



Eat Better

to reduce your risk of heart
and circulatory diseases



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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 really affects how you feel and how healthy you are. Eating the right sort of foods in the right amount is one of the most important things you can do for your overall health. It can reduce your risk of developing heart and circulatory diseases. If you already have a heart or circulatory disease, eating better can help protect your heart from further problems.

We help you understand a healthy approach to food and how to get into good eating habits. It's about taking your own health and wellbeing seriously and finding ways to make a balanced diet work for you. Eating healthily can be tasty, simple and doesn't have to take extra time. It's about making gradual, long-term changes and enjoying the food you eat.

“You don't 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

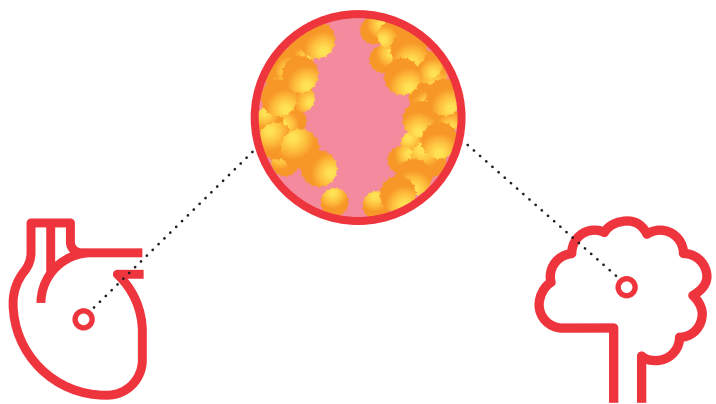
The benefits of a healthy balanced diet

Eating better over time can reduce your risk of heart and circulatory diseases, just as an unhealthy diet increases your risk.

Heart and circulatory diseases, such as coronary heart disease, stroke and vascular dementia kill 1 in 4 people in the UK. Eating unhealthily can lead to obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol or Type 2 diabetes. All of these conditions can increase your risk of developing heart and circulatory diseases, and are known as risk factors.

These risk factors can damage the arteries and make it easier for fatty deposits to build up. If the arteries that carry blood to your heart get damaged and clogged, it can lead to a heart attack. If this happens in the arteries that carry blood to your brain it can lead to a 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 the artery walls making it difficult for blood to flow through them. This increases 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 are five 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 consistently high blood pressure. High blood pressure increases your risk of a heart attack or stroke, find out more about salt on [page 30](#) and alcohol on [page 34](#).

Being overweight

Being overweight puts a strain on your heart and circulatory system. Eating better will 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, feel stronger and healthier.

GO bhf.org.uk/myweight

Now is always the best time to start

Here are some tips to get you started:



Start now

When it comes to making a change, it's important just to make a start. Now is always the best time.



Start 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.



Give it time

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



Achievable goals

You won't be able to change your entire lifestyle in one day. Just 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
- Fruits and vegetables 12
- Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other 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 isn't about cutting out foods – it's about eating a wide 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 fat, sugar and salt. It's about getting the right balance.

The Eatwell Guide shows the types of food and drinks we should choose and in what proportions to have a healthy balanced diet.

How much of each food type you eat also matters. Base your meals on high fibre starchy foods (like brown rice, whole wheat pasta and potatoes with their skins) and plenty of fruit and vegetables. Only have foods high in sugar and fat occasionally.

All-day ideas for balanced meals:

Breakfast



Egg & tomato wrap

Lunch



Stir fry ginger beef

Dinner



Chicken & veg traybake

Eatwell Guide

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy 1046kJ 250kcal	Fat 3.0g	Saturated 1.3g	Sugars 34g	Salt 0.9g
13%	LOW 4%	LOW 7%	HIGH 38%	MED 15%

of an adult's reference intake
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

