



**Eat for
the Beat!**



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This booklet provides you with dietary advice to help reduce your risk of further coronary heart disease (CHD). CHD includes heart attack, angina, acute coronary syndrome (ACS) or heart surgery.

Eating the right food can help to control many risk factors associated with CHD such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and diabetes. Even making small changes to your diet can have health benefits.

Modifying your fat intake

Reducing fat, especially saturated fat, in your diet helps improve health. Too much saturated fat can increase your blood cholesterol levels.

Saturated fats are mainly found in animal products including butter, processed meats such as sausages and burgers, full-fat milk, cheese, cream, pies, biscuits, pastry, coconut and ghee.

Having unsaturated instead of saturated fats lowers blood cholesterol. **It is strongly advised to replace foods high in saturated fat with foods rich in unsaturated fat.**

There are two types of unsaturated fats:

- Monounsaturated fats are found in olive oil, rapeseed oil, groundnut oil and margarines made from these, avocados and nuts.
- Polyunsaturated fats come from plant products and oily fish. Good sources include margarine labelled high in polyunsaturates, sunflower oil, corn oil, oily fish and soya-based products.

If you are overweight

A modest weight loss (5-10%) can help to reduce blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels. You may need to reduce your portion sizes and calorie intake, and increase your activity. Ask your dietitian or enquire at your GP surgery for more advice.

What can I eat to keep my heart healthy?

A heart healthy diet is rich in fruit, vegetables, wholegrain cereals, fish, beans, nuts and seeds, some dairy products, plant oils and less meat. This Mediterranean style of diet has benefits for heart health. The main focus is on cooking with fresh ingredients and using herbs and spices to flavour food rather than salt.

Getting the balance right

The Eatwell Guide shows the food groups that form a balanced healthy diet, including foods from a Mediterranean diet. Aim to eat foods in the proportions shown to get the balance right, and keep your heart and body healthy.



Source: Public Health England in association with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2014



Choose unsaturated oils and use in small amounts

Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta, and other starchy carbohydrates

Aim to include a small portion of these foods with every meal as they provide your body with vitamins and energy. Choose wholegrain varieties to increase fibre. High-fibre foods are digested more slowly and may keep you fuller for longer, reducing the temptation to eat unhealthy snacks between meals.

Eating foods high in soluble fibre can also help to reduce your cholesterol levels. These foods include oats, barley and rye.

Healthy suggestions

- Choose wholegrain or oat-based cereal.
- Try wholemeal, granary, rye or seeded bread.
- Be adventurous and try making your own bread.
- Choose brown rice or whole wheat pasta.
- Try grains such as pearl barley, couscous or bulgur wheat.
- Maximise fibre and vitamins by leaving skins on potatoes.

Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables should make up over a third of the food we eat each day. They contain a variety of vitamins and minerals, and are full of fibre. Aim for at least 5 portions a day and try to choose a variety to benefit from the different nutrients they contain. Fresh, frozen, dried or canned all count. A portion is roughly 80g or a handful.

- 3 heaped tablespoons of fresh, cooked, frozen or canned vegetables.
- 1 small bowl of salad.
- 1 small bowl of soup containing vegetables, beans and/or pulses.
- 3 heaped tablespoons of beans or pulses such as chick peas, kidney beans or cannellini beans.
- 1 medium-sized apple, orange, pear or peach.
- 1 small banana.
- 2 satsumas, plums or similar sized fruit.
- 1 handful of fruits such as grapes or strawberries.
- 1 tablespoon (30g) of dried fruit* such as raisins or apricots.
A small glass (150ml) of pure, unsweetened fruit* or vegetable juice.

Healthy suggestions

- Add a handful of berries, a tablespoon of dried fruit or chopped banana into your breakfast cereal.
- Have a small glass of pure unsweetened fruit or vegetable juice with breakfast.
- If you have a cooked breakfast, choose less meat and replace with grilled tomatoes, baked beans and mushrooms.
- Add mixed salad leaves, tomatoes and cucumber to sandwiches.
- Serve a side salad with meals. Try to avoid high-fat dressings and choose vinegar-based varieties or a squeeze of lemon juice instead.
- Try adding fresh chopped tomatoes with basil and a drizzle of olive oil to toasted bread.
- Make your own soup with plenty of pulses, vegetables, herbs and spices.
- Add more vegetables into curries, stews, stir-fries and pasta dishes.
- Add natural yoghurt to fruit salad or stewed fruit as a sweet dessert or healthy snack.

*Fruit juice and dried fruit count as a maximum of one portion daily, no matter how much you have. Have fruit juice with meals to reduce tooth erosion, and speak to your Dietitian, GP or pharmacist about risk of fruit juice interactions with your medications.



Beans, pulses, meat and other protein



We need protein to build and repair muscle and to keep our immune system healthy. Good sources of protein also contain iron, and are rich in vitamins and minerals. Try to have some food from this group every day.

