



Eat Better

to reduce your risk of heart
and circulatory diseases



**British Heart
Foundation**

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Why eat better?

In this section we will cover:

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Eating in a healthy way to protect your heart

What you choose to put in your body affects how you feel and how healthy you are. Eating the right foods in the right amount is one of the most important things you can do for your heart and overall health.

If you already have a heart or circulatory condition, eating better can help protect your heart from further problems.

How do you eat in a healthy way? It's about making small, long-term changes and enjoying the food you eat. Eating healthily can be tasty, simple and fun.

“You do not need to get the balance right in every meal, but try to get it right as often as you can.”

Tracy Parker, Senior Dietitian, BHF

The benefits of a healthy, balanced diet

The benefits of eating better are endless. By giving your body the nutrients it needs, you'll have more energy, feel stronger and boost your gut, mood and mental health.

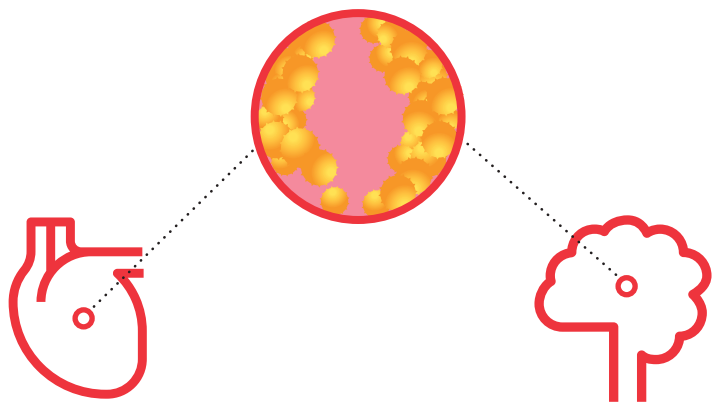
Eating better over time can reduce your risk of heart and circulatory diseases, while an unhealthy diet can increase it.

Heart and circulatory diseases, such as coronary heart disease, stroke and vascular dementia kill around one in four people in the UK.

Eating unhealthily can lead to obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol or type 2 diabetes. These conditions are called risk factors, which increase your chance of getting heart and circulatory diseases.

These risk factors can damage your arteries and make it easier for fatty material to build up. If your arteries get damaged and blocked, it can lead to a heart attack or stroke.

Arteries damaged by fatty deposits



Artery in the heart getting blocked

Artery in the brain getting blocked

Risk factors

High cholesterol

Some foods we eat increase our 'bad' (non-HDL) cholesterol. Too much bad cholesterol can build up in your artery walls, making it difficult for blood to flow through them. This can increase your risk of a heart attack or stroke. Turn to page 22 to learn more about eating less saturated fat to reduce your risk of high cholesterol.

Type 2 diabetes

You're two to three times more likely to develop heart and circulatory diseases if you have type 2 diabetes. Eating a healthy diet can help reduce this risk.

High blood pressure

Eating too much salt or drinking too much alcohol can lead to high blood pressure, which can increase your risk of a heart attack or stroke. Find out more about salt on page 30 and alcohol on page 34.

Excess weight

Having excess weight puts a strain on your heart and circulatory system. Eating better can help you reach and maintain a healthy weight.

Good to know:

The short-term benefits of eating better are great too. By giving your body the nutrients it needs, you'll have more energy and feel stronger and healthier.

 bhf.org.uk/myweight

Now is always the best time to start

Here are some tips to get you started:



Starting now

When it comes to making a change, it's important to just make a start. Whether it's eating more vegetables or drinking less alcohol each week, now is always the best time.



Starting small

Small changes can add up to a big difference. It may be something as simple as having one less sugar in your tea or swapping your afternoon biscuit for a piece of fruit.



Giving it time

You will not see changes overnight. It may take time for some benefits like weight loss to start showing, but you should soon notice an increase in energy and better sleep.



Setting achievable goals

You will not be able to change your entire lifestyle in one day. Make small changes and build up each week or month and you'll be more likely to stick to your new habits.

“By making small changes every day, you can really improve your health and reduce the risk to your heart. The best time to start is right now.”

Tracy Parker, Senior Dietitian, BHF

Get the balance right

In this section we will cover:

- The Eatwell Guide 09
- Fruit and vegetables 12
- Starchy carbohydrates 14
- Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins 16
- Dairy and alternatives 20
- Oils and spreads 22
- Foods high in sugar, salt and fat 24

The Eatwell Guide

Healthy eating is not about cutting out or focusing on individual foods or nutrients. It's thinking about your whole diet and eating a variety of foods in the right amounts to give your body what it needs.

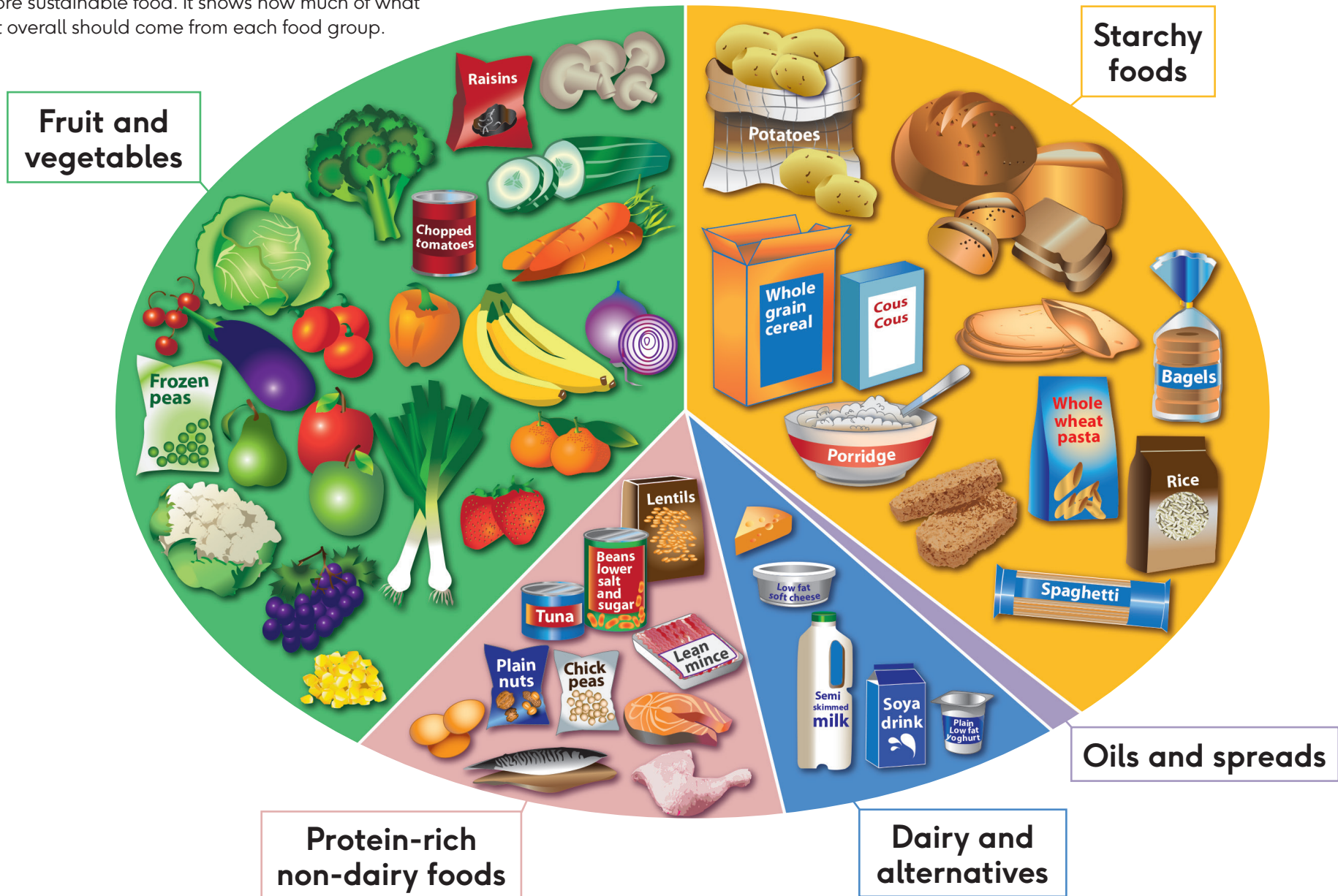
There are foods we need to eat more of, like fruit and vegetables, and others we need to eat less of, which are foods high in saturated fat, sugar and salt. It's about getting the right balance.

