

Kids and High Blood Pressure – Diets That Help

When most people think of hypertension, more commonly known as “high blood pressure,” they immediately think of older individuals, especially those with co-occurring medical conditions. Yet, this hypertension in children is just as much of a public health concern as it is for adults. Fortunately, with the right diet, you can alleviate and prevent symptoms of hypertension for your child. Two of these specialized diets are below.

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)

Adhering to this dieting plan with a pediatric heart doctor’s guidance can make a significant difference in your child’s health. The DASH diet is focused on reducing fats and saturated fats in the diet and the integration of more fresh fruits and vegetables. This eating plan also requires that you work more whole grains into your child’s daily meals. Additional foods that can benefit your child’s health and combat hypertension include:

- **Low-fat dairy**
- **Fish**
- **Poultry**
- **Nuts**

There are two primary versions of the DASH plan: the standard version and the low-sodium version. Both are designed to cut back on the sodium levels in your child’s diet to match or fall below the recommended 2,300mg per day. This threshold may vary according to your child’s condition, care provider, and medical needs. Speak with your pediatric heart doctor to determine which is the best choice for your kid’s health.

Homemade Foods to Fight Kids’ High Blood Pressure

If you are hesitant to follow the DASH diet, there are still options available to help you protect your child from symptoms of hypertension. Kids with high blood pressure, or those that are at risk of developing high blood pressure, should have increased amounts of potassium, magnesium, and fiber in their eating regimens. The following foods can perfectly fulfill these requirements:

- **Fruits: apples, apricots, bananas, dates, grapes, oranges, tomatoes**
 - **Should be served 4-5 times daily.**
- **Vegetables: broccoli, carrots, collard and green beans, potatoes, kale**
 - **Should be served 4-5 times daily.**

Along with these guidelines, you should provide your child with 7-8 servings of whole grains per day, 2-3 daily servings of low-fat dairy products, and two or fewer servings of 3oz meat, poultry, or fish. As long as you are diligent in your adherence to these standards, your child will be safe from hypertension symptoms. Contact a pediatric heart doctor to determine which of these options is best for combating hypertension in children.