**News Release**

**For Immediate Release**

EATING WELL FOR HEALTHY BLOOD PRESSURE

Approximately 29 percent (7.54 million) of Texans report being diagnosed with hypertension. In Texas, it is estimated that approximately 41 percent of Africans Americans, 34 percent of American Indians or Alaskan Natives, 32 percent of Whites, and 24 percent of Hispanics/Latinos have hypertension. Individuals with hypertension are at greater risk of developing conditions associated with the heart, including heart failure and heart attack, as well as stroke, chronic kidney disease, and type 2 diabetes.

Hypertension, commonly referred to as high blood pressure, has a self-management component rooted in the foods we eat. Many individuals are encouraged by health care providers to adopt the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) plan as part of a healthy lifestyle with an emphasis on foods that help lower high blood pressure, as well as, adding physical activity into daily routines. The DASH eating plan is not intended to treat high blood pressure. However, following the eating pattern and lifestyle modifications, has been shown to lower blood pressure for individuals.

According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, the DASH eating plan requires no special foods but encourages individuals to choose heart-healthy foods with daily and weekly limits in mind. The DASH eating plan includes foods from all 5 major food groups, however, special attention is given to limiting foods with higher fat, sodium and sugar content. Some of the main recommendations are listed below:

* Eating vegetables, fruits, and whole grains
* Including fat-free or low-fat dairy products, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, and vegetable oils
* Limiting foods that are high in saturated fat, such as fatty meats, full-fat dairy products, and tropical oils such as coconut, palm kernel, and palm oils
* Limiting sugar-sweetened beverages and sweets.

The typical American diet is so overly salted that the first few tastes of low-sodium foods can leave people unimpressed and unwillingly to make changes to their traditional diets. Thankfully, your taste buds can be “reprogrammed” by choosing to eat lower-sodium foods for 2-3 weeks. The longer you eat the healthier, low-sodium foods the better they taste. Rather than focusing on what you can’t eat, explore the new flavors of delicious heart-healthy recipes.

Not sure where to find reliable, healthy recipes? Check out the Dinner Tonight website: https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu where all recipes listed meet the standard Dietary Guidelines for Americans and many are Heart-Check Certified by the American Heart Association.

For more information and tips on incorporating more healthy foods and activities into your life, contact the Gregg County Extension Agent, Mandy Patrick @ 903-236-8429.

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