The Eatwell Guide, the UK's national food guide, shows the different types of food and drinks we should choose and in what amounts to have a healthy, balanced diet.

You should base your meals on high-fibre foods like brown rice, wholegrain bread, cereals and potatoes with their skins. Get plenty of fruit and vegetables and a variety of protein foods including peas, beans and lentils. Only have foods high in sugar and fat sometimes as a treat.

Eatwell Guide

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.



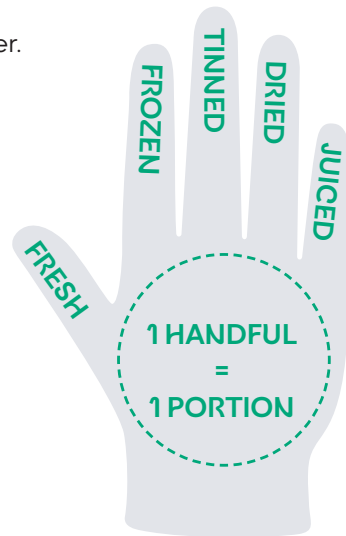
Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet. Eating at least five portions a day has been shown to help lower the risk of developing heart and circulatory diseases.

Fruit and vegetables provide a wide range of vitamins, minerals and fibre. There are five ways to get your five a day: the fruit or veg can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or tinned (in juice or water).

Five ways to eat more veg

- Have a side salad with your dinner.
- Cut up carrots, peppers or celery for a crunchy afternoon snack.
- Choose dishes that come in a tomato or vegetable-based sauce.
- Stock up on tinned or frozen vegetables so you always have them ready to make meals or snacks.
- If you do not like vegetables, set yourself a challenge of trying one new one a week.



Good to know:

Smoothies and juices are a popular way to eat fruit and vegetables but it's actually better to eat them whole. Juices are much higher in free sugars and calories and contain less fibre than whole fruit.

How much is one portion of fruit and veg?

Fresh fruit



Seven strawberries
(one portion = 80g)



One whole pear (one
portion = 80g)



Nine cherries (one
portion = 80g)

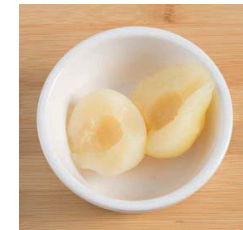
Fruit juice, dried and tinned fruit



One heaped
tablespoon of dried fruit
(one portion = 30g)



One small glass
(150ml) of fruit juice



Three heaped
tablespoons of tinned
fruit (one portion = 80g)

Vegetables



Eight broccoli florets
(one portion = 80g)



Two heaped handfuls
of salad (one portion
= 80g)



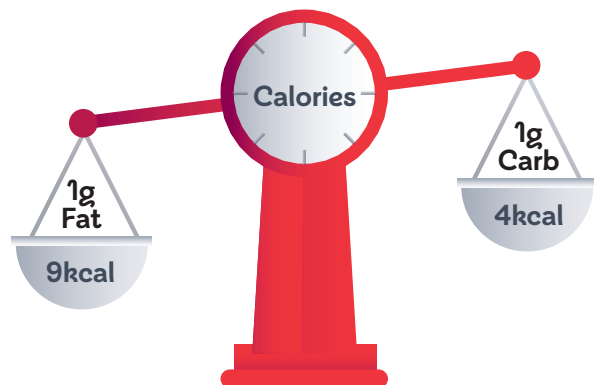
Three heaped
tablespoons of carrots
(one portion = 80g)

Starchy carbohydrates

As well as bread, rice, pasta and potatoes, this food group includes oats, chapattis, naan, yam, plantain and couscous.

Carbohydrates (carbs) are your body's main source of energy and you should try to eat some at every meal. Choose wholegrain varieties of these foods as they contain fibre as well as vitamins and minerals.

There's no truth to the claims that carbs are fattening. Gram for gram they contain less than half the calories of fat. However, watch out for added fats you use when cooking or serving as this will add extra calories.



Lower carb diets can help people with type 2 diabetes improve their blood sugar levels and manage their weight but they're not for everyone.

If you want to eat less carbs, do not try to cut them all out. Instead, be more aware of how much you're eating and choose high-fibre options. To remind yourself of portion sizes, go to our handy portion guide on page 40.

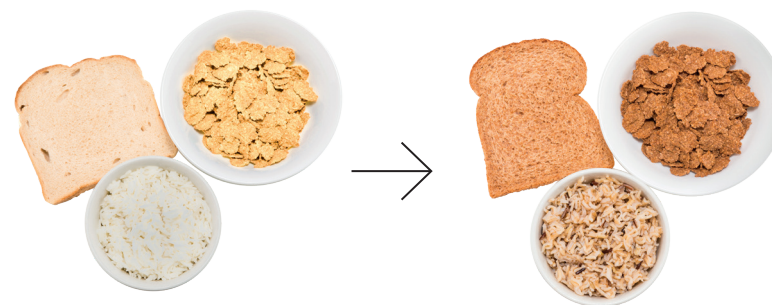
Good to know:

Eating 30g of fibre a day helps to keep your digestive system healthy, can prevent constipation and can lower your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. To reach 30g, choose more fruit, vegetables, wholegrains, beans, pulses, nuts and seeds.

