

Eating for your heart

BEATING HEART DISEASE TOGETHER



About the British Heart Foundation

The British Heart Foundation is the nation's heart charity, saving lives through pioneering research, patient care and vital information.

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British Heart Foundation website

You may find other useful information on our website at:

bhf.org.uk

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About this booklet

This booklet contains advice on how **healthy eating** can reduce the risk of developing coronary heart disease and how it can help people who already have coronary heart disease. It explains how what you eat and drink affects your heart, and gives some general guidelines for healthy eating. It looks in particular at the effects of:

- fruit and vegetables
- the different types of fats in foods
- weight and body shape
- salt, and
- alcohol.

We explain the technical terms used in this booklet on page 46.

This booklet does not replace the advice that your doctors, nurses or dietitians may give you, but it should help you to understand what they tell you.

Why eating well is important

If you have coronary heart disease, your doctor, nurse or dietitian may already have given you information about healthy eating and how to eat well for your heart. Perhaps you have already managed to make some changes. Maybe you have tried to make changes but have gone back to your old habits. Or perhaps much of the information in this booklet is new to you. Whatever stage you are at, we hope you find the information in this booklet useful.

Eating a well-balanced diet can help improve your general health, both now and in years to come. It can help reduce your risk of developing coronary heart disease and some cancers. Eating healthily can also stop you gaining weight, which means reducing the risk of diabetes, high blood pressure and arthritis. If you already have coronary heart disease, eating a well-balanced diet will also bring important extra benefits.

How healthy eating can help you

Eating healthily can:

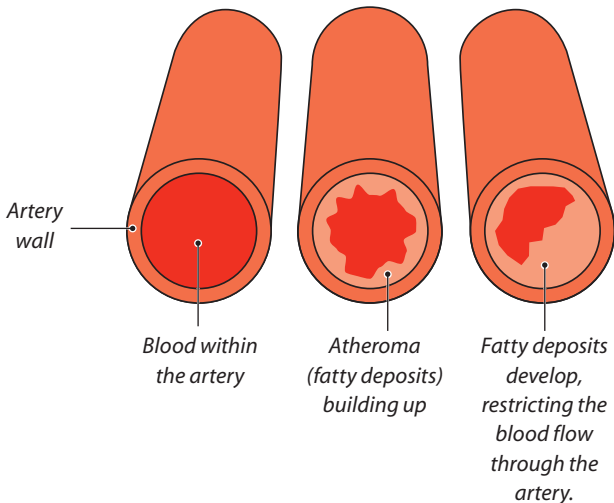
- help lower your blood cholesterol level
- help keep your blood pressure down
- help you to maintain or reach a healthy weight and body shape
- reduce the risk of developing diabetes
- help prevent atheroma (fatty material) from building up in the inside walls of your arteries, and
- help prevent blood clots from forming.

If you have diabetes, you have a higher risk of getting coronary heart disease, so it's particularly important that you eat healthily. For more information on diabetes, see our booklet *Diabetes and your heart*.

What is coronary heart disease?

The process of coronary heart disease begins when the **coronary arteries** (the arteries that supply the heart muscle with oxygen-containing blood) become narrowed by a gradual build-up of fatty material within their walls. This condition is called **atherosclerosis** and the fatty material is called **atheroma**.

How atheroma builds up



In time the artery may become so narrow that it cannot deliver enough oxygen-containing blood to the heart muscle when it needs it – such as when you are doing exercise. The pain or discomfort that happens as a result is called **angina**.

A **heart attack** happens when a narrowed coronary artery becomes blocked by a blood clot.

How food and drink affect your heart

On the next three pages we give a summary of the main points about how to eat a healthy, balanced diet and how this can reduce the risk of developing coronary heart disease and help protect your heart. On pages 14-39 we give some more detail about each point.

Fruit and vegetables

Eating a wide variety of fruit and vegetables can help reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. **Aim to eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day.** See page 14.



Fats and cholesterol

Reduce the total amount of fat you eat, replace saturated fats with monounsaturates and polyunsaturates, and cut down on foods that contain trans fats. This can help reduce your cholesterol level and protect your heart. We explain more about all the different types of fats and which foods they are found in on page 17.

