pamphlet. It would be great to involve dieticians or dietary students in this
- ▶ I would love to give general healthy eating guides to all patients, regardless of their blood pressure, as everyone can benefit from a healthy, balanced diet

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