Quick changes

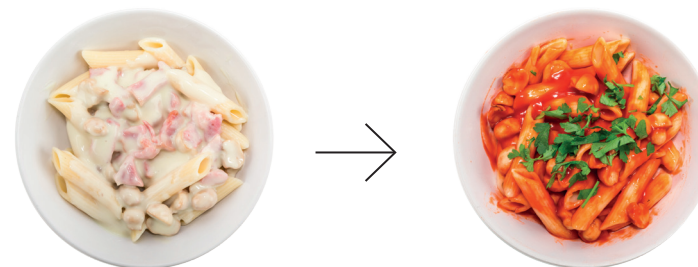
Switch processed for wholegrain

Processed carbs like white bread, white pasta and white rice do not have as much fibre or nutrients as the wholegrain versions. Try switching these foods for wholegrain alternatives.



Avoid creamy or cheesy sauces

Try adding healthier toppings like tomatoes and mushrooms for flavour instead.



Swap creamy or cheesy pasta dishes

for a pasta dish with no added cheese or cream

Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins

Protein foods help your body grow and repair itself. You should aim to eat a variety of proteins, such as:

Beans and pulses

Beans and pulses like kidney beans, baked beans, chickpeas and lentils are a filling and healthy protein choice as they're high in fibre and low in fat.

Soy

Soy protein is found in products like tofu, soybeans, soy mince, edamame, tempeh, soy milk and soy yoghurt. It's a great source of protein and fibre and is low in saturated fat.

Nuts and seeds

These are high in fibre and contain healthy unsaturated fats. Make sure you eat no more than a handful a day as they're still high in calories. Choose the unsalted varieties and nut butters without added oil, salt and sugar and look for 100% nuts.

Eggs

There's no limit on how many eggs you can eat. It's best to cook them without fat by boiling or poaching them. If you have been diagnosed with familial hypercholesterolaemia (FH), talk to your doctor or dietitian for guidance on eggs.

Fish

Fresh, frozen or canned fish all count. Remember, fish canned in brine and smoked fish are high in salt.

You should aim for two portions of fish per week, with one portion being oily fish (one portion = 140g of cooked fish).

Eating oily fish that are high in omega-3 fatty acids (like salmon, sardines and mackerel) as part of a balanced diet may help protect your heart health.

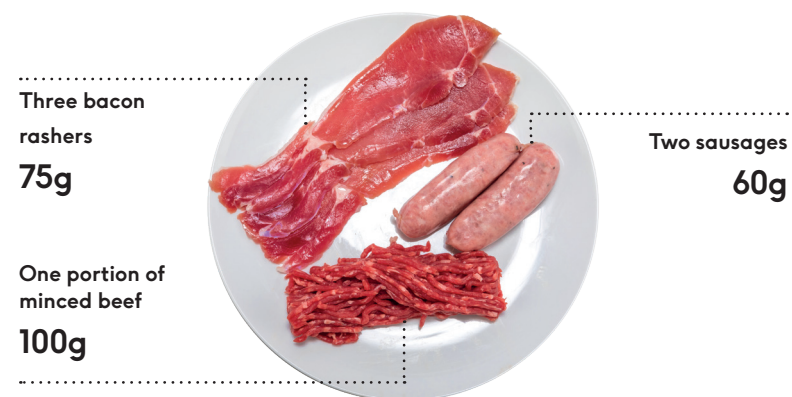
Meat

Some types of meat are high in saturated fat, which can raise your cholesterol. The type of meat you choose and the way you cook it can change how healthy it is:

- Choose leaner meats where possible and avoid adding extra fat or oil when cooking. Grill, bake or steam instead of frying.
- Try swapping to lean white meats like chicken and turkey, vegetable proteins such as beans and pulses, as well as fish.
- Cut the fat off meat, remove the skin from chicken.
- Limit processed meats such as sausages, bacon and cured meats.

How much red meat should I eat?

If you eat more than 90g per day of red or processed meats, try to reduce this to no more than 70g per day.



Good to know:

Eating a variety of plant-based proteins each day will give you all the protein you need to stay healthy. Be careful as some meat-free alternatives like vegetarian or vegan nuggets, burgers and sausages can be high in salt, saturated fat and calories.

Plant-based diets

A plant-based diet does not mean getting rid of meat.

Eating more plant foods, including vegetarian and vegan diets, is linked with many health benefits. This includes keeping to a healthy weight and a lower risk of type 2 diabetes, heart attack, stroke and some cancers.

'Plant-based' does not automatically mean 'healthy'. Replacing animal foods with unhealthy plant foods like processed fake meat, or chips and sweetened foods and drinks does not lower your risk of getting heart and circulatory diseases. The health benefits depend on the quality of the foods you eat.

A 100% plant-based diet may not suit everyone, but we do recommend eating more fruit, vegetables, pulses, beans and wholegrains whether you eat animal products or not.

A Mediterranean-style diet includes lots of fruit, veg, pulses, fish and only a small amount of meat. It may be easier to follow than a diet that has no animal foods at all. The balance of different food groups in the Mediterranean diet are the same as in the Eatwell Guide.

Good to know:

Healthy, plant-based diets are good for our health and the planet too. Eating more plant foods can lead to reductions in greenhouse gases and water needs.

Quick changes

Cut back on red meat

Try swapping meat for pulses. For example, replace half the mince in a chilli or bolognese with kidney beans or lentils, or half the chicken in a curry with chickpeas. Go one step further and try one meat-free day a week.

Chunky vegetable chilli

Serves: Six.

Prep time: 10 min.

Cooking time: 1hr 10 min.



Mushroom and cauliflower frittata

Serves: Two.

Prep time: 15 min.

Cooking time: 15 min.

 bhf.org.uk/recipefinder

Dairy and alternatives

Dairy means milk and milk products like cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais. Alternatives to dairy include soya, rice, oat and nut-based drinks and yoghurt.

Butter cream and ice cream are not included here because they're high in saturated fat. They fit under 'foods high in fat, salt and sugar' (page 24).

Dairy foods are a good source of protein and calcium, which are important for strong bones and teeth. However, the amount of fat in them is not always the same and they're often high in saturated fat.