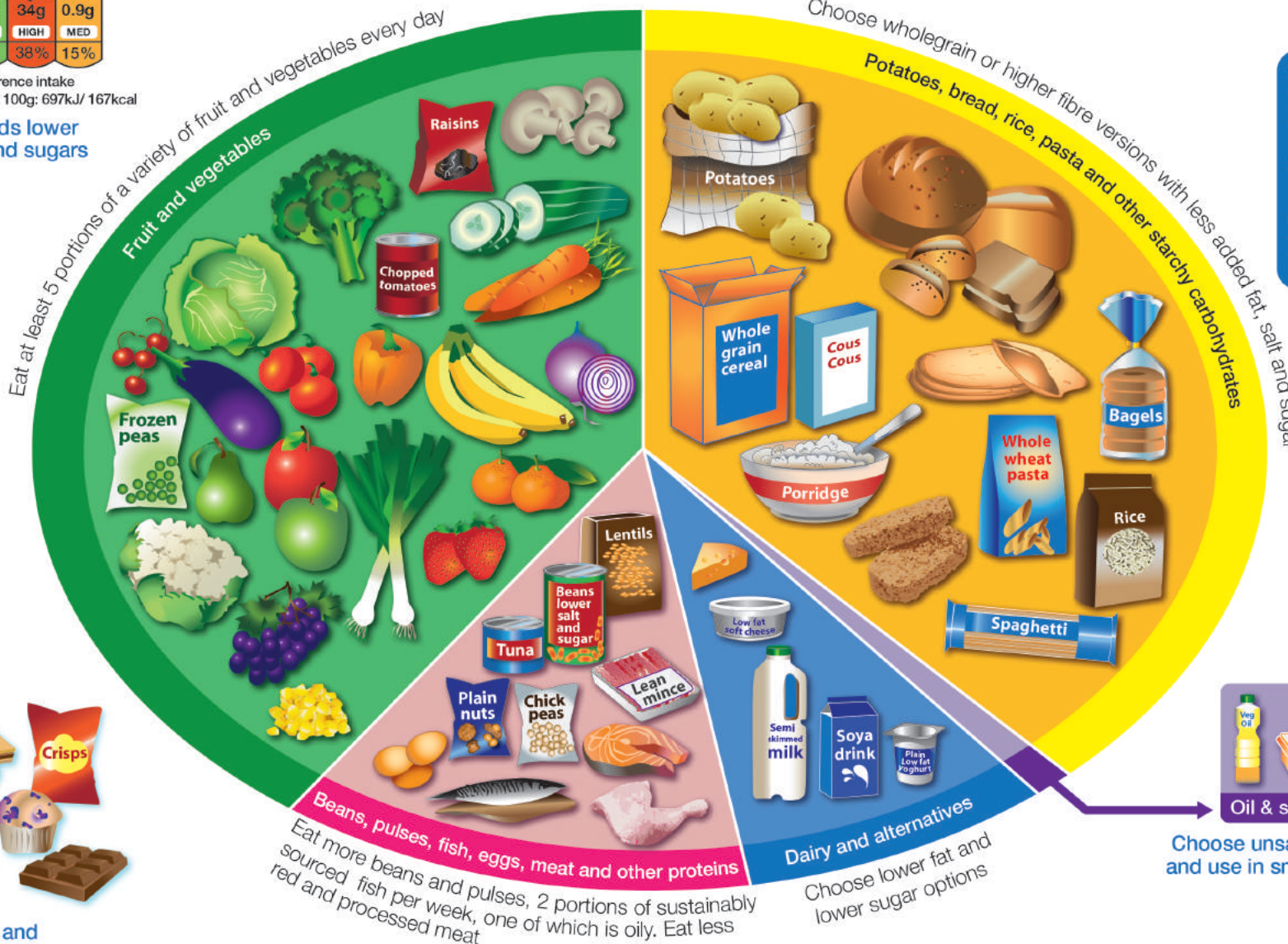
Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars

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.



Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.

Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.



Eat less often and in small amounts

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

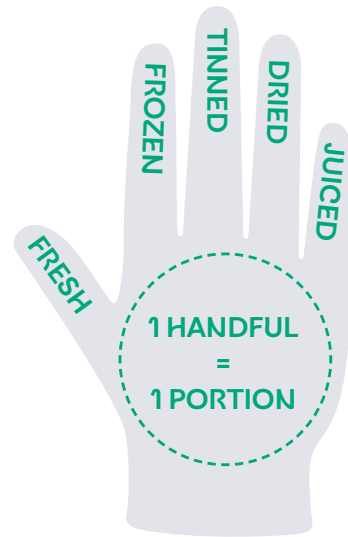
Fruit and vegetables

Eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables is really important to lowering your risk of developing heart and circulatory diseases.

