



**Irish Heart
Foundation**

Here for Every Heartbeat



Blood pressure-lowering meal plan

Key principles of a blood pressure-lowering diet

This meal plan is based on the [DASH \(Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension\) diet](#), which is one of the most researched dietary patterns for lowering blood pressure. A dietary pattern is the way a person usually eats, including the foods and drinks they have most days.

This eating pattern is rich in fruit, vegetables, wholegrains, pulses, low-fat dairy products, fish and nuts, while limiting salt, highly processed foods, saturated fat and added sugars.

Why it works



Eating more fruit and vegetables helps increase potassium, magnesium and fibre intake. These nutrients help support healthy blood vessel function and can help lower blood pressure.



Reducing salt intake is one of the most effective dietary changes for lowering blood pressure. Most people consume more salt than they realise, particularly from processed foods, sauces, ready meals and takeaways.



Choosing potassium-rich foods such as potatoes, beans, lentils, leafy greens, yoghurt, bananas, tomatoes and salmon can help counteract the effects of sodium (salt) on blood pressure.



Eating beans, lentils and chickpeas regularly provides fibre, magnesium and plant protein, all of which are associated with better cardiovascular health.



Including low-fat dairy products provides calcium and potassium, two nutrients emphasised within the DASH diet.



Using herbs, spices, lemon and vinegar instead of salt helps reduce sodium (salt) intake without sacrificing flavour.



Choosing wholegrains provides fibre and supports overall heart health.



Studies have shown that a DASH-style eating pattern can begin lowering blood pressure within weeks.



Below is a list of options for breakfast, lunch and dinner which you can pick and choose from to create your own personalised **blood pressure-lowering meal plan**.



★ Remember, healthy eating doesn't have to be complicated.

★ You do not need to choose a new option every day. For example, some people choose to have the same breakfast or lunch every day.

★ The most important thing is that your meal is nutritious and you enjoy it.

Batch cooking can be a great option too so you can have dinner ready for a few days in a row.

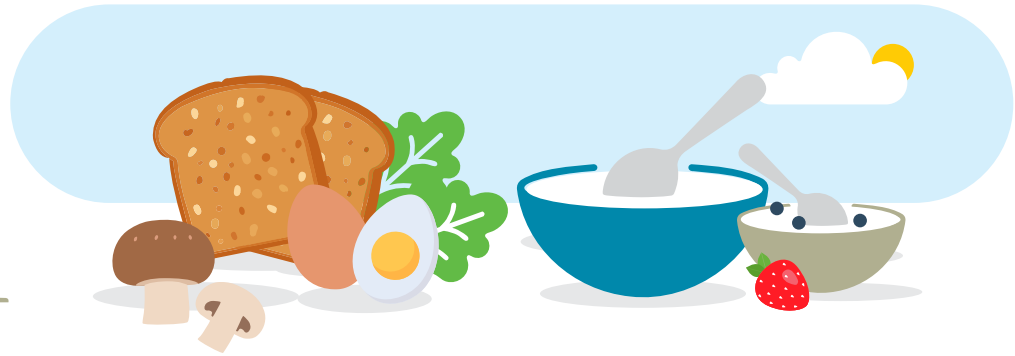


We have provided you with a blank meal plan at the back where you can fill in the options that work best for you. Why not stick it on the fridge to keep you motivated?



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Breakfast options



Why it helps blood pressure

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| 1 | Wholegrain cereal with low fat milk and berries. | High fibre. Dairy provides calcium and potassium. |
| 2 | Overnight oats with kiwi, pumpkin seeds and low-fat milk. | Oats provide fibre while kiwi and pumpkin seeds contribute potassium and magnesium. |
| 3 | Wholegrain toast with mashed cannellini beans, roasted tomatoes, basil and black pepper. | A bean-based breakfast provides potassium, magnesium and fibre.