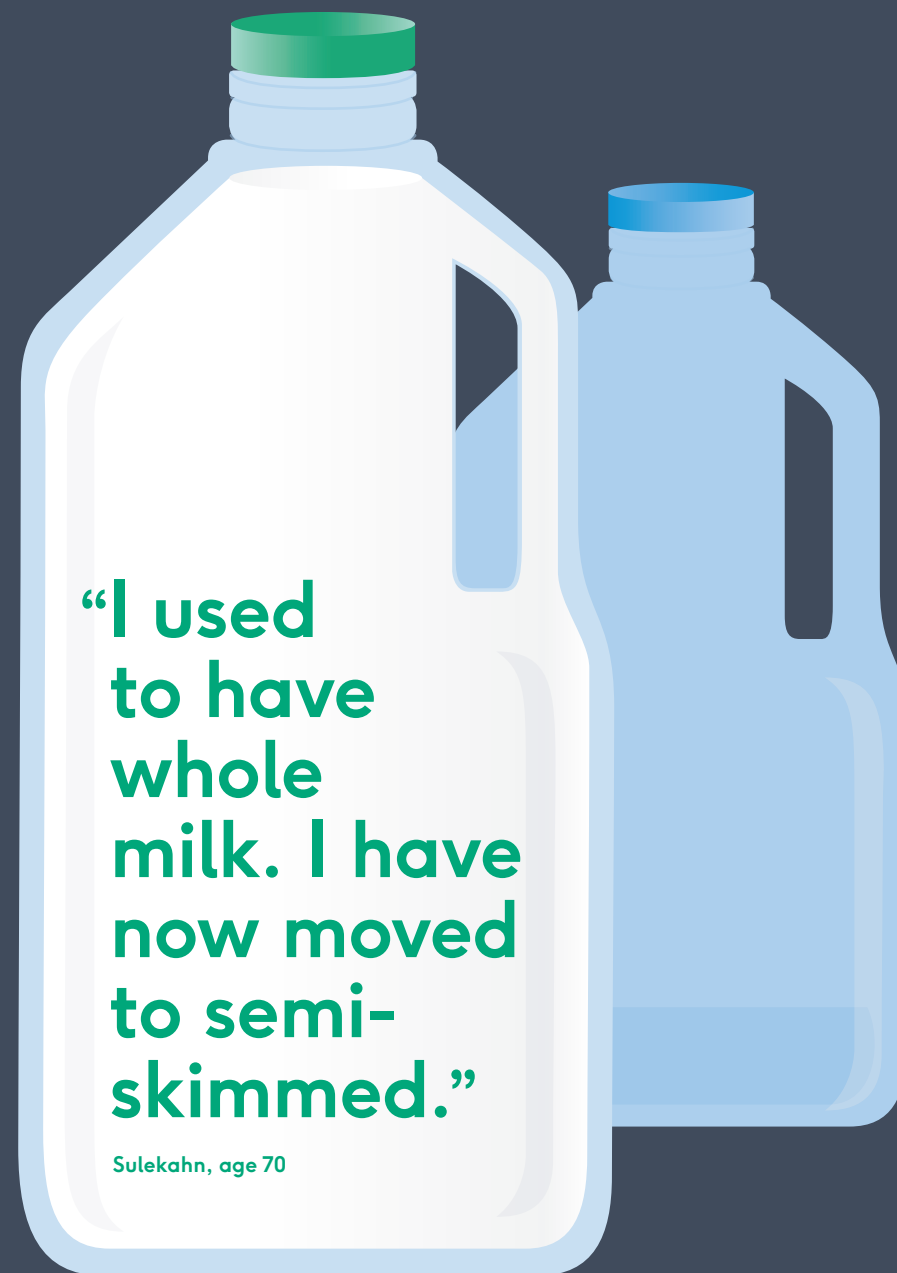
Non-dairy milks tend to have fewer calories and less saturated fat (except coconut-based milk). Some lack the calcium and protein (except soya milk) we get from dairy products and sugar is often added to standard and flavoured versions. If you drink milk alternatives, check they have added calcium and choose the unsweetened varieties.

Quick changes

- Milk. Go for semi-skimmed, 1% or skimmed.
- Yoghurt. Try natural or low-fat yoghurts with no added sugar.
- Cheese. Choose reduced fat options like reduced fat cheddar or cream cheese.
- Crème fraiche. Pick lower fat versions or natural yoghurt.

Good to know:

Choosing lower fat dairy milk is better if you have high cholesterol. It's lower in fat, saturated fat and calories than whole milk, but still contains the same amount of calcium and protein. However, some reduced fat or fat-free dairy products can have more added sugar to replace the fat. Always check the label.



Oils and spreads

A small amount of fat is needed in a balanced diet. Fat provides us with essential fatty acids (which the body cannot make) and helps us to absorb important vitamins.

To keep your heart healthy, most of us need to cut down on saturated fat and trans fats. These fats can raise the level of bad cholesterol in your blood, which may increase your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Replacing these with healthier unsaturated fats (mono-and-polyunsaturated fats) can help keep your cholesterol at a healthy level.

All fats, even the healthy ones, are high in calories. Eating more than you need can lead to weight gain, which can increase your risk of heart and circulatory diseases. So, it's best to eat them in small amounts.

The different types of fats

Monosaturated fats

Avocados, olives, olive oil, rapeseed oil. Almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, peanuts, pistachios and spreads made from these nuts.

Polyunsaturated fats

Oily fish, corn oil, sesame oil, soya oil and spreads made from those oils. Flaxseed, pine nuts, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds and walnuts.

Saturated fats

Processed meats like sausages, ham, burgers. Fatty meat. Hard cheeses including cheddar. Whole milk, cream, butter, lard, ghee, suet, palm oil and coconut oil.

Trans fats

Fried foods, takeaways, snacks like biscuits, cakes or pastries. Some hard margarines.

 [bhf.org.uk/fats](https://www.bhf.org.uk/fats)



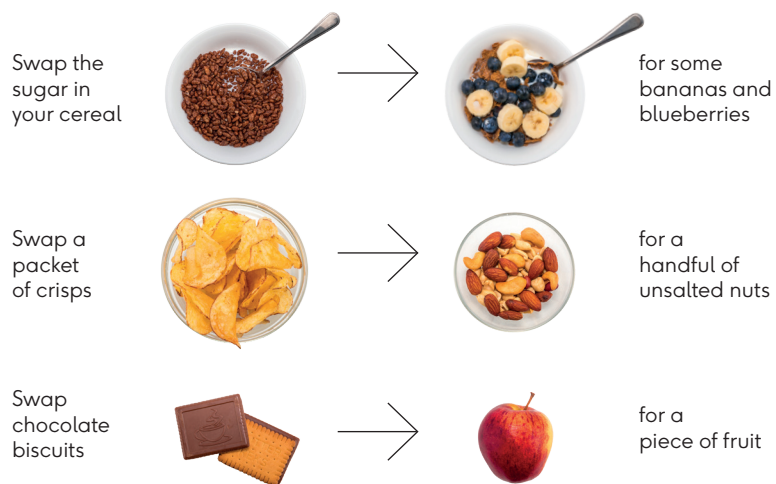
“Really our food at home is just the same, we just have less sweet things, less fried things and have smaller portions.”

Sulekahn, age 70

Foods high in sugar, salt and fat

These usually include foods such as cakes, crisps, chocolate and sugary drinks. We need to cut down on these foods because they have little nutritional value.

They do not have the vitamins, fibre or protein that other food groups do. They do not provide a steady amount of energy, either.



“Gradual change is more likely to result in permanent change.”
Tracy Parker, Senior Dietitian, BHF

Section 3

Start making changes

In this section we will cover:

- Cutting back on sugar 26
- Cutting down on salt 30
- Drinking less alcohol 34
- Non-alcoholic drinks 36

Cutting back on sugar

Eating too much sugary food can lead to weight gain. Having excess weight can mean you're more likely to develop heart and circulatory diseases, as well as their risk factors like type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.

Even if you're a healthy weight, you should keep an eye on how much sugar you're eating.

All sugars are a type of carbohydrate found in many of the foods we eat. There are different types of sugars and they mean different things for your health. We need to cut down on the sugars that are bad for our health, which are called 'free sugars'.