Oily fish and omega-3 fats

Eating oily fish regularly can help to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and also helps to improve survival after a heart attack. **Aim to eat two portions of fish a week. One of the portions should be oily fish.** See page 24.

Keeping a healthy weight and body shape

If you are overweight, or if you tend to put on weight around your waist, reducing your weight or waist size will reduce the workload of your heart, help keep your blood pressure down, and help improve your cholesterol levels. See page 28.

Salt

Reduce the amount of salt you eat. This may help keep your blood pressure down and reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and heart attack. See page 33.

Processed foods

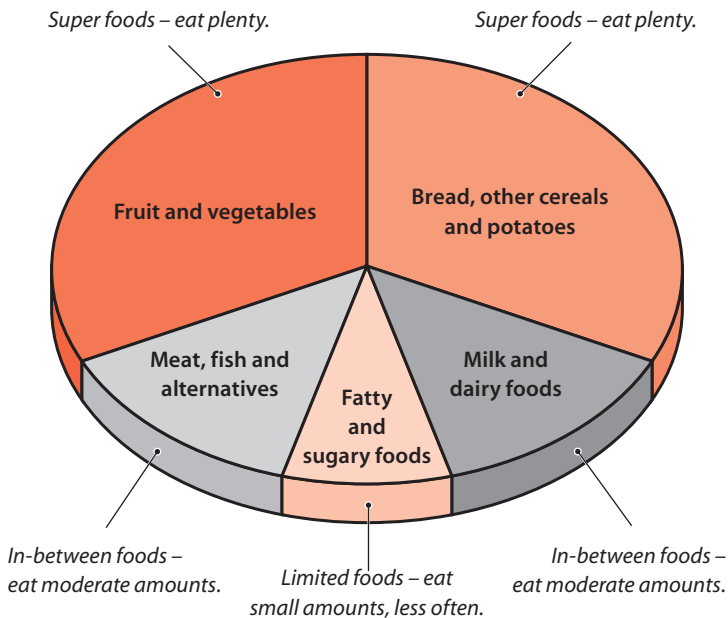
Eating processed foods regularly can lead to a diet that is high in unhealthy fats, salt and sugar, and low in fibre. So aim to prepare meals from basic ingredients. Or use food labels to help you make healthier choices. See page 36.

Alcohol

Too much alcohol can damage the heart and increase blood pressure, and can lead to weight gain. See page 38.

The balance of good health

The diagram below shows the balance of foods from the five different food groups that you should be aiming for.



- There are some foods that we should eat plenty of. These are foods from the 'Fruit and vegetables' group and the 'Bread, other cereals and potatoes' food group (for example, starchy foods such as cereals, pasta, rice, bread, potatoes or breakfast cereals – particularly the wholegrain versions of these).
- Eat foods from the 'Milk and dairy foods' and the 'Meat, fish and alternatives' groups in moderate amounts. The lower-fat versions are the better choices.
- The foods we should try to eat less often or have only small portions of are those from the 'Fatty and sugary foods' group.

Eating more fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables contain lots of vitamins and minerals that keep the body healthy and protect it from diseases. They also contain carbohydrates which give the body energy, but they are low in fat, which can help with weight control.

There is good evidence that eating a diet that includes a wide range of fruit and vegetables lowers the risk of coronary heart disease.¹

Aim to have at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. On average, people in the UK eat only three portions a day. (In some other countries, people eat an average of eight or nine portions a day.) On page 16 we explain what counts as a portion.

Different fruit and vegetables contain different combinations of vitamins and minerals, so aim to eat a variety to get the most benefit. Fresh, frozen, chilled, canned and dried fruit and vegetables, and 100% juice, all count. Potatoes are a good source of starch but they don't count as a 'five a day' portion.

We don't know exactly why fruit and vegetables have this good effect. It may be due to the **antioxidants** in the fruit and vegetables. Antioxidants prevent 'oxidation' –

the chemical process which allows atheroma to form within the walls of the coronary arteries (see page 7). However, there is no evidence that taking vitamin tablets or supplements has the same benefits as eating fruit and vegetables.

