

# PRESSURE POINTS

February 2012

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE NEWS YOU CAN USE



## Improving Blood Pressure with Your Dinner Plate



Every five years the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) comes out with new dietary guidelines for Americans. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide people with the information they need to make healthier food choices. The latest recommendations state that people with high blood pressure should consume no more than 1,500 milligrams (mg) of sodium a day (or a little more than half a teaspoon of salt per day). One way to meet this goal is to include more fresh foods (like fruits and vegetables) with your meals. This past June, the government came out with a new visual cue, called MyPlate, to remind people what foods to include on their dinner plate. See below on how to follow MyPlate at your next meal.

### Make half of your plate fruits and vegetables

Fruits and vegetables are low in calories, a good source of fiber, and packed with vitamins and minerals helping improve blood pressure. Choose fresh or frozen over canned varieties which tend to be higher in sodium and/or sugar. Remember to include a variety of fruits and vegetables in your diet and NOT just the usual corn and potatoes.

Here are some quick ideas to get more fruits and veggies on your plate:

- Top baked fish with mango salsa.
- Add broccoli, carrots and pineapple to a chicken stir-fry.
- Slice an apple over your salad.

### Make the other half of your plate grains and protein

Choose whole grains over refined grains like white bread and white rice. Whole grains are more nutritious because they contain fiber, which helps keep you full longer. Refined grains, on the other hand, are highly processed and have little or no fiber. Some good choices of whole grains include whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, barley and brown rice.

Look for lean protein sources like chicken or turkey without skin, fish, and seafood. Don't forget about plant sources of protein like beans (kidney beans, black beans, garbanzo beans, etc.) and tofu (made from soybeans). They are packed with fiber and other nutrients which help maintain a healthy blood pressure.

Here are some quick ideas to include more plant sources of protein on your plate:

- Make a stir-fry with tofu instead of chicken.
- Add black beans to your rice.
- Toss some kidney beans into vegetable soup.

Go to [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov) for more dinner ideas.

### Questions for Your Health Care Team

- What are the best types of fish to include in my diet?
- How much sodium should I consume daily?

## It's Your Heart – Treat it Right

During National Heart Month, UMass Memorial offers a drawing for a heart-healthy gift pack including a pedometer, water bottle, bag and American Heart Association cookbook. For details and to sign up, visit [www.umassmemorial.org/strength](http://www.umassmemorial.org/strength).



## Everyday Physical Activity Tips

Small steps that get your family to move more can help everyone maintain a healthy weight. Choose a different tip each week for you and your family to try. See if you can add to the list.

### Walk whenever possible

- Take the stairs instead of the escalator or elevator.
- Take a family walk after dinner.
- Take the dog on longer walks.

### Live actively

- Join an exercise group, and enroll your children in community sports.
- Do sit-ups in front of the TV: Make it into a competition with your kids.
- Choose activities you enjoy and ask children what activities they want to do.

Below is a link to help you and your family to track your steps to a healthier lifestyle.

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/downloads/tracking-sheet.pdf>

### Move more in your home

- Do yard work: Get your children to help rake, weed or plant.
- Work around the house: Give children chores to help with.
- Wash the car by hand.



## Recipes for Heart Health: *Broccoli with Asian Tofu*

*Courtesy of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute*

Prep time: 20 minutes. Cook time: 20 minutes. Yields four servings.

1 package (16 oz) firm tofu, drained

2 tablespoons lite soy sauce

1 teaspoon sesame oil (optional)

½ tablespoon brown sugar

1 tablespoon fresh ginger root, finely chopped or shredded (or 1 teaspoon ground)

1 pound fresh broccoli, rinsed and cut into individual spears

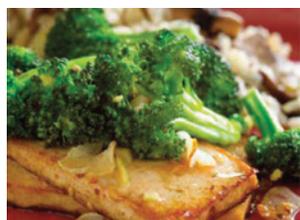
1 tablespoon peanut oil or vegetable oil

¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper

4 tablespoons garlic, peeled and thinly sliced (about 8 cloves)

1 tablespoon sesame seeds (optional)

Cooking spray



Slice tofu into eight pieces. Place on a plate or flat surface covered with three paper towels. Top with four more paper towels. Top with another flat plate or cutting board. Press down evenly to squeeze out moisture. The more liquid you remove, the more sauce the tofu will absorb. Place tofu in a bowl just big enough to hold all eight pieces lying on their widest side without overlapping.

In a small bowl, combine the soy sauce, sesame oil, brown sugar and ginger and stir thoroughly. Pour over tofu. Carefully turn the tofu several times to coat well. Set aside.

Meanwhile, heat a large nonstick sauté pan coated with cooking spray. Add broccoli and sauté for about five minutes until it turns bright green and becomes tender and crispy. Remove broccoli from the pan and set aside.

Heat a grill pan or flat sauté pan over high heat. Drain tofu, reserving marinade. Place on grill pan to heat for about three minutes. Gently turn. Heat the second side for three minutes.

At the same time, in the sauté pan over medium-low heat, warm the peanut oil, crushed red pepper and garlic until the garlic softens and begins to turn brown (about 30 seconds to one minute). Add broccoli and reserved marinade and gently mix until well-coated.

Place two slices of tofu on each plate with one-quarter of the broccoli and marinade mixture. Sprinkle with sesame seeds (optional).

**Nutritional information:** Per serving 183 calories, 11g fat, 2g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 14g protein, 13g carbohydrates, 4g fiber, 341mg sodium

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