These are sugars added to junk food, some cereals and yoghurts, or naturally found in honey, syrups and fruit juices.

Foods like fruit, vegetables, grains and dairy contain natural sugars. These foods play a role in a healthy diet because they give us the vitamins, minerals and fibre our bodies need. You do not need to cut down on these foods.

Good to know:

Some foods we think of as healthy like honey, fruit juice and low-fat yoghurt are packed with sugar. Make sure you read the label so you know exactly how much sugar you're eating.

How free sugars can add up



Glass of orange juice

12g

+



Can of soft drink

35g

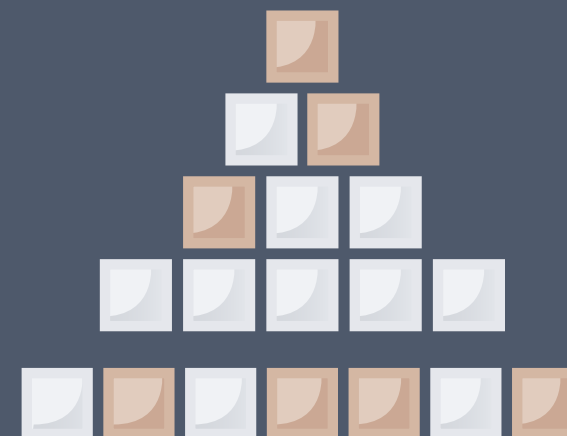
+



Bar of chocolate

25g

=72g



=30g

(or seven cubes of sugar)

Recommended daily intake

Quick changes

Cut back on sugar

- Add less sugar to your tea or coffee. Start by reducing it by one teaspoon at a time.
- If you struggle to finish a meal without something sweet, swap sugary desserts for fruit salad.
- Breakfast cereals often have lots of sugar added to them. Look for a low-sugar version and add fresh fruit.

High in free sugars

Cola drink



No free sugars



diet cola

Fruit yoghurt



plain yoghurt,
fresh fruit

Orange juice



fruit salad

Porridge, with milk and honey



porridge with milk and fruit

“I would eat ice cream every other day. I used to love it.”

Now I might have a little ice cream, maybe once a month.”

Sulekahn, age 70

Cutting down on salt

Eating too much salt can lead to high blood pressure which increases the risk of heart and circulatory diseases. Many of us need to reduce the amount of salt we have in our diets. Adults should not eat more than six grams of salt a day, which is about one level teaspoon.

You may think of salt as what you sprinkle onto food, but most of the salt we eat has already been added to our food before we buy it.

Ready-made foods like bread, cooking sauces and microwavable meals might not taste salty like a packet of crisps, but they often have a lot of hidden salt. Take a good look at the label (page 42) to find out.

Eating less salt is just one part of eating a balanced diet and maintaining a healthy blood pressure. It's also important to keep to a healthy weight, eat more fruit and veg, drink less alcohol and be more active.

Sodium

You might see 'sodium' on a food label, rather than 'salt'. Sodium is another way of talking about the amount of salt in food but it's measured differently to salt. You need to multiply the sodium number by 2.5 to work out what the salt content is.

4g salt = 1.6g sodium

Good to know:

There are many different types of salt available like rock salt, sea salt, pink Himalayan salt and unbleached salt. They all contain the same amount of sodium as table salt, so are equally as bad for your heart.



Quick changes

Cut back on salt

Our taste buds get used to salt over time. If you suddenly get rid of salt, food can seem bland. As you gradually reduce your salt intake, your taste buds will get used to it and you'll learn to enjoy a less salty flavour.

Try these tips:

- use herbs and spices to flavour your food instead of salt
- keep salt away from your table
- taste your food before you reach for the shaker.



Good to know:

There are low-salt food substitutes that can be useful for eating less sodium. They will not help you kick the habit of eating salty foods, though. So, it's still a better idea to eat less salt. Check with your doctor before using these salt alternatives, as they contain potassium which is not suitable for some people with existing health conditions.

Hidden Salt

Watch out for hidden salt. Lots of foods do not taste salty but still contain a lot of salt. These can even include sweet foods like cakes and cereals. Prepared foods like ready meals and takeaways often have very high amounts of salt in them.

Hidden salt can be found in foods, like:

Condiments and sauces



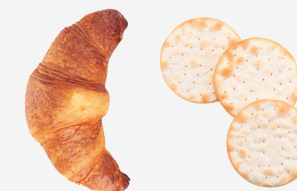
Processed and red meats



Preserved foods



Savoury and sweet foods



Drinking less alcohol

No alcoholic drink is healthy. If you do drink, you need to make sure you're not drinking more than 14 units a week. This should be spread over three or more days. Saving your weekly units for a big night out is just as bad for your health.

14 units is the same as:



Six pints of 4% beer



Six medium glasses (175ml) of 13% wine

Alcoholic drinks are high in calories. These calories can add up leading to weight gain. Having excess weight increases your chances of developing heart and circulatory diseases. Drinking less and changing what you drink can help you maintain a healthy weight.

Drinking too much alcohol can also lead to high blood pressure, some cancers, stroke and damage to your liver. If you choose to drink, there are easy ways to make sure you're drinking within the recommended amounts.

How many units are in your glass?



Large glass of wine 250ml (12%)

Three units



Pint of lager/beer/cider (5.2%)

Three units







Single shot of spirits 25ml (40%)



One unit



Quick changes

Cut back on alcohol

Instead of drinking pints  →  drink a half pint or bottled beer

Swap a large glass of red wine  →  for a small glass

Instead of a large glass of white wine  →  mix a small glass with soda water to make a spritzer

Instead of a double measure spirit with a mixer  →  choose a single measure with diet mixers

Good to know:

Look into lower strength alcohol. 'Low-alcohol drinks' refer to drinks which have an 'alcoholic strength by volume' (ABV) between 0.5% and 1.2%. Choosing lower strength alternatives means you have fewer units of alcohol per drink and are more likely to stay within the guidelines. They also tend to have fewer calories.

Non-alcoholic drinks

What we drink can affect our health just as much as the food we eat. You might be getting a lot of your sugar and fat from what you drink.

Energy drinks, hot drinks, juices, smoothies, squash and flavoured waters often contain added sugar.

Avoid adding syrups, sugar or whipped cream to coffees or hot chocolate. These all add sugar and saturated fat to your order and you can end up drinking as many calories as you might get in a slice of cake. Ask for sugar-free syrup options, skimmed milk and order a small size.



Flavoured latte



Cola drink



1.5 litre bottle of flavoured water

Quick changes

Drink swaps to cut back on sugar and fat



Flavoured latte with whole milk and sugar

latte with skimmed milk, no sugar

black coffee with skimmed milk, no sugar



Cola or fizzy drink



sugar-free cola or fizzy drink



water



Hot chocolate, syrup, whole milk and whipped cream

hot chocolate with whole milk, sugar-free syrup, no cream

hot chocolate with sugar-free syrup, skimmed milk, no cream

Build good habits

In this section we will cover:

- What a portion is and how to get it right 39
- Understanding food labels 42
- Eating out 46
- Home-cooking tips 48
- Food shopping 50
- Keeping costs down 52

What a portion is and how to get it right

Eating the right amount of food is just as important as having a balanced diet. If you're struggling with your weight, your portion sizes could be the reason why.