Fruit and vegetables are a good source of vitamins, minerals and dietary 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 dinner.
- Cut 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 to hand.
- If your family doesn't like vegetables, set yourselves 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



7 strawberries



1 whole pear



9 cherries

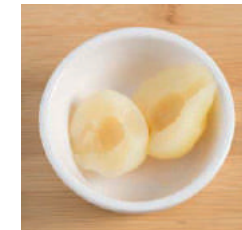
Fruit juice, dried and tinned fruit



1 heaped tablespoon of dried fruit



1 small glass (150ml) of fruit juice



3 heaped tablespoons of tinned fruit

Vegetables



8 broccoli florets



2 heaped handfuls of salad



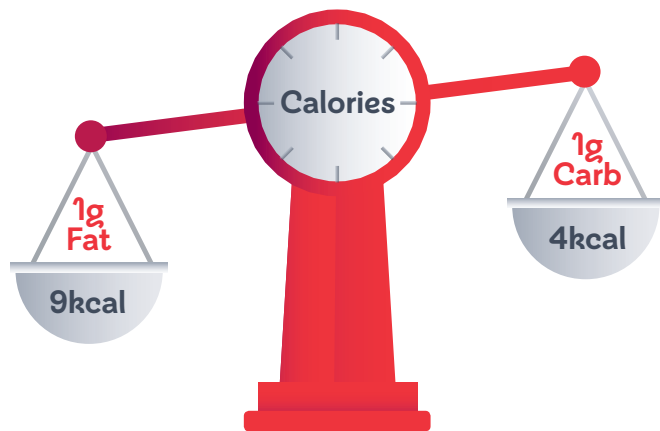
3 heaped tablespoons of carrots

Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and starchy carbohydrates

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

These foods are your body's main source of energy and you should try to eat some at every meal. Choose wholegrain foods as they have a higher fibre content. This means they are digested more slowly and are more filling.

There is no truth to the claims that carbohydrates are fattening. Gram for gram they contain less than half the calories of fat.

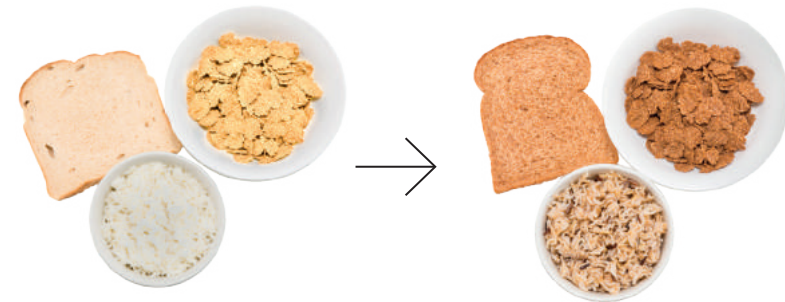


However, not all carbohydrates are the same. Sugars are also a type of carbohydrate. Those found naturally in milk and fruit are healthy for us. But the sugars we need to cut down on are those added to food and drinks such as cakes, biscuits, sweets and sugary drinks. Too much of these foods can make you gain weight, which can increase your risk of heart and circulatory diseases. To read more on sugars go to [page 26](#).

Easy changes:

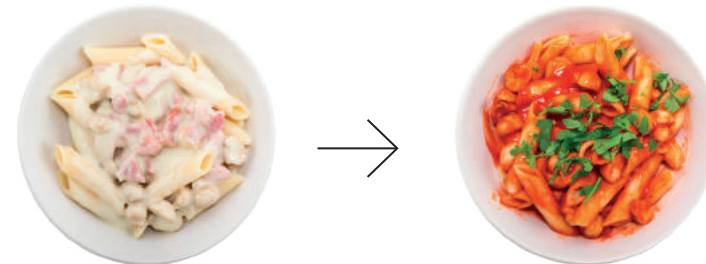
Switch processed for wholegrain

Processed carbohydrates like white bread, white pasta and white rice don't have as much fibre or nutrients as the wholegrain versions. Try switching these foods for wholegrain alternatives.