Fish, lean cuts of meat and chicken or turkey with the skin removed, are lower in saturated fat. These are a better choice than processed meat such as sausages, burgers and pies. Pulses such as beans, peas and lentils are a great, low-fat, high-fibre alternative.

Healthy suggestions

- Choose lean cuts of meat and trim off all visible fat before cooking.
- Try grilling, microwaving, oven-baking, poaching, stir-frying or casseroles.
- Use lentils, beans, nuts, soya, tofu and Quorn as alternative protein sources.
- Use smaller portions of lean meat, and fill up your plate with more vegetables.
- Brown meat in its own juices and drain off the fat.
- Try making a fish pie or adding fish to kedgeree, pasta or risotto.
- For a quick and easy snack try sardines, salmon, pilchards or other fish on toast, in sandwiches or baked potatoes.
- Stir-fry with less meat and add a handful of unsalted nuts and more vegetables instead.
- Have a meat-free day – use peas, beans or lentils in casseroles, stir-fries, curries and pasta dishes instead.

Dairy and alternatives

Dairy and fortified alternative foods are an excellent source of calcium and protein. Try to include some of these foods in your diet and choose low-fat, fat-free or reduced-fat varieties.

- Milk.
- Cheese, cottage cheese, cream cheese or quark.
- Natural or Greek yoghurt.
- Fromage frais.
- Choose low-fat milk – semi-skimmed, 1% fat or skimmed varieties.
- Use low-fat, low-sugar yoghurt or fromage frais for desserts.
- Low-fat natural or Greek yoghurt taste great added to fruit. Add a handful of cereal or granola for a delicious breakfast.
- Try low-fat/reduced-fat cheese.
- Choose stronger cheeses and grate or cut cheese thinly, so that you use less.



Oils and spreads

Choose unsaturated oils and use them in small amounts. Use the information on page 3 on how to include healthy fats in your diet.

Food and drinks high in fat, salt or sugar

This food group includes cakes, biscuits, chocolate, sweets, crisps, pies, pastries and sugary drinks. Sugar, treacle, honey and syrup added to food and drinks are also included in this group.

These food and drinks are high in calories with little nutritional benefit and should be limited.

- Try sugar-free fizzy drinks or no-added-sugar squash.
- If you add sugar to tea or coffee, reduce it gradually to get used to the taste before cutting it out completely.
- Reduce pies, sweet pastries, biscuits and cakes because most contain hidden fats.
- Use low-fat yoghurt or fromage frais instead of cream for cooking or with desserts.
- Try reduced-fat mayonnaise, salad cream and dressings, and use less.

Salt

Eating too much salt can increase your blood pressure, further increasing your risk of coronary heart disease. To reduce your salt intake:

- Limit salt in cooking, avoid adding it at the table and be aware that stock cubes and pots are high in salt.
- Try seasoning food with pepper, herbs and spices instead of salt or stock.
- Reduce ready meals, canned and processed foods as they contain higher amounts of hidden salt.
- Reduce bacon, sausages, smoked meat, cheese, crisps and salted nuts.
- Check food labels and choose products that contain less salt.

Meal ideas

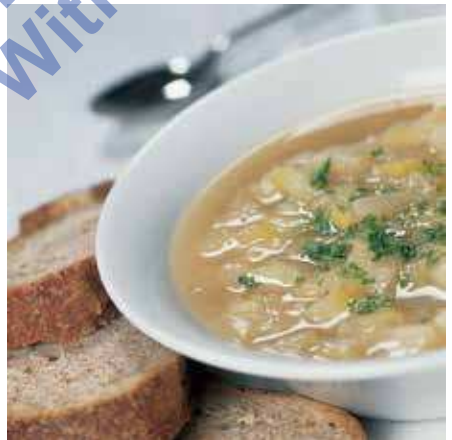
Try the following meal ideas and ask your dietitian for a personalised plan to meet your needs.

Breakfast

- Porridge made up with semi-skimmed or 1% fat milk and a small glass of pure unsweetened orange juice.
- High-fibre cereal such as whole wheat flakes, 1 or 2 wheat or oat bisks or unsweetened muesli with low-fat milk. Add a chopped banana or a handful of berries for added fibre.
- 1 or 2 slices of wholemeal, granary or multigrain bread toasted and topped with a thin scrape of reduced-fat spread or reduced-sugar jam/marmalade and a small bowl of fruit salad.
- 1 or 2 slices of rye bread topped with a mashed banana and a tablespoon of sultanas.
- Small pot of low-fat natural yoghurt and a handful of unsweetened granola.