Bigger portion sizes can mean that you end up eating more calories than you need. Even if you're eating healthy foods, you can still have too much of a good thing. Getting portion sizes right is an important part of eating well and keeping to a healthy weight.

Everyone is different, so the amount of food you need to eat will vary. This depends on how old you are, whether you're male or female and how active you are. This can make knowing what you should be serving yourself confusing.

In the UK there are specific portion guidelines for:

- fruit and vegetables (see page 12)
- fish (see page 16)
- red and processed meats (see page 17).

For other foods, an easy way to size up portions for you is to use your hand as a guide. The portion size will vary with the size of your hand.

Quick changes

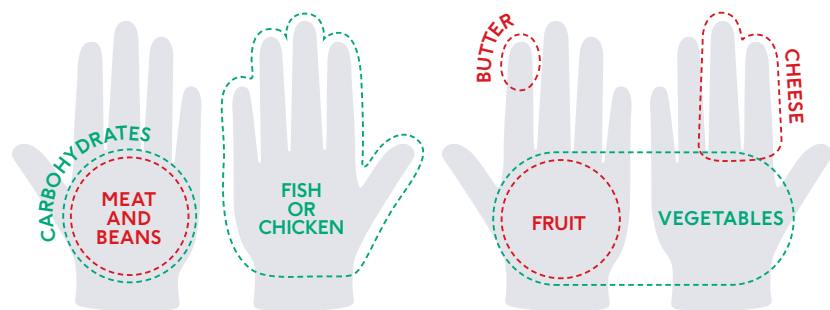
Tips to help keep your portion sizes on track

- Eat off smaller plates.
- Only cook what you need. Have freezer bags or storage tubs so you can save it for another day.
- Measure out your food before you cook it.

Packaged foods

When we look at packets, it's easy to think of it as one serving, regardless of the size of the pack. Packaged foods will usually have the portion size written on the packet, but it's often more than one portion especially if it's a larger pack.

Handy guide to portions



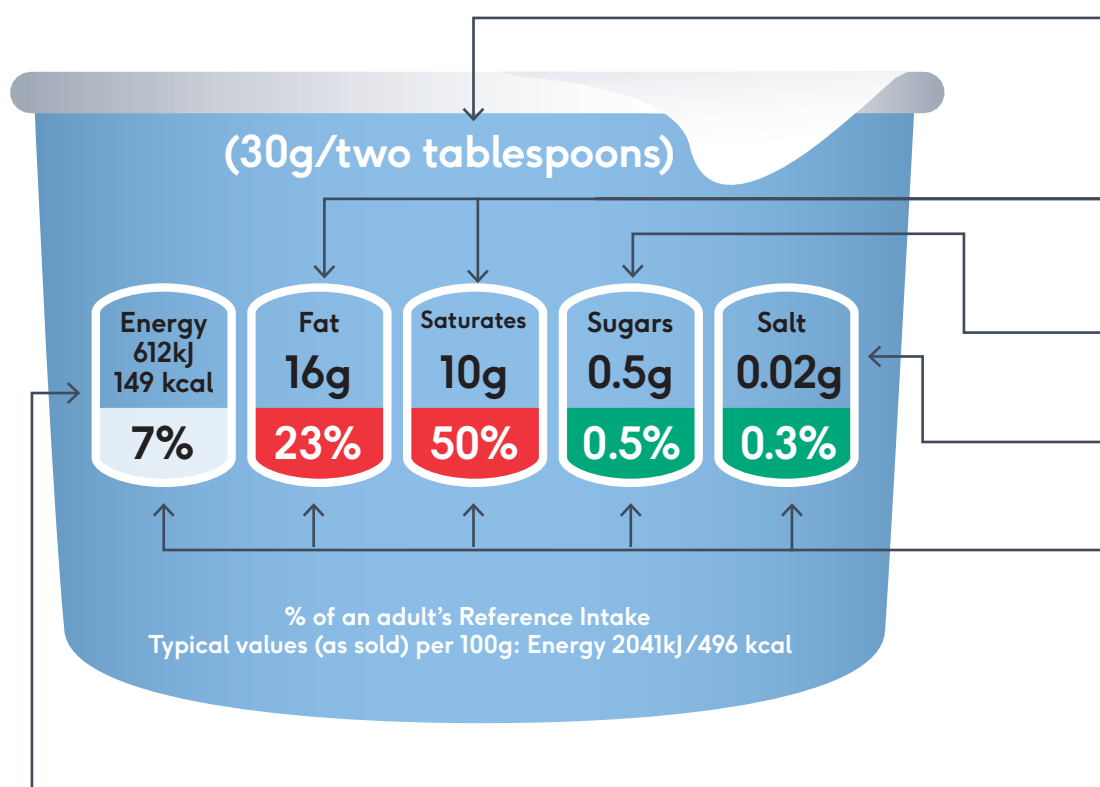
“Measuring portion sizes can be done using household items like spoons and cups, but an easier way is to just use your hand.”

Tracy Parker, Senior Dietitian, BHF

“I get those little freezer bags. Then when you open cheese or whatever, you can put half in the freezer straight away. You eat less of it if it's not in the fridge.”

Shirley, age 52

Understanding food labels



Portion size

This is often written in brackets at the top of the food label. It's the manufacturer's recommendation for one portion of the product. The % Reference Intake (RI) is worked out based on this portion size.

Fat and saturates

Fat tells you how much total fat is in the food. 'Saturates' is another word for saturated fat.

Sugars

This is how much total sugar is in a food, both natural and added.

Salt

This is how much salt is in a product.

Reference Intake (RI)

These are the recommended maximum daily amounts of energy and nutrients you need for a healthy, balanced diet. % RI tells you how much of the reference intake the portion size provides. The colour coding is based on the amount of nutrients in 100g of the food (see page 44).

Energy

The terms kJ (kilojoules) and kcal (kilocalories) tell you how much energy is in a food product.

Good to know:

Portion sizes given on a pack may be less than you'd usually eat. If you have more than the portion, you end up consuming more calories, fat, saturated fat, salt or sugar than you realise.

Once you work out how food labels and ingredient lists work, it can help you make healthier choices.

Most packaged foods use colour-coded nutritional labels. Red shows that something has a lot of salt, sugar, saturated fat or calories. Try to eat mainly green and amber labelled foods.

If you cannot see a colour-coded label, you can read the nutritional information on the back of the packet instead. Using the food label card below will help you work out what's high (red), medium (amber) or low (green). You can then compare them with other options and make a healthier choice.