Avoid creamy or cheesy sauces

Foods like cheese, mayonnaise and creamy sauces will add extra calories and make them less healthy.



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 helps your body grow and repair itself.

You should aim to eat a variety of proteins such as:

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.

Eating oily fish that are high in omega 3, like salmon, sardines and mackerel as part of a balanced diet can help protect your heart health.

Beans and pulses

Beans and pulses are naturally low in fat and high in fibre, so are a filling protein choice. They're an important protein source if you don't eat meat, fish or dairy products. They're also a healthy and cheaper alternative if you want to eat less meat.

Nuts and seeds

These are high in fibre and contain healthy unsaturated fats. But make sure you eat no more than a handful a day as they are still high in calories. Choose the unsalted varieties.

Eggs

There is no limit on how many eggs you can eat. But it is best to cook them without fat, such as boiled or poached.

Quorn

Quorn is made from an edible fungus and has a meat-like texture. It is naturally low in saturated fat and high in fibre. It contains more fibre than an equivalent portion of baked beans, wholemeal bread or brown rice.

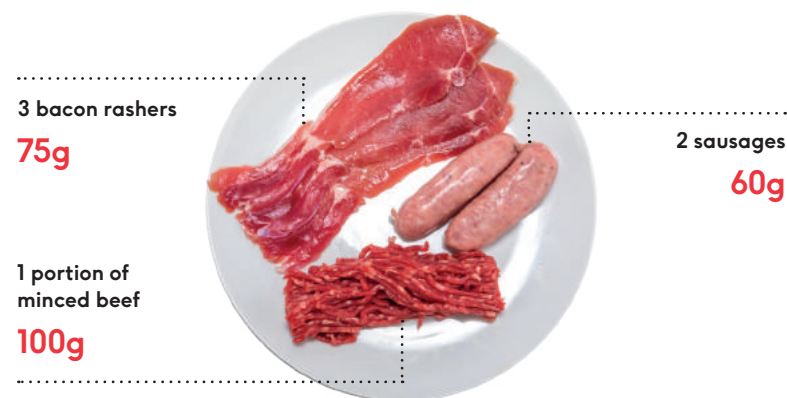
Meat

Some types of meat are high in saturated fat. The type of meat you choose and the way you cook it can make a difference:

- Choose leaner meats where possible and avoid adding extra fat or oil when cooking - grill instead of frying.
- 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.



Eat less processed meat

Some meats are high in saturated fat, which can raise your blood cholesterol. Try swapping to lean white meats like chicken and turkey, fish and vegetable proteins, such as beans and pulses.

Type	Avoid	Choose
Pork	Cooked pork belly joint with fat	Cooked lean pork leg joint
Beef	Fried rump steak with fat	Grilled lean rump steak
Poultry	Fried chicken breast in breadcrumbs	Grilled chicken breast without skin

Plant-based diets

A plant-based diet doesn't necessarily mean no meat. It is a diet that focuses on vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, legumes and fruits, but with few or no animal products. Plant-based diets, including vegetarian and vegan diets, are linked with many health benefits, such as a healthy weight, a lower risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart and circulatory diseases and some cancers.

But 'plant-based' does not automatically mean 'healthy'. Replacing animal foods with unhealthy plant foods like fruit juices, refined grains, potatoes or chips and sweetened foods and drinks don't lower your risk. Like any diet, the health benefits are dependent on the quality of the diet.

A plant-based diet may not suit everyone, but we do recommend eating more fruit, vegetables, pulses and wholegrains whether you eat animal products or not. Following a Mediterranean-style diet, which includes plenty of fruit, veg, pulses and fish, and only small amounts of meat, may be easier to follow than one that has no animal foods at all. The proportions of different food groups in the Mediterranean diet follow the same balance of food groups in the Eatwell guide.

Good to know:

Eating foods high in soluble fibre can help lower your cholesterol levels. Good examples are oats, baked beans, kidney beans, lentils and chickpeas.

Easy changes:

Cut back on red meat

Try swapping some 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. Or go one step further and try one meat-free day a week.

Chunky vegetable chilli

Serves: 6

Prep time: 10 min.

Cooking time: 1hr 10 min.