Light meals

- Broth or lentil soup and a wholemeal roll, followed by a small pot of low-fat Greek yoghurt with a handful of berries or grapes.
- A medium roll or sandwich made with wholemeal, granary or seeded bread and filled with lean meat, mustard, lettuce and tomato, followed by an apple, pear, orange or peach.
- 1 or 2 slices of granary toast topped with canned fish such as sardines, and served with a small bowl of salad.
- Wholemeal pitta filled with 50g cubed feta cheese, tomato, lettuce, cucumber and a handful of olives.
- 2 wholegrain, multigrain or rye crisp breads topped with low-fat cottage cheese and a small can of pineapple in natural juice.
- Small baked potato filled with a small can or pot of reduced-sugar and reduced-salt baked beans.



Main meals

- Baked salmon fillet or chicken breast – wrap in foil with a squeeze of lemon juice and black pepper and bake in oven. Serve with 3-4 new potatoes in their skins and 1 or 2 handfuls of mixed vegetables.
- 100g lean minced beef or soya mince served with a medium potato mashed with semi-skimmed milk and a handful of carrots and cabbage.
- Grilled steak (size of a deck of cards) served with 3 small boiled potatoes and a handful of Brussels sprouts or any green vegetables.
- Pasta arrabiata – chop and gently fry a clove of garlic, some chilli, half a courgette and onion in a tablespoon of olive oil; add half a can of chopped tomatoes, mix with 125g cooked whole wheat pasta, and sprinkle with a tablespoon of grated parmesan cheese.
- Prawn, chicken or Quorn stir-fry – heat a tablespoon of rapeseed oil in a non-stick pan, add a teaspoon of crushed garlic and half a teaspoon of crushed ginger, followed by a handful of shelled prawns, chicken or Quorn with a generous helping of sliced vegetables; add a dash of soya sauce and stir-fry till cooked. Serve with 4 tablespoons of brown rice.
- Mushroom omelette – made with 4 sliced mushrooms, 2 eggs and served with 10 oven chips and a large handful of peas.
- Vegetable dhal and a wholemeal chapatti.



Alcohol

Drinking too much alcohol can increase your blood pressure, triglyceride levels and impact your weight and body shape. Alcohol is not recommended for some heart conditions and should not be taken with certain medication.

Drinking heavily in a short space of time to get drunk or to feel its effects, is binge drinking. This is linked with a significant rise in blood pressure, increased heart rate and irregular heartbeat, all of which make your heart's job harder.

If you enjoy alcohol and can safely include it in your diet, make sure you only do so within sensible limits.

To reduce the risk of harming your health if you drink most weeks:

- Men and women are advised not to regularly drink more than 14 units a week
- Spread your drinking over three days or more if you drink as much as 14 units a week.
 - 25ml of spirits (37.5% alcohol by volume (ABV)) = 1 unit
 - 125ml glass of dry wine (12% ABV) = 1.5 units
 - 125ml glass of dry wine (13.5% ABV) = 1.7 units
 - 1 pint of lager (4% ABV) = 2.2 units

Aim to have at least 2 alcohol-free days a week. Many alcoholic drinks now state how many units of alcohol they contain on the bottle or can. This makes it easier to keep track of your alcohol intake.

A guide to food labelling

Looking at food labels help us to check what the food contains, and choose the foods that best suit our needs.

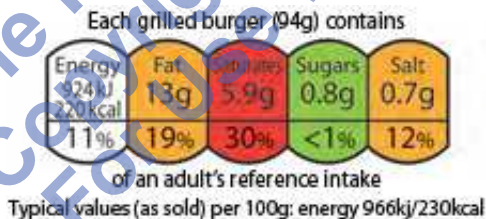
The red, amber and green colour-coding and percentage 'reference intakes' or 'RI' systems aim to make it easier for us to make healthy choices. Labels use these systems to show how much fat, saturated fat, sugar, salt and energy products contain. The RI indicates how much energy an average adult needs, and how particular nutrients fit into their daily diet.

What does the colour-coding mean?

Red means the food or drink is high in this nutrient and we should try to have these foods less often or eat them in small amounts.

Amber means medium, and if a food contains mostly amber you can eat it most of the time.

Green means low, and the more green lights a label displays, the healthier the choice.



For more information on RIs visit www.nhs.uk/livewell and look for 'Reference intakes on food labels explained'.

Traffic light labels often show the amount of nutrients that are present in the manufacturer's suggested portion or serving size. If you are having a small amount out of the pack (like margarine or mayonnaise), look at the information per 100g to compare foods.

If you are eating larger amounts of packaged foods such as ready meals or packaged snacks such as sandwiches or yoghurt look at the amount per serving or portion.