Replace salt with pepper and herbs for flavour. |
| 4 | Spinach and mushroom omelette with wholegrain toast. Use garlic and black pepper or chives for flavour. | Leafy greens contribute potassium and magnesium. Herbs replace salt. |
| 5 | Perfect porridge with grated pear, almonds and low-fat yoghurt. | Potassium-rich fruit combined with calcium-rich dairy. |
| 6 | Irish Heart zingy green smoothie. | A simple way to boost vegetable intake at breakfast. |
| 7 | Wholegrain English muffin with avocado, rocket and sliced tomato. Use a squeeze of lemon or lime instead of salt. | Potassium-rich avocado, tomato and low salt. |
| 8 | Cholesterol lowering porridge bread with reduced sugar baked beans. | Lower salt option, high fibre, plant protein |
| 9 | Low-fat Greek yoghurt with berries, oats and ground flaxseed. | Provides calcium, fibre and heart-healthy fats. |
| 10 | Boiled eggs, roasted tomato and mushrooms, wilted spinach with a toasted wholemeal pita. | A high-fibre, nutrient-dense alternative to a cooked breakfast bap. |

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Lunch options

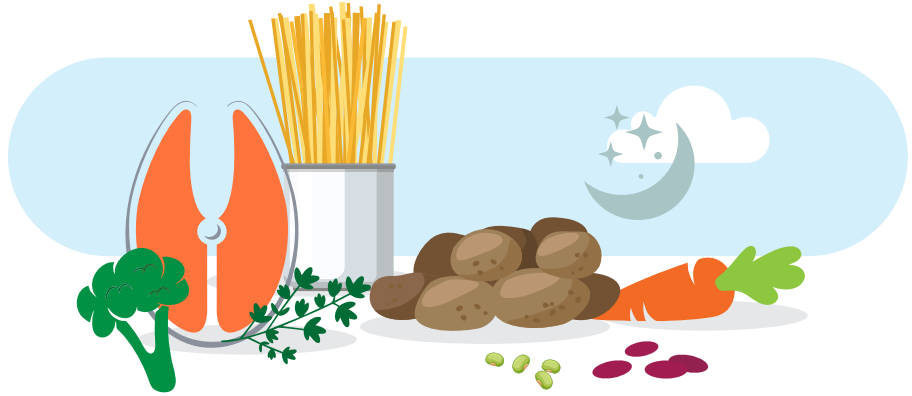


Why it helps blood pressure

1	<u>Irish Heart mixed vegetable and barley soup.</u>	Packed with vegetables and wholegrain barley for fibre.
2	<u>Irish Heart roasted red peppers.</u>	Red peppers provide potassium, while herbs, spices and roasting add flavour without relying on salt.
3	Quinoa bowl with chickpeas, cucumber, roasted beetroot and parsley.	Beetroot contains dietary nitrates which support blood vessel function.
4	Baked potato topped with tuna, low-fat yoghurt, sweetcorn and spring onions.	High in potassium and omega-3.
5	<u>Irish Heart South-East Asian prawn noodle broth.</u>	Lean protein and vegetables make it DASH-friendly, especially if low-sodium stock is used.
6	Wholemeal wrap with grilled chicken, avocado and mixed salad leaves.	Provides lean protein and potassium-rich vegetables.
7	<u>Irish Heart honey-sesame roasted root vegetables.</u> Add hummus and a wholegrain to make a satisfying bowl.	Packed with fibre, olive oil, and sesame seeds, while being very low in saturated fat and salt.
8	<u>Irish Heart lentil, mushroom and double potato bake.</u>	Combines pulses, vegetables and potassium-rich potatoes with little saturated fat.
9	2 boiled eggs with mixed salad leaves and tomato on wholegrain toast.	Filling, fibre-rich and quick to prepare.
10	Salmon, cucumber and mixed leaf open sandwich on wholegrain bread.	Fish provides heart-healthy fats while wholegrains and salad leaves increase fibre intake.