Mushroom and cauliflower frittata

Serves: 2

Prep time: 15 min.

Cooking time: 15 min.

 bhf.org.uk/recipefinder

Dairy and alternatives

This includes milk and milk products, like cheese, cream, yoghurt, fromage frais, and soya, rice and nut-based milk alternatives.

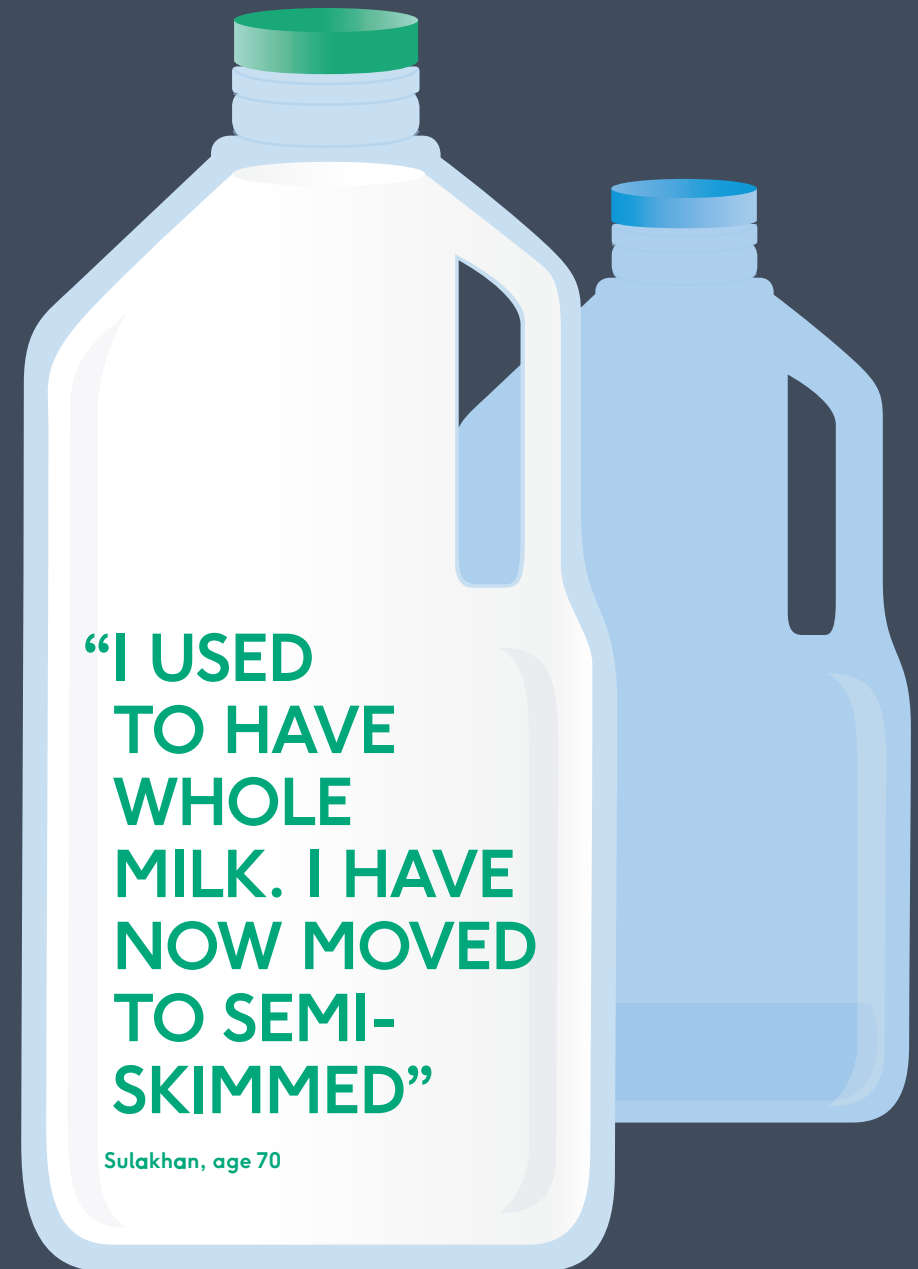
Dairy foods are a good source of protein and calcium which is important for strong bones and teeth. However, the fat content in dairy foods varies, and they're often high in saturated fat.