	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salts
Low Healthier choice	3g or less	1.5g or less	5g or less	0.3g or less
Med OK most of the time	3.1g to 17.5g	1.6g to 5g	5.1g to 22.5g	0.3g to 1.5g
High Just occasionally	More than 17.5g	More than 5g	More than 22.5g	More than 1.5g

All measures per 100g

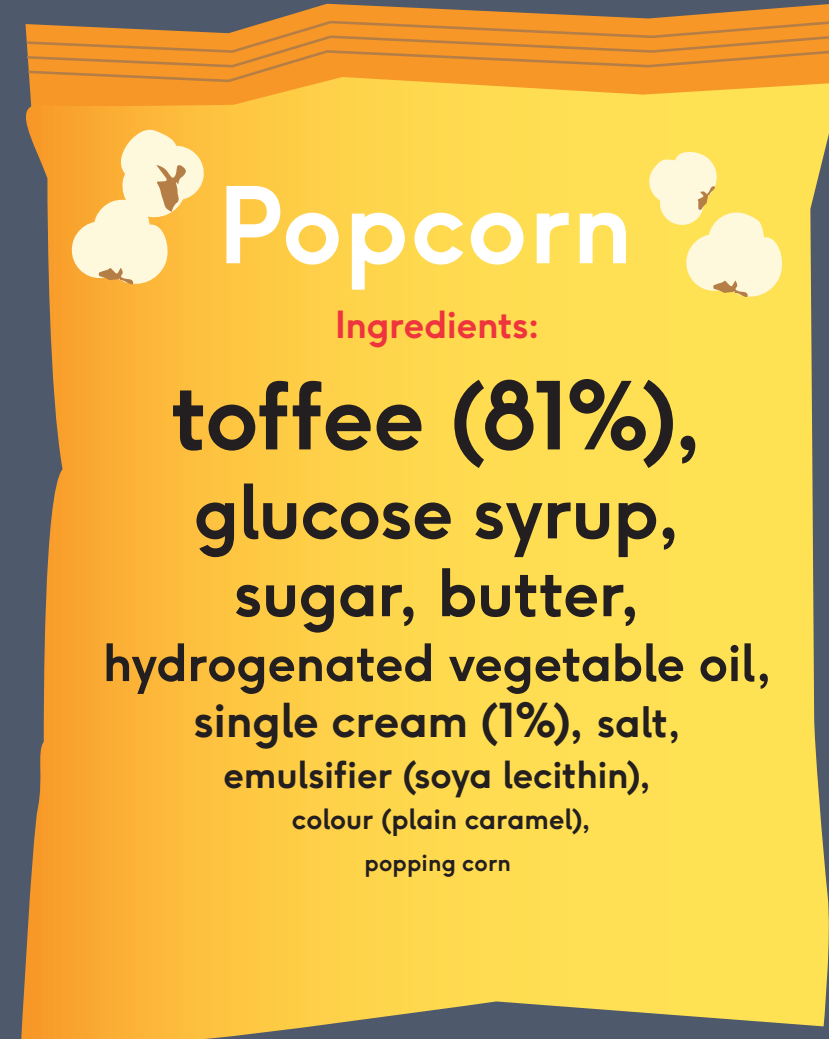


You can also read the ingredients list. Ingredients are listed in order from the biggest amount to the smallest.

Ingredients lists

All packaged foods will have a list of the ingredients in the food on the packet.

The ingredients list will let you know if there's added salt and sugar in the food you're buying. If an ingredient is high up on the list, it means there's a lot of it in the food. If it's near the bottom of the list, it means there's not much in there.



Eating out

Eating at a cafe, restaurant or ordering a takeaway means you cannot see how your food's being made. This makes it tricky to know if what you're eating is healthy.

Compared with meals prepared and eaten at home, food you order tends to be larger, higher in calories and often loaded with added salt, fat and sugar. Some takeaways and restaurants now list the nutritional information on their menus, which helps you make a healthier choice. Here are some other top tips to remember when eating out:

- Choose chicken or fish instead of fatty red meats like sausages and salami.
- Look for foods that have been baked, steamed or grilled, not fried.
- Swap your usual portion size for the next one down. Turn a large into a medium and a medium into a small.
- Change your dishes. It's usually not a problem to replace chips with salad or vegetables. You can also ask for no extra cheese, butter or oil or to get the sauce on the side.

"I fill half my plate with salad."

Rangit, age 80

Quick changes

Takeaway swaps

Unhealthy options



Large, stuffed crust, meat toppings and garlic bread

Healthy options



small or medium, thin base, vegetable toppings



Onion fried rice, lamb korma
chicken pakora, peshwari naan,
poppadoms



plain rice, chapati,
tandoori chicken, side salad,
saag aloo



Large, lamb doner, garlic sauce,
chilli sauce (no salad)



small, chicken shish
(with salad)

Home-cooking tips

You do not have to be a good cook or spend hours in the kitchen to eat healthily.

Microwaving

A great option if you're trying to heat up veg or sauces quickly. Microwaving food does not add any extra calories if you do not add oils or fats. It's quick, easy and keeps washing up to a minimum. Try not to rely on ready meals though, as they're often very high in salt, sugar and fat.

Ready meals

If you're looking for ready-made options, most supermarkets have healthy eating ranges. Check the front of pack traffic light labels to choose the healthiest option and serve with extra vegetables or salad.

Salads

Quick and easy, just toss everything together and go. You can experiment with different ingredients to make salads more filling. Do not forget to add some pasta, grains or potatoes for your carbs and watch the sugar levels on store-bought dressings. Add protein like nuts, beans, chicken or tinned fish to help you feel full.

Meal planning

Planning ahead is the best thing you can do if you're trying to eat more healthily. You can save time and help yourself stock up with healthy options by batch cooking soups, stews and freezing extra portions. Or, you can cook larger meals and use the leftovers the next day by adding more vegetables.

If you're trying to eat more veg but do not know where to start, check out our tips in the fruit and vegetables section on page 12.



“I used to find it hard to fit in enough veg. Now I always have a bit of frozen veg with dinner. It only takes a few minutes in the microwave.”

Shirley, age 52

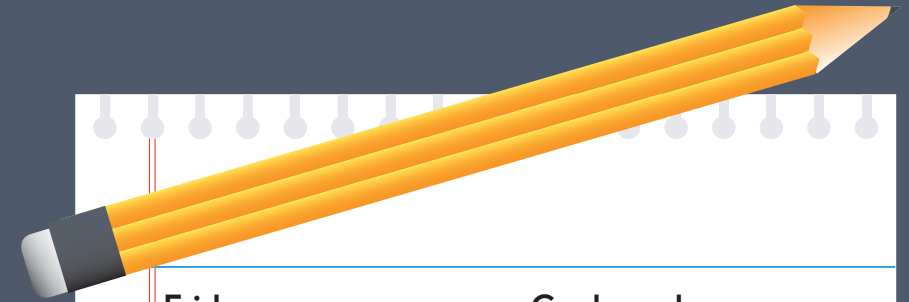
Food shopping

By filling your kitchen cupboards with good choices, you'll set yourself up to follow a healthy, balanced diet.