Fruit and vegetables are rich in **potassium**, a mineral which may help to control blood pressure and regulate the heartbeat.

Fruit, green leafy vegetables and root vegetables are also rich in **folate**. This is essential for the formation of blood cells and to maintain the level of homocysteine – a substance in the blood. There is growing evidence that people with high levels of homocysteine may have a higher risk of coronary heart disease.² However, there is not enough evidence for people to take folic-acid supplements (the synthetic form of folate) in the hope that they will reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

Fruit and vegetables are high in **fibre** and are slowly absorbed. This will help you feel fuller for longer, which is helpful if you are trying to lose weight.

Aim to eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day

What counts as a 'portion'?

Fruit

Apple, orange or banana	1 medium fruit
Very large fruit (for example, melon or pineapple)	1 large slice
Small fruits (for example, plums, kiwis or satsumas)	2 small fruits
Raspberries, strawberries or grapes	1 handful
Fresh fruit salad or stewed or canned fruit	2 to 3 tablespoonfuls
Dried fruit	1 tablespoonful
Fruit juice	1 glass (150ml) of 100% juice (Only counts as 1 portion in your daily amount.)

Vegetables

Carrots, sweetcorn or peas	3 heaped tablespoonfuls
Beans and pulses (for example, kidney beans, lentils or chickpeas)	3 heaped tablespoonfuls (Only counts as 1 portion in your daily amount.)
Mixed salad	1 cereal bowlful

Fats and cholesterol

Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a waxy substance which is mainly made in the body. The liver makes it mostly from the saturated fats in food.

Cholesterol plays a vital role in how every cell works, throughout the body. However, too much cholesterol in the blood can increase your risk of getting coronary heart disease.

What causes high blood cholesterol?

The most common cause of high blood cholesterol levels in people in the UK is eating too much fat, especially saturated fat. However, some people have high blood cholesterol levels even though they have a healthy diet.

LDL cholesterol and HDL cholesterol

Cholesterol has a special 'transport system' for reaching all the cells which need it. It uses the blood circulation as its 'road system' and is carried on 'vehicles' made up of proteins. These combinations of cholesterol and proteins are called **lipoproteins**.

There are two main types of lipoproteins – **LDL** (low-density lipoprotein), and **HDL** (high-density lipoprotein). The lower the density of the lipoprotein, the more fats it contains.

- Low-density lipoproteins – sometimes called **LDL cholesterol** – carry cholesterol from the liver, through the bloodstream, to the cells.
- High-density lipoproteins – sometimes called **HDL cholesterol** – return the extra cholesterol, that isn't needed, from the bloodstream to the liver. HDL cholesterol is a 'good' type of cholesterol because it removes the cholesterol from the bloodstream rather than depositing it in the arteries.

Triglycerides

Triglycerides are another type of fatty substance in the blood. They are found in foods such as dairy products, meat and cooking oils. They can also be produced in the body, either by the body's fat stores or in the liver. People who are very overweight, eat a lot of fatty and sugary foods, or drink too much alcohol are more likely to have a high triglyceride level.

Blood lipids

Blood lipids include **cholesterol** and **triglycerides**. Some types are 'bad', but one type (HDL cholesterol) is good.

Cholesterol

LDL cholesterol – bad
HDL cholesterol – good

Triglycerides – bad

Cholesterol, triglycerides and the risk of coronary heart disease

People who have a **high total cholesterol level** have a higher risk of coronary heart disease than those with lower levels. The risk is particularly high if you have a high level of LDL cholesterol and a low level of HDL cholesterol (the good cholesterol).

Atheroma (fatty deposits) develops in the coronary arteries when levels of harmful LDL cholesterol are too high. These fatty deposits can gradually make the coronary arteries narrower. The 'good' HDL cholesterol removes excess cholesterol from the circulation, and helps to protect against coronary heart disease. That's why it's called the good type of cholesterol.

People with a **high triglyceride level** have a greater risk of coronary heart disease than people with lower levels.

How can healthy eating help improve my cholesterol level?

Eating a healthy diet can help reduce your cholesterol levels by over 10%.³ However, some people find that healthy eating can have a greater effect on their cholesterol level than other people.