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Dinner options



Why it helps blood pressure

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|----|---|---|
| 1 | <u>Irish Heart lentil and mushroom burgers with sweet potato wedges.</u> | A high-fibre, plant-based alternative to meat burgers with lower saturated fat. |
| 2 | Wholewheat pasta with spinach, white beans and tomato sauce. | Low fat, high fibre. Use tinned tomatoes for your sauce base to keep sodium low. |
| 3 | <u>Irish Heart baked garlic and herb salmon with mixed vegetables.</u> | Provides heart-healthy fish alongside plenty of vegetables and uses herbs instead of excess salt. |
| 4 | Herb baked chicken (use rosemary or thyme) with roasted sweet potato and steamed broccoli. | Potassium-rich vegetables and a low-salt cooking method. |
| 5 | Tofu and vegetable stir-fry with broccoli, pak choi and brown rice. | Plant-based meal rich in fibre, wholegrains and blood-pressure-supporting nutrients such like potassium and magnesium. |
| 6 | <u>Irish Heart Italian baked salmon with Tenderstem broccoli and baby potatoes.</u> | A balanced combination of fish, vegetables and potassium-rich potatoes. |
| 7 | <u>Irish Heart sesame coated chicken with red cabbage salad.</u> | Lean chicken, vegetables, seeds and heart-healthy oils make this a balanced meal that is low in saturated fat. |
| 8 | <u>Irish Heart tasty turkey meatballs with tagliatelle.</u> | Lean turkey, vegetable-rich tomato sauce and wholewheat pasta provide protein and fibre while keeping saturated fat and salt low. |
| 9 | Grilled cod with new potatoes and green beans. | Lean protein, vegetables and potassium-rich potatoes support blood vessel health. |
| 10 | <u>Irish Heart baked garlic and herb salmon with mixed vegetables.</u> | Provides heart-healthy fish alongside plenty of vegetables. Use herbs instead of excess salt. |

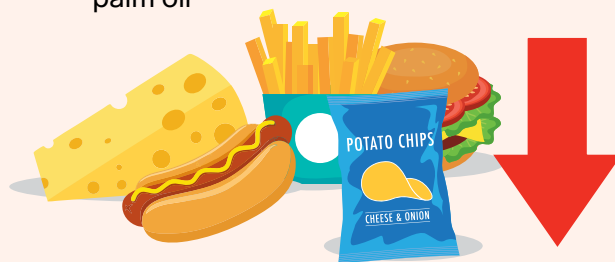
Aim to **include** several of these across the week:

- ✓ Fruit and vegetables (aim for at least 5-7 portions per day)
- ✓ Potassium-rich foods like: potatoes, sweet potatoes, bananas, tomatoes, beans, lentils, yogurt, spinach
- ✓ Choose wholegrain varieties
- ✓ Beans, lentils and chickpeas
- ✓ Unsalted nuts and seeds
- ✓ Low-fat dairy products
- ✓ Fish (especially oily fish once or twice weekly)
- ✓ Olive oil or rapeseed oil



Aim to **limit** these foods across the week:

- ✓ Table salt
- ✓ Stock cubes, gravy granules and salty seasonings
- ✓ Processed meats (rashers, sausages, salami, deli meats)
- ✓ Regular takeaways and fast food
- ✓ Crisps and salty snacks
- ✓ Large amounts of butter, cream and high-fat cheese
- ✓ Foods containing coconut or palm oil



Healthy snack ideas (optional):

- ✓ Banana and a small handful of unsalted almonds
- ✓ Natural yoghurt with berries
- ✓ Apple with peanut butter
- ✓ Carrot sticks and hummus
- ✓ Pear and walnuts
- ✓ Oatcakes with avocado
- ✓ Unsalted edamame beans
- ✓ Homemade fruit smoothie
- ✓ Orange and pumpkin seeds
- ✓ Cucumber and tomato salad with black pepper

Weekly meal planner

Goal(s) for this week:

Name

Week beginning



	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks (optional)
Mon				
Tues				
Wed				
Thurs				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Weekly Checklist

- ☐ Eat 5–7 portions of fruit and vegetables daily
- ☐ Include a potassium-rich food at most meals
- ☐ Choose wholegrain carbohydrates
- ☐ Include beans, lentils or chickpeas at least 4-5 times per week
- ☐ Choose low-fat dairy products regularly
- ☐ Limit processed foods high in salt
- ☐ Flavour foods with herbs and spices instead of salt
- ☐ Include oily fish 1-2 times per week
- ☐ Drink plenty of water
- ☐ Stay physically active alongside dietary changes

Notes...

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