HEALTHY EATING FOR A HEALTHY HEART

INTRODUCTION

A good diet, as shown in the Eatwell Guide below, together with being physically active, is an important part of staying healthy. This booklet explains how to make healthy food choices which in the long term can help reduce your risk of coronary heart disease, strokes, diabetes and certain forms of cancer. If you already have heart disease, eating well can help to protect your heart from further problems.

It is important to:

- Eat regular meals
- Enjoy a variety of foods
- Aim for at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day
- Base meals on wholegrain starchy carbohydrates eg. Wholemeal bread, brown rice/pasta, potatoes, wholegrain cereals
- Reduce fat in your diet, especially saturated fat
- Include some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, lean meat and low fat dairy products
- Aim for 4 to 5 portions of unsalted nuts, seeds and legumes for eg. Peas, beans, lentils per week
- Reduce salt intake
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Take regular exercise
- Drink alcohol in moderation following alcohol guidelines
- Stop smoking
CHOLESTEROL

Cholesterol is a fatty substance carried around the body by proteins. When cholesterol and proteins are combined, they are called lipoproteins. There are two types of lipoproteins: low-density lipoproteins (LDL) and high-density lipoproteins (HDL).

**LDL Cholesterol** (sometimes called ‘bad’ cholesterol):
LDL cholesterol travels around your body from the liver to the blood vessels. If levels are too high, LDL may build up in blood vessels, causing plaque as shown in the picture, causing damage. This can lead to raised blood pressure, clots and heart attack.

**HDL Cholesterol** (sometimes called ‘good’ cholesterol):
HDL cholesterol travels around the body collecting LDL cholesterol from the lining of the blood vessels and returning it to the liver, where it is broken down. This type of cholesterol can protect your heart.

Our cholesterol levels have been linked to the fat content of our diets.

FATS

Fats in the diet can be divided into two groups as per the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saturated Fat</strong></td>
<td><strong>Saturated Fat including Trans fat</strong> - a high intake increases levels of LDL cholesterol. animal products, ghee, lard, butter, coconut oil and many processed foods eg. cakes, pastries, biscuits, sausages, hamburgers, ready meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unsaturated fat which includes:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Monounsaturated Fat</strong> - can decrease LDL and raise HDL cholesterol. olive oil, rapeseed oil, olive oil spreads, multigrain bread, nuts and seeds, avocados.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Polyunsaturated Fat</strong> - can decrease LDL and HDL cholesterol sunflower oil, corn oil, oily fish, some nuts and seeds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is best to try and **reduce total fat intake** particularly if you are overweight. Saturated fats can be replaced with a small amount of unsaturated fats.
Tips for reducing total and saturated fat:

1. Replace butter, ghee, lard with a little oil or spread that is high in monounsaturates such as rapeseed oil or olive oil (check labels, as normal vegetable oil is often rapeseed).
2. Cut visible fat off of meat and remove skin from poultry.
3. Aim for 2 portions of fish per week, 1 of which is oily (eg. Mackerel, kippers, pilchards, salmon, sardines and fresh tuna (not canned)).
4. Grill, steam, boil, microwave, bake or poach foods, avoid frying.
5. Reduce your intake of pastry, biscuits, cake, chocolate, crisps.
6. Try using lower fat dairy products or alternatives such as semi-skimmed or skimmed milk.
7. Try low fat yoghurt or ½ fat crème fraiche instead of cream.
8. Try lower fat cheeses for eg. cottage cheese, ½ fat cheddar or ½ fat cream cheese.
9. Grate cheese as it makes it go further. Use mature cheeses but only small amounts eg 25g.

FIVE-A-DAY

Fruit and vegetables are a good source of:
- Antioxidants, which help prevent damage to blood vessels.
- Soluble fibre, which help to reduce blood cholesterol levels.
- Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamins are easily lost during food storage, preparation and cooking. To maximise the vitamin content:
- Steam, microwave or lightly boil in a small amount of water.
- Raw as snacks.

Try to eat a mixture of 5 fruit and vegetables a day. If you eat less than 5, aim to increase them gradually.

You can choose from fresh, frozen, dried or canned. Opt for canned fruit in natural juice or canned vegetables, with no added salt.

What is a portion of fruit or vegetables?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruit</th>
<th>Portion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very large fruit, eg. melon, pineapple</td>
<td>1 slice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large fruit, eg grapefruit or mango</td>
<td>½ fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium fruit, eg apple, orange, banana</td>
<td>1 fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small fruits, eg. plums, satsumas, kiwis, apricots</td>
<td>2 fruits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very small fruit, eg. grapes, berries, cherries</td>
<td>1 cupful (7-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried fruit, eg. sultanas, dates, raisins</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooked or canned fruit</td>
<td>1-3 tablespoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Portion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooked vegetables</td>
<td>1-3 tablespoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed salad</td>
<td>1 dessert bowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable sticks, eg. carrots, pepper</td>
<td>Handful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulses, eg. beans, lentils, chick peas</td>
<td>3 heaped tablespoons (more than this is still only 1 portion)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only include 1 small glass (150mls) of fruit or vegetable juice as 1 portion a day.

INCLUDE STARCHY FOOD AT EACH MEAL

Starchy foods provide energy, vitamins and minerals. They are naturally low in fat and can help you to feel full, particularly the whole grain or wholemeal varieties. They can also be a good source of fibre.