The aim is to:

- reduce your total cholesterol
- reduce your level of LDL cholesterol (the 'bad' type of cholesterol), and
- raise your level of HDL cholesterol (the 'good' cholesterol).

Choosing healthier fats

Foods containing fat are made up of a combination of saturated fats, monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats. Choosing healthier fats can help to protect your heart. But remember that all fats are high in calories. So, if you are watching your weight, you should limit the amount of all the fats you eat.

To help improve your cholesterol level and reduce your risk of coronary heart disease, you need to do the following.

- **Cut right down on saturated fats** and replace them with monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats. Reducing the amount of saturated fat you eat will help protect your heart, even if you don't have a high cholesterol level. See pages 22-23 for examples of foods containing all these fats.
- **Reduce the *total* amount of fat you eat.** This is especially important if you are overweight. For example, cut down on foods such as pastries, crisps and biscuits, and replace them with healthier alternatives such as fruit or vegetables. Or, at mealtimes, cut down on the amount of fatty foods you eat by filling up with starchy foods such as bread, pasta or rice instead – particularly the wholegrain versions of these foods.
- **Cut down on foods containing trans fats.** Trans fats are found naturally in very small amounts in foods such as dairy foods and meat. Trans fats are also formed when vegetable oils are partly 'hydrogenated' and used to make hard margarines and processed foods such as some cakes, biscuits, pastries and crackers. Foods that have 'hydrogenated oils' or 'hydrogenated fat' in the list of ingredients are likely to contain trans fats. Trans fats increase the total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol.

Choosing healthier fats

To help reduce your cholesterol level, you need to cut down on saturated fats and trans fats and replace them with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.

Omega-3 fats are good for your heart too.

	Unsaturated fats	
	Monounsaturated fats	Polyunsaturated fats
Which foods are these fats found in?	<p>Found in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• olive oil and rapeseed oil• avocado• nuts and seeds (almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, peanuts and pistachios). <p>Some margarines and spreads are made from monounsaturated fats.</p>	<p>Found in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• corn oil, sunflower oil and soya oil• nuts and seeds (walnuts, pine nuts, sesame seeds and sunflower seeds). <p>Some margarines and spreads are made from polyunsaturated fats.</p>

	Saturated fats	
Omega-3 fats	Saturated fats	Trans fats
<p>Found in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fish oil • oily fish such as herring, mackerel, pilchards, sardines, salmon, trout and fresh tuna. <p>See page 24 for more about omega-3 fats from sources other than fish.</p>	<p>Found in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • butter • hard cheese • fatty meat • meat products • biscuits • cakes • cream • lard • dripping • suet • ghee • coconut oil and palm oil. 	<p>Found in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pastries • cakes • biscuits • crackers • hard margarines. <p>Foods that have 'hydrogenated oils' or 'hydrogenated fat' in the list of ingredients are likely to contain trans fats.</p>

- **Eat oily fish regularly.** Oily fish provide the richest source of a particular type of omega-3 polyunsaturated fat that can help to lower blood triglyceride levels.⁴ They can also help prevent the blood from clotting, and help regulate the heart rhythm.⁴ Eating oily fish regularly can help to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and also helps to improve survival after a heart attack.⁵

These omega-3 fats are found mainly in oily fish such as herring, mackerel, pilchards, sardines, salmon, trout and fresh tuna. Aim to have two portions of fish a week. One of these portions should be oily fish. If you have had a heart attack, aim to have two or three portions of oily fish a week, to help protect your heart.⁶ (One portion of oily fish = 100 grams or 4 ounces of fish, or half a medium can of fish.)

If you don't like oily fish, you can get omega-3 fats from vegetable sources such as flaxseed oil and rapeseed oil, and from some nuts and seeds such as walnuts and flax seeds. However, we do not yet know for certain if the omega-3 fats in these foods bring exactly the same benefits as the omega-3 fats from oily fish.

Or you might want to take **omega-3 supplements** instead. It is important that you discuss taking supplements with your doctor, nurse or dietitian first.

To get the benefits from eating certain foods – such as oily fish – it is important to eat them as part of a balanced diet which is low in saturated fat, and in combination with a healthy lifestyle.