Easy changes:

- **Milk** Go for semi skimmed, 1% or skimmed.
- **Yoghurt** Go for natural or low fat yoghurts with no added sugar.
- **Cheese** Choose reduced fat options like reduced fat cheddar or processed cheese.
- **Cream** Choose single instead of double cream.

Good to know:

Some yoghurts, puddings and flavoured milks have extra sugar and fat added to them. Avoid having these every day and only have them as an occasional treat.



Oils and Spreads

Eating too much of the wrong fats can increase your cholesterol, which will increase your risk of heart and circulatory diseases.

As part of keeping your heart healthy, there are some types of fat you should cut right down on, but there are others that form an important part of your diet. The ones you need to try to avoid are saturated fat and trans fat. These can raise the level of bad cholesterol in your blood, which may increase your risk of heart and circulatory diseases. Replacing these fats with healthier unsaturated fats can help lower your cholesterol.

The different types of fats:

Monounsaturated 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. Hard margarines.

 bhf.org.uk/fats



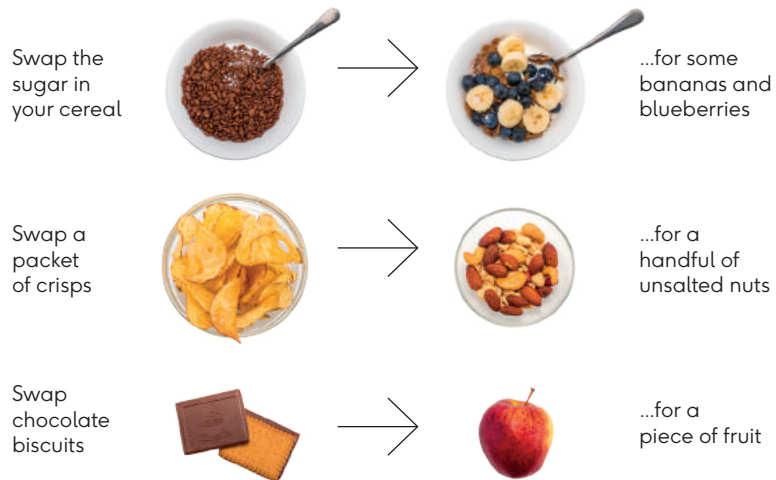
“REALLY OUR FOOD AT HOME IS JUST THE SAME, WE JUST HAVE LESS SWEET THINGS, LESS FRIED THINGS, AND HAVE SMALLER PORTIONS.”

Sulakhan, age 70

Foods high in sugar, salt and fat

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

They don't have the vitamins, fibre or protein that other food groups do and they don't provide a steady amount of energy either. It's fine to enjoy these types of food as a treat once in a while, but not as an everyday habit.



“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
- Eating out 38
- Home-cooking tips 40

Cutting back on sugar

Eating too much sugary food can lead you to put on weight. Being overweight or obese makes you 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 still keep an eye on how much sugar you're eating.

Foods like fruit, vegetables, grains and dairy contain natural sugars. These foods play a role in a healthy diet because they give us vitamins, minerals and fibre our bodies need.

We need to cut down on 'free sugars'. These are sugars added to junk food, some cereals and yoghurts, or naturally found in honey, syrups and fruit juices.

Good to know:

Some foods we think of as healthy are actually packed with sugar. Make sure you read the label so you know exactly how much sugar you're eating.

Different types of sugar to look out for:

- Sugar
- Brown sugar
- Malt sugar
- Dextrose
- Sucrose
- Maltose
- Organic sugar
- Dark muscavado
- Treacle
- Fructose
- Jaggery
- Honey
- Caster sugar
- Beet sugar
- Agave syrup
- Barley malt syrup
- Golden syrup
- Cane sugar
- Palm sugar
- Molasses
- Maple syrup
- Glucose
- Date syrup
- Cane juice

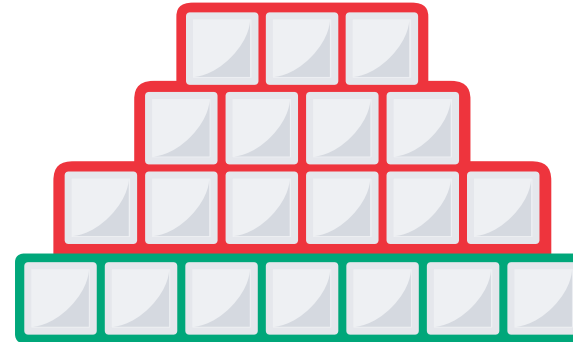
Average vs. recommended daily free sugars intake

On average we eat three times the recommended amount of free sugars every day.