FIBRE

There are two types of fibre, shown below. Choose from both sources to keep healthy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soluble fibre - helpful in lowering cholesterol levels</th>
<th>Insoluble fibre – will help to fill you up and is important for digestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruit and vegetables</td>
<td>Wholegrain breakfast cereals (eg. Weetabix)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats and foods made with oats (eg. Porridge)</td>
<td>Wholemeal pitta, bread, chappatis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>Brown rice and pasta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>Potatoes, sweet potato and vegetable skins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulses eg. lentils</td>
<td>Seeds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Make sure that you drink plenty of fluids each day, particularly when you are increasing your fibre intake. Aim to have 6-8 cups (2 litres/4 pints) of fluid a day. Choose from a variety of sources, eg. water, no added sugar squash, diet soft drinks, tea, coffee.

LIMIT YOUR INTAKE OF SALT

A high salt intake can lead to raised blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. It is recommended that the average intake of salt is less than 6g = 1 teaspoon per day. However, 75% of the salt that we eat is already in the foods we buy.

Ways of Reducing Salt Intake:

- Choose less processed foods (ready meals, soups, bottles sauces, canned products) and eat less salty foods (ham, bacon, smoked fish, cheese, salted butter, yeast extracts, stock cubes).
- Try not to add salt to cooking, instead use herbs, spices, pepper, lemon juice, garlic, vinegar or mustard for flavouring (check food labels of mixed or blended spices).
- Try not to add salt to food at the table, and make sure that you always taste food first.
- Cut down on salty snacks such as crisps, salted nuts and biscuits and olives.
Buy canned vegetables and fish labelled “no added salt” or those tinned in water not brine or oil. Sea salt / rock salt are no different to ordinary salt and therefore the intake of these should also be reduced. Salt substitutes are not recommended. Try to reduce salt intake gradually to allow your taste buds to adjust.

**SUGAR**

Sugar contains only calories with no other nutrients. Decrease your sugar intake if you are overweight or have increased triglyceride levels.

**Suggestions for reducing sugar:**
- Avoid adding sugar to food and drinks – try an artificial sweetener instead.
- Choose no added sugar or low sugar squash or diet fizzy drinks.
- Cut down on cakes, biscuits, sweets, chocolate, jam, marmalade, syrup, treacle and honey.
- Choose breakfast cereals with a low sugar content, eg. porridge, Shredded Wheat, Weetabix.
- Choose reduced sugar puddings, eg. sugar-free jelly, fruit and diet yoghurts.
- Choose fresh or fruit canned in natural juice instead of syrup.
- Check food labels for added sugar. Syrup, honey, raw sugar, cane sugar, brown sugar, muscovado and concentrated fruit juice are all types of sugar. Sugar may also be described on food labels as glucose, sucrose, fructose, dextrose, maltose or corn syrup.
- Be aware of foods labelled “low fat” – some may be high in sugar – check the nutrition information panel (aim for less than 5g sugar per 100g).

**ALCOHOL**

Regularly drinking above the recommended intake has been shown to increase blood pressure, which in turn increases the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Current safe drinking recommendations: **14 units a week for both men and women**

**What is a unit of alcohol?**
- ½ pint (300mls) of standard strength (3-4% alcohol by volume (ABV)) beer, lager or cider
- One small glass of wine (125ml)
- One measure of spirits (25mls)
- One small glass of sherry or fortified wine (50mls)

Alcohol contains calories (1g = 7 calories) and can also contribute to weight gain.

**Important Points**
- Avoid binge drinking, and try to have at least 2 alcohol free days per week.
• Variation in alcoholic strength: beers, lagers and ciders contain range from 3% ABV to as much as 9% ABV. Wines can vary from 8% to as much as 12-14% ABV.
• Low-alcohol drinks: Some are virtually alcohol-free whilst others are as high as 1.2% ABV. They may also be high in sugar, aiding weight gain. Read the label.

If you are on any medications, always consult your doctor before taking alcohol.

A GUIDE TO FOOD LABELLING

Look at the label where it says ‘per 100g’ and use the table below as a guide to compare products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A LOT</th>
<th>A LITTLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 22.5g of sugars</td>
<td>5g or less of sugars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 17.5g of fat (5g of saturates)</td>
<td>3g or less of fat (1.5g or less of saturates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1.5g salt</td>
<td>0.3g or less salt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eat a little of the foods that contain ‘A LOT’ and more of the foods that contain ‘A LITTLE’.

EXERCISE – WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Check with the doctor before starting any new exercise.

Taking regular physical exercise can be an enjoyable way to help reduce your cholesterol levels, blood pressure and weight. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate exercise at least 5 times a week. Choose something you enjoy and can start to do regularly.

Suggestions

- Go for a walk in the park, at lunchtime or in the evening. Walk Hillingdon is your local Walking for Health scheme, further information can be found [https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/8625/Led-walks](https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/8625/Led-walks)
- Get off the bus or train a stop early and walk the rest of the way
- Park your car further away from your destination and walk the rest of the way
- Try a bicycle indoors or out
- Go for a swim or try aqua aerobics
- Join a club or team (running, football, netball, tennis)
- Take dance lessons

Further information can be found at:

http://www.bhf.org.uk
https://heartuk.org.uk/
http://www.bda.uk.com
http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/healthy-eating/Pages/Healthyeating.aspx
Languages/ Alternative Formats

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