- **Eat a high-fibre diet.** This may help to reduce the amount of cholesterol that is absorbed from your intestine into the bloodstream and therefore reduce your risk of coronary heart disease. For example, porridge, beans, pulses, lentils, nuts, fruits and vegetables are all high in ‘soluble fibre’ which can help lower cholesterol. A high-fibre diet also helps to fill you up – making you less likely to snack on fattening foods.

Frequently asked questions

Will eating sterol-enriched foods help reduce my cholesterol level?

There is evidence that substances called ‘plant sterols’ and ‘stanols’ – which are added to certain foods including margarines, spreads, soft cheeses and yogurts – may reduce blood cholesterol levels.

Sterol-enriched foods may be helpful for people who cannot take cholesterol-lowering drugs, or for those who still have high cholesterol levels even though they have already made changes to their diet. They can also be

taken with cholesterol-lowering drugs. But even if you do eat sterol-enriched foods, it is still important to make sure you follow a healthy diet.

Is soya good for my heart?

Soya is a source of fibre which, as we explained on page 25, may help to lower your cholesterol. Soya products – for example, soya milk, soya yogurts, tofu, miso, and textured soya protein – are full of nutritional value as they contain lots of vitamins and minerals, and they are high in polyunsaturated fats and low in saturated fat. So, if you eat soya as part of a healthy balanced diet, it is likely to be good for your heart.⁷

What about the cholesterol found in foods?

There is some cholesterol in certain foods – for example, in eggs, liver and kidneys, and in seafood such as prawns. However, eating these foods does not usually make a great contribution to the level of cholesterol in your blood. If you need to reduce your cholesterol level, **it is much more important that you eat food that is low in saturated fat.**

Other ways of helping improve cholesterol levels

Physical activity

Doing regular physical activity – for example, brisk walking or cycling – can help improve your cholesterol level. Adults should aim to do 30 minutes of at least moderate-intensity physical activity a day, on at least five days of the week.⁸ The 30 minutes can be done all in one go, or in shorter bouts of at least 10 minutes a time. Being active can increase the level of HDL cholesterol (the ‘good’ cholesterol).

Being active can also benefit your heart in many other ways such as helping to lower blood pressure, control your weight, reduce the risk of diabetes, prevent blood clotting and relieve stress and anxiety.

For more about how to get more active, see our booklets *Physical activity and your heart* and *Get active!*

Cholesterol-lowering medicines

Some people need to take medicines to reduce their cholesterol level or to protect them from coronary heart disease. The main type of drugs used to reduce cholesterol levels are called statins. For more information on these, see our booklets *Reducing your blood cholesterol* or *Medicines for the heart*.

Keeping a healthy weight and body shape

Keeping close to a healthy weight will help lower blood pressure and reduce the workload of your heart. It will also help lower your cholesterol level, and reduce the risk of developing diabetes. If you already have diabetes, controlling your weight will help you keep your diabetes under control.

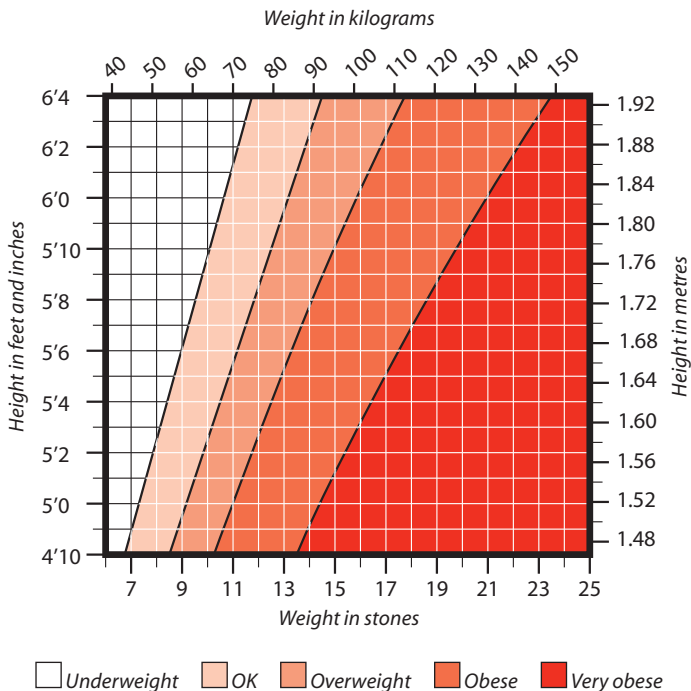
If you eat a lot of fatty foods, sweet foods or sugary drinks, you are more likely to put on weight. This is because these foods are very high in calories. If you eat more calories than your body burns up, the extra calories are stored as fat and too much fat results in putting on weight. You are even more likely to put this weight on if you are physically inactive.