Recommended daily intake = 30g or 7 cubes of sugar



Average daily intake = 90g or 21 cubes of sugar



Good to know:

Brown sugar and honey are not healthier than white sugar – they are just sugar in a different form.

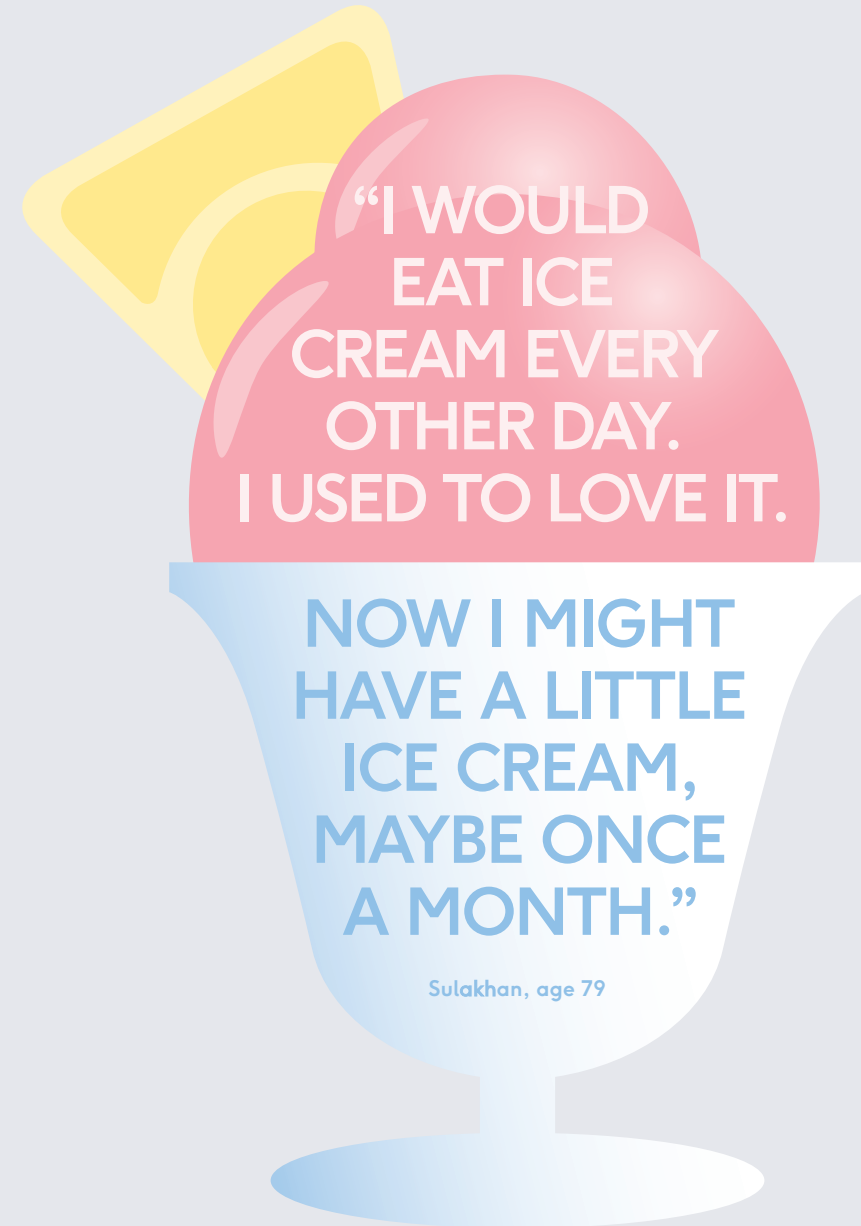
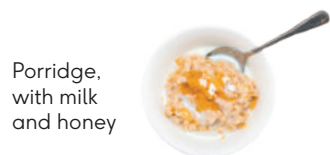
 bhf.org.uk/freesugars