- Make a list before you go shopping so that you know you're buying what you need for healthy meals.
- If you go shopping when you're hungry or thirsty you'll be much more tempted to buy unhealthy foods.
- If you're worried that fresh food will not keep long enough, frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables are just as nutritious as fresh. Try to buy the varieties that do not have added fat, salt or sugar.
- Watch out for special offers on treat foods unless they're products you planned to buy.
- Choose tinned fruit in juice, tinned vegetables in water and tinned fish in water or oil rather than brine.

"When it comes to fruit and veg, I buy what's in season or on special offer."

Shirley, age 52



Fridge	Cupboard
<input type="checkbox"/> low-fat milk	<input type="checkbox"/> olive/rapeseed oil
<input type="checkbox"/> yoghurts	<input type="checkbox"/> baked beans
<input type="checkbox"/> eggs	<input type="checkbox"/> tinned pulses
<input type="checkbox"/> spread	<input type="checkbox"/> tinned tomatoes
<input type="checkbox"/> unsweetened juice	<input type="checkbox"/> canned fish in water
<input type="checkbox"/> reduced fat cheese	<input type="checkbox"/> tinned sweetcorn
<input type="checkbox"/> fresh fruit	<input type="checkbox"/> tinned fruit
<input type="checkbox"/> fresh vegetables	<input type="checkbox"/> tomato puree
Freezer	<input type="checkbox"/> dried herbs
<input type="checkbox"/> wholegrain breads	<input type="checkbox"/> ground spices
<input type="checkbox"/> frozen vegetables	<input type="checkbox"/> dried fruit
<input type="checkbox"/> fish fillets	<input type="checkbox"/> pasta and rice
<input type="checkbox"/> lean meats	<input type="checkbox"/> noodles
	<input type="checkbox"/> porridge oats

Keeping costs down

Eating healthily does not have to be expensive. You can enjoy some of your favourite meals without spending more than you'd like to.

Online

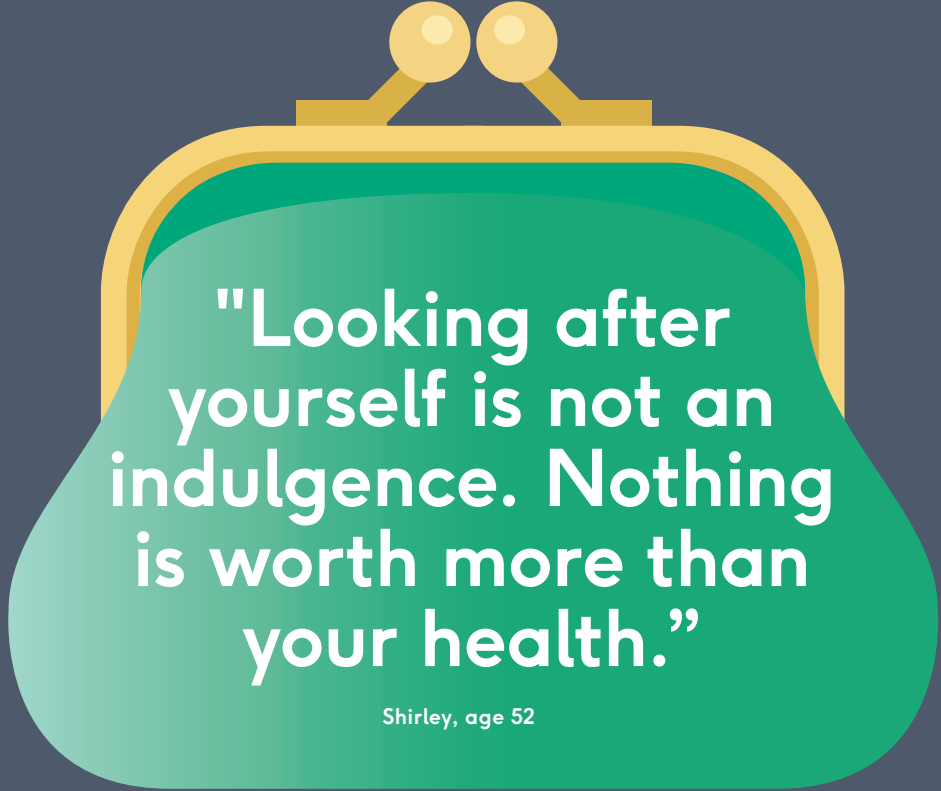
- Online shopping. This helps you find the cheapest options by comparing different shops and only ordering what you have on your list.

In the supermarket

- Freezer-friendly. It's often cheaper to buy bigger packets of food. Break the large pack down into individual portions and freeze them.
- Supermarket. Own brand food is often cheaper than brand names for very similar products. It's also worth doing your research; other supermarkets may be cheaper than your usual choice.
- Seasonal fruit and vegetables. Try buying these as they're often cheaper.
- Special offers on less healthy foods. Avoid these as they often add to your grocery bill rather than saving money.

In the kitchen

- Add veg and pulses. Adding fruit, vegetables and pulses or beans to your meals will help bulk them out with healthy fibre and vitamins while making your food go further.
- Stick to your portions. Eating too much is a quick way to overspend. What we buy in supermarkets is not usually packaged into portions. Multibuy and offers like 'three for two' are not always healthy and mean you end up with too much food. To avoid overeating, measure out your food ahead of time and freeze leftovers.



"Looking after yourself is not an indulgence. Nothing is worth more than your health."

Shirley, age 52

For more support

If you'd like more information on eating better or living with a heart or circulatory condition, visit the following websites:

- BHF nutrition. bhf.org.uk/nutrition
- NHS Live Well. nhs.uk/live-well

How to order or download our booklets

We make a number of booklets on heart and circulatory conditions, tests and treatments. To order or download your free booklet, scan the QR code or visit bhf.org.uk/publications.



Our services

Heart Helpline

bhf.org.uk/helpline or call 0808 802 1234 (freephone) on weekdays from 9am to 5pm (excluding bank holidays).

Talk to our experienced nurses who are here to help answer your questions or concerns about heart and circulatory diseases.

Our online community

bhf.org.uk/ouronlinecommunity

Connect with other people affected by heart and circulatory conditions.

RevivR

bhf.org.uk/revivr

Many of us will witness a cardiac arrest in our lifetime. Be ready for that day with RevivR, our fast, free and easy-to-use online training course.

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Heart attacks that strike without warning, strokes that shatter futures, newborn babies born with broken hearts. These are just some of the cruelties of heart and circulatory diseases. And the reality is, there is so much more for science to discover before we can beat the world's biggest killers.

That's why the British Heart Foundation exists. Funding research is how we change the game. And we all have a role to play. The tools we have at our disposal today, from heart transplants and pacemakers to statins and portable defibrillators, are all down to research. Research made possible by people like you, funding people like us.

When we join forces, we can make the impossible possible. We can take the best and brightest ideas from scientists' minds and help turn them into treatments you can get at your GP. We can make theories on pages jump into reality. Research can save your life and your family's lives. But without you? It all stops tomorrow.

Medical breakthroughs do not just happen. Driven by love, your donations and the awe-inspiring research we fund, we make them happen together.

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