How to find out if you need to lose weight

You can use the chart on the next page to find out if you need to lose weight. If you fall into the overweight, obese or very obese category in the chart, you need to lose some weight.

Are you a healthy weight?

Take a straight line up or down from your weight, and a line across from your height (without shoes). Put a mark where the two lines meet to find out if you need to lose weight. This is only an approximate guide.



Adapted from *Treat Obesity Seriously*, by J Garrow. 1981.

By permission of Churchill Livingstone.

Does your body shape increase your risk of coronary heart disease?

The way the fat is distributed on your body can affect your risk of coronary heart disease. People who carry too much weight around their middle have a greater risk of developing coronary heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Waist size

One way of finding out if your body shape is increasing your risk of coronary heart disease, is by measuring your waist. Find the bottom of your ribs and the top of your hips. Measure around your middle at a point mid-way between these. For most people this will be at the level of the tummy button. Then check your measurement in the box below.⁹

	Your health is at risk if you have a waist size of:	Your health is at high risk if you have a waist size of:
Men	over 94cm (37 inches)	over 102 cm (40 inches)
Women	over 80cm (32 inches)	over 88 cm (35 inches)

If you are at risk or at high risk, it is important to make healthy lifestyle changes that would reduce or prevent any further increase in your waist size and weight. This will improve your health and reduce your risk of coronary heart disease.

Waist-hip ratio

Another way of finding out if you are at risk of health problems is by working out your waist-hip ratio. To do this, divide your waist measurement by your hip measurement. For example, if you have a waist measurement of 85 centimetres (33.5 inches) and a hip measurement of 100 centimetres (39.5 inches), this would give a waist-hip ratio of 85 divided by 100, which equals 0.85.

You are at high risk of health problems if:¹⁰

- you're a man with a waist-hip ratio of more than 1, or
- you're a woman with a waist-hip ratio of more than 0.85.

If you need to lose weight or reduce your waist size

The best way to lose weight is by:

- reducing your calorie intake by cutting down on the amount of fat and sugar in your diet, and
- increasing your daily physical activity.

Try not to lose weight too quickly. Losing weight slowly and steadily – about one or two pounds (between half a kilo and 1 kilo) a week – is more healthy, and you're more likely to keep the weight off for good. People who follow a weight-loss programme that aims to lose a total of 5 to 10 kilos (about 10 to 20 pounds) – by losing between half a kilo and 1 kilo (about 1 to 2 pounds) a week – usually achieve their target weight loss.¹¹ If you are very overweight, losing even 10 kilos (22 pounds) will benefit your health.¹²

For more information on how to lose weight, see our booklet *So you want to lose weight ... for good. A guide to losing weight for men and women*.

Being physically active plays an important part in losing weight. For more information on how to increase the amount of physical activity you do, see page 27.

Cutting down on salt

People who have a lot of salt in their diet are more likely to have high blood pressure. Having high blood pressure increases the risk of developing coronary heart disease or having a heart attack.

It is the sodium in the salt that contributes to high blood pressure. Most people eat far more salt than they need. It is recommended that adults have no more than 6 grams of salt a day.¹³ That's about one teaspoonful.

There is sodium in all types of salt, whether it's salt in grains, crystals or flakes.

To cut down on salt...

- **Don't add salt to your food at the table.**
- **Cook without adding any salt.** Use extra pepper, herbs, garlic, spices or lemon juice to add flavour to your food instead.
- **Cut down on processed foods** that contain a lot of salt (see the next page).