Remember: the portion/serving size on the pack may be different from the size that you eat or drink. If you are having a different amount, use the table below to help you make a healthier choice.

| Food | Per 100g or portion/serving greater than 100g | | |
|-----------|---|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Low | Medium | High |
| Fat | 3g or less | 3.1g to 17.5g | More than 17.5g/100g or 21g/portion |
| Saturates | 1.5g or less | 1.6g to 5g | More than 5g/100g or 6g/portion |
| Sugars | 5g or less | 5.1g to 22.5g | More than 22.5g/100g or 27g/portion |
| Salt | 0.3g or less | 0.31g to 1.5g | More than 1.5g/100g or 1.8g/portion |

| Fluids | Per 100ml or portion/serving greater than 150ml | | |
|-----------|---|----------------|--|
| | Low | Medium | High |
| Fat | 1.5g or less | 1.6g to 8.75g | More than 8.75/100g or 10.5g/portion |
| Saturates | 0.75g or less | 0.76g to 2.5g | More than 2.5g/100g or 3g/portion |
| Sugars | 2.5g or less | 2.6g to 11.25g | More than 11.25g/100g or 13.5g/portion |
| Salt | 0.3g or less | 0.31g to 0.75g | More than 0.75g/100g or 0.9g/portion |

When you go shopping, be aware that foods with claims such as “low in fat”, “reduced-fat” or “% fat-free” may still contain a lot of fat or sugar.

Making changes to your diet?

Once you are ready to make changes to your diet it can be helpful to set goals. Goals can help you focus on changes that are personal to you. Try to set **S.M.A.R.T** goals which are achievable and realistic for you.

SPECIFIC – decide what you want to change. Instead of saying “I’m going to start healthy eating”, think how you are going to achieve this: “I am going to have breakfast every day” or “I will reduce my portion sizes”.

MEASURABLE – be able to measure your diet changes. Decide how often you will do something, for example “I am going to eat 2 portions of fruit every day”. Putting a number to it will help you check if you are achieving your goal.

ACHIEVABLE – focus on a goal that you can reach. The more realistic the goal, the easier it will be to achieve. Making small gradual changes, for example cutting out half a spoonful of sugar from tea or coffee makes it easier to accept and reach your final goal.

RELEVANT – make sure that your goal focuses on what you need to change. For example, if you already eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables, there would be no need to set a goal for this.

TIMED – this is how long it will take you to reach your goal. For example, give yourself a deadline such as every morning, every day or twice a week. Write down when you want to make the change. This will help you to monitor your goals.

Is there anything preventing you from achieving these changes? How can you overcome these obstacles?

Make notes in the space provided on the next page.

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Frequently asked questions

Q Is there any point changing what I eat? I have been given drugs to treat my heart condition.

A Yes. We know that eating more fruit and vegetables and less saturated fat reduces the risk of coronary heart disease. So changing what you eat is as important as stopping smoking, taking regular exercise or taking your medication.

Q Do I need to take any vitamin or mineral supplements?

A If you are eating a healthy diet, then it should not be necessary to take vitamin supplements. Research shows no benefit for people with heart disease who take vitamin C, E and beta-carotene supplements, alone or in combination.

Q Can I use herbal remedies to lower my risk of heart disease?

A There is no clear evidence to support the use of complementary therapies or herbal remedies to reduce your risk of further heart disease. Some herbal remedies can interact with your medicines so it is always best to check with your GP or health professional before taking any.

Q Should I use a salt substitute instead of ordinary salt?

A Salt substitutes should be avoided as these are usually high in potassium, which can be harmful to some people with heart failure or kidney disease.

Q Will eating wholegrain cereals prevent heart disease?

A Wholegrain cereals contain many important nutrients (vitamins, essential fatty acids, trace elements) and cereal fibre. Eating cereal fibre such as oats or oat bran seven or more times each week may reduce your risk of coronary heart disease. If you increase your fibre intake, you must also increase your fluid intake to keep your digestive system healthy.

Q Should I use cholesterol-lowering products, for example special margarines, yoghurts and cereal bars?

A Products such as Benecol and Flora Pro.activ are specially formulated to lower cholesterol. By using the recommended amounts, they will lower your cholesterol, but they **must not** be taken instead of cholesterol-lowering medication. They are not routinely recommended, can be expensive and there are other changes you can make to your diet as described throughout this booklet.

Q Should I limit the amount of cholesterol I eat?

A Rich sources of dietary cholesterol are eggs, liver, shellfish (prawns, fresh crab, lobster) and molluscs (mussels, oysters, scallops). Eaten in moderation, these foods should have only a small effect on your blood cholesterol. It is more important to reduce the amount of saturated fat in your diet.

Q Will soya products lower my cholesterol?

A Yes, but to achieve this large amounts of soya are required which could lead to other complications. Ask your dietitian for information on safe levels of soya for your health needs.

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Useful websites

British Heart Foundation: www.bhf.org.uk

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland: www.chss.org.uk

Heart UK: www.heartuk.org.uk

NHS choices: www.nhs.uk

For further information, please contact:

Dietitian:

Telephone no:

Remember to bring this book with you to your next appointment.

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