DASH to Better Health!

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet is an eating plan that is:

- **RICH IN** fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, lean meat and low fat/fat free dairy
- **LOW IN** sodium, added sugar, saturated and total fat, cholesterol, and red meat (1)

Along with decreasing blood pressure, this diet boasts a number of other health benefits:

- **What DASH Can Do**

What is High Blood Pressure?
As the heart pumps out blood, the blood applies a certain amount of force on the arteries—this is blood pressure (1). High blood pressure (aka Hypertension) can be very dangerous as it can cause damage to the blood vessels and organs such as your heart, kidneys, brain and eyes (1).

What is the DASH Diet?
The DASH diet is not a short-term, fad diet; It is a lifelong plan that has been proven to reduce blood pressure, often by 8-14 points when used alone (2). The diet may also decrease the risk of many other diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis, and cancer (2). Two versions of the diet exist: the standard DASH, and the lower sodium DASH (2). Both versions are lower in sodium than a traditional diet. Many factors determine which diet is more appropriate for you, such as age, ethnicity, lifestyle factors, and blood pressure (2).

Could the DASH Diet Be Right for Me?
Whether you have current health concerns or not, the DASH diet can have many health enhancing effects! Check out the recommendations below, and for further details, search “DASH diet” on www.heartandstroke.on.ca. Or come see a dietitian at the Health and Performance Centre for a personalized eating plan!

Curried Squash and Lentil Soup

**Ingredients**
- 1 cup dry green lentils
- 1 butternut squash, cubed
- 2 medium yams, cubed
- 3 medium carrots, slices
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 litre low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp curry
- 1 tsp each turmeric and salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- parsley (garnish)

**Preparation**
In a medium pot, add lentils and 3 cups of water. Cook until lentils are soft.
In a large pot sauté onion in oil. Add curry, turmeric and 3 Tbsp of water. Stir for 1 min. Add carrots, yams, squash, broth, salt and pepper. Cook until vegetables are soft. Puree to desired consistency.
Drain lentils and add to puree. Garnish with parsley if desired.
Serves 6-8.

**Sodium check:** ~320mg/serving

**References**

**General DASH Recommendations**
- Watch the sodium! Choose frozen vegetables over canned. Opt for preparing dried beans instead of going for canned. Choose the low sodium versions of sauces, spices, condiments, soups and frozen dinners, or better yet, make your own! Keep fast food and processed meats to a minimum, or try to eliminate them.
- Aim for “100% whole-grain” breads, pastas and cereal
- Try to substitute half or more of the meat in recipes for vegetables or legumes, and try more main-course vegetable dishes.
- Opt to eat fruits in the place of sugary snacks and desserts; you’ll be surprised at how well they can satisfy your sweet tooth!
- Low fat/fat-free, lactose-free, and low-sodium dairy foods can make healthy, vitamin-packed additions to snacks and main meals.
- Choose lean meat, poultry and fish instead of red meat; cut the skin and fat off meat and avoid frying.
- Nuts, seeds, fats and oils must be eaten in moderation, but keep in mind that certain varieties contain fats that have countless health benefits, as well as vitamins and minerals. (2)

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**Take-Away Tip:**

DASH to Better Health!

Lisa Armstrong is a Registered Dietitian at the Health and Performance Centre. Lisa helps individuals optimize their eating for weight loss, reducing cholesterol, managing diabetes, maximizing energy and many other nutrition related health consultations. Additionally, Lisa also works with athletes of all levels to improve health and performance. Book an appointment with Lisa to get the most out of your eating and exercise.

**To make an appointment, contact our HPC reception staff at 519 767-5011 ext. 1. Email Lisa with any questions at larmstro@uoguelph.ca. Bring in this flyer to receive $20 off your first appointment!**

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