You will find that within a few weeks your taste buds will get used to less salt. You won't like salty foods and will be able to appreciate other flavours more.

Salt in processed foods

Three-quarters of the salt we eat is 'hidden'¹⁴ in foods such as packet and canned soups, instant noodles, ketchups and sauces, sausages and burgers, and salty savoury snacks. Many basic foods such as bread and cereals can contain a lot of salt too. Look at the 'nutritional information' on the packet to find out how much salt the product contains.

Most food labels show the amount of sodium rather than salt. Soon the labels will show salt levels too. To convert the figure for sodium to salt, you need to multiply by 2.5. So, for example, 2g of sodium = 5 grams of salt (2 grams x 2.5).

Salt alternatives

Reduced-salt alternatives contain less sodium than standard salt, but they are not sodium-free. So, if you use these products, you will still be adding sodium to your food. Because these alternatives taste salty, they don't help you get used to less salty flavours. It's better gradually to reduce the amount of salt you eat until finally you use hardly any – or none at all.

Reduced-salt alternatives are not suitable for some people – for example people with kidney problems – so always check with your doctor before using these products.

Processed foods

Processed foods are foods that have been made into a product and then need very little preparation before eating – for example, ready meals, fish fingers, meat pies and burgers. A lot of the food we eat in the UK is processed and it often contains lots of hidden fats, salt and sugars.

Instead of eating processed foods or ready meals, try and cook more meals using basic ingredients – for example using meat, fish, vegetables, pulses and beans. If you do eat processed foods, use the information on the food labels to help you make healthier choices. (See the next page.)

Food labels

Most packaged foods have information on their ingredients. Many also give nutrition information.

The nutrition information label can tell you how much energy (calories), sugars, fat and salt the food contains. To find out if a product has 'a lot' or 'a little' of each of these nutrients, look at the 'Per 100g' information and compare it with the information in the box below. This tells you if a product has 'a lot' or 'a little' of each nutrient in it.

Guide to food labelling¹⁵	
This is a lot (per 100g of food)	This is a little (per 100g of food)
10g of sugars or more	2g of sugars or less
20g of fat or more	3g of fat or less
5g of saturates or more	1g of saturates or less
1.25g of salt or more 0.5g of sodium or more	0.25g of salt or less 0.1 g of sodium or less

You can get a pocket-sized *Guide to food labelling* from the British Heart Foundation. (See page 41 for how to order a copy.)

The guideline daily amounts below are a rough guide to the recommended daily amounts of calories and nutrients for an average man or woman. You can use this information to help you make some healthier food choices. For example, you can use it to find out whether you're getting too much fat in your food. If a ready-made meal contains 50g of fat, you know that it has more than half the recommended amount of fat for the day. Use these figures only as a rough guide, because people's calorie and nutrient needs vary depending on their size and the amount of activity they do.

Guideline daily amounts¹⁶

Nutrient	Men	Women
Energy	2,500kcal	2,000kcal
Sugars	120g	90g
Fat of which saturates	95g 30g	70g 20g
Fibre	24g	24g
Sodium Salt	2.4g 6g	2.4g 6g

g = grams kcal = kilocalories

Alcohol



1 unit of alcohol =

- half a pint (300ml) of beer, bitter, lager or cider (3% to 5% alcohol by volume)
- or a pub measure (25ml) of spirits such as gin, vodka, whisky or rum
- or a small glass (100ml) of wine.

Drinking within sensible limits

Men should drink no more than 3 to 4 units a day.¹⁷

Women should drink no more than 2 to 3 units a day.¹⁷

These guidelines apply whether you drink every day, once or twice a week, or just occasionally.

Moderate drinking – between 1 and 2 units of alcohol a day – may offer some protection against coronary heart disease.¹⁷ However, there is no case for non-drinkers to start drinking alcohol. There is little evidence that red wine has any specific benefits over other alcohol.

Drinking more than the sensible limits shown opposite does not protect the heart and can actually lead to damage to the heart muscle, high blood pressure, stroke and some cancers. Alcohol is high in calories too and so can add to weight gain. One unit of alcohol has at least 100 kcal (kilocalories).

My progress record

This is a personal health record for people with a heart condition. You can use it to keep a record of important information, and to chart the progress you are making in tackling your risk factors for coronary heart disease. For example, you can use it to see how you are getting on with changing your diet, losing weight, becoming more active, reducing your cholesterol and controlling diabetes. It also contains information about coronary heart disease to help you make informed decisions about your health. Your nurse or doctor may be able to order a copy for you, or you can order a copy from the British Heart Foundation (see the next page), and work through it with your health professional.

For more information

British Heart Foundation website

bhf.org.uk

For up-to-date information on coronary heart disease, the BHF and its services.

Booklets

To order any of our booklets:

- call the **BHF Orderline** on **0870 600 6566**, or
- email **orderline@bhf.org.uk**, or
- visit **bhf.org.uk/publications**.

You can also download many of our publications from our website.

For information on other BHF booklets, and on videos and DVDs, ask for a copy of the *Heart health catalogue*.

Our booklets are free of charge, but we would welcome a donation. (See page 2 for how to make a donation.)

Heart Information Series

This booklet is one of the booklets in the *Heart Information Series*. The other titles in the series are as follows.

- 1 Physical activity and your heart
- 2 Smoking and your heart
- 3 Reducing your blood cholesterol
- 4 Blood pressure
- 5 Eating for your heart
- 6 Angina
- 7 Heart attack
- 8 Living with heart failure
- 9 Tests for heart conditions
- 10 Coronary angioplasty and coronary bypass surgery
- 11 Valvular heart disease
- 12 Having heart surgery
- 13 Heart transplantation
- 14 Palpitation
- 15 Pacemakers
- 16 Peripheral arterial disease
- 17 Medicines for the heart
- 18 The heart – technical terms explained
- 19 Implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICDs)
- 20 Caring for someone with a heart condition
- 21 Returning to work with a heart condition
- 22 Diabetes and your heart
- 23 Cardiac rehabilitation

Heart health magazine

Heart health is a free magazine, produced by the British Heart Foundation especially for people with heart conditions. The magazine, which comes out four times a year, includes updates on treatment, medicines and research and looks at issues related to living with heart conditions, like healthy eating and physical activity. It also features articles on topics such as travel, insurance and benefits. To subscribe to this **free** magazine, call **0870 850 5281** or go to **bhf.org.uk/hearthealthmag**.

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Technical terms

antioxidants	A chemical that inhibits oxidation – the chemical process which allows atheroma to form within the walls of the coronary arteries.
atheroma	Fatty material that can build up within the walls of the arteries.
atherosclerosis	The build-up of fatty material within the walls of the arteries.
cholesterol	A fatty substance mainly made in the body.
coronary heart disease	When the walls of the arteries become narrowed by a gradual build-up of fatty material called atheroma.
HDL	High-density lipoprotein. The 'good' cholesterol.
high-density lipoprotein	The 'good' cholesterol. Also called HDL.
homocysteine	An amino acid found in the blood. There is growing evidence that people with high levels of homocysteine may have a higher risk of coronary heart disease.
LDL	Low-density lipoprotein. The more 'harmful' cholesterol.

lipoproteins	Combinations of cholesterol and proteins.
low-density lipoprotein	The more 'harmful' cholesterol. Also called LDL.
omega-3	A type of polyunsaturated fat found in certain types of fish.
saturated fat	A fat which usually originates from animal sources and is usually solid at room temperature.
soya	A plant which produces nutritious beans.
stanols and sterols	Substances, found naturally in a range of plant sources, which are added to certain foods such as margarines, spreads, soft cheeses and yogurts, and which may help reduce blood cholesterol levels.
trans fat	A fat produced by partial 'hydrogenation' (when liquid oils are turned into semi-solid fat).
triglycerides	A type of fatty substance found in the blood.
unsaturated fat	A fat derived from plant sources and from some animal sources. It is liquid at room temperature.

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Crystal
Mark
5714



Clarity approved by
Plain English Campaign

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British Heart
Foundation

British Heart Foundation

Greater London House

180 Hampstead Road

London NW1 7AW

Phone: 020 7554 0000

Fax: 020 7554 0100

Website: bhf.org.uk