Easy 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



Cutting down on salt

Eating too much salt can lead to high blood pressure which increases the risk of heart and circulatory diseases. Nearly everyone needs to reduce the amount of salt they have in their diet. **Adults shouldn't eat more than 6g of salt a day, which is about a level teaspoon.**

You may think of salt as what we 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 pizza, cooking sauces, microwavable meals as well as breads, cereals, biscuits and cakes might not taste salty the way a packet of crisps does, but they often have quite a lot of hidden salt. Take a good look at the label.

Good to know:

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

Sodium

Sometimes you might see 'sodium' on a food label, rather than 'salt'. Sodium is just another way of talking about the salt content of food. It is 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

 bhf.org.uk/salt-animation



Easy changes:

Cut back on salt

Our taste buds get used to salt over time. If you suddenly cut salt, food can seem bland. But as you gradually reduce your salt intake, your taste buds will adjust 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.

Other ways to add flavour:



Good to know:

Reduced salt products can help you cut back on sodium, but they still taste salty so don't help you get used to less salty flavours. It's better to just get used to having less salt. Reduced salt alternatives are not suitable for some people with certain conditions, so check with your doctor before using these products.

Hidden Salt

Watch out for hidden salt. Lots of foods don't 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.

Condiments & sauces



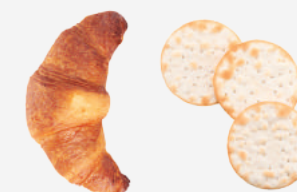
Processed & red meats



Preserved foods



Savoury & 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. And 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 equivalent to:



Alcoholic drinks are high in calories. These calories can quickly add up leading to weight gain. Being overweight increases your chances of developing heart and circulatory diseases. Drinking less and changing what you drink can really help if you're watching your weight.

Drinking too much alcohol can also lead to high blood pressure, some cancers, a 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%)

3 units



Pint of lager/beer/ cider (5.2%)

3 units

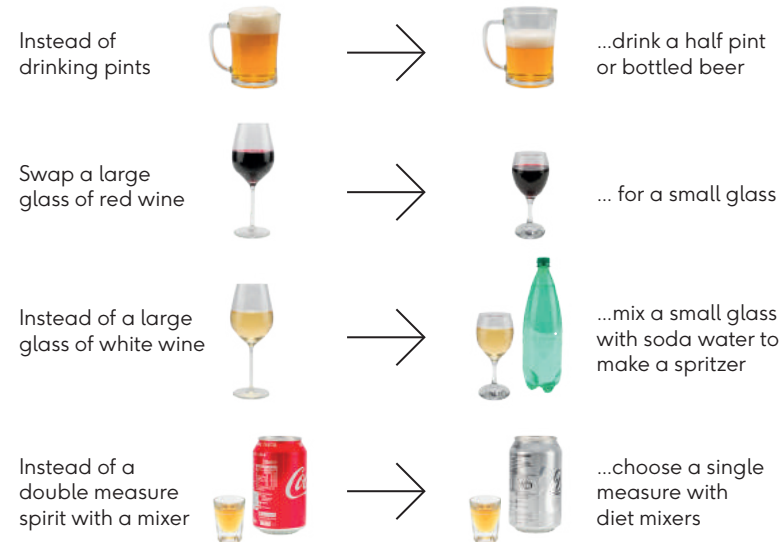


Single shot of spirits 25ml (40%)

1 unit

Easy changes:

Cut back on alcohol



Good to know:

Look into lower strength alcohol. 'Low-alcohol drinks' refers 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, so can be useful if you're watching your weight.

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 be drinking as many calories as would be in a slice of cake. Ask for sugar-free syrup options, skimmed milk and order a small size. Water is the best choice.

How much sugar is in a drink?



Good to know:

Pure, unsweetened fruit juice, vegetable juice and smoothies only ever count as one of your five-a-day, no matter how much you drink. This is because they are higher in sugar and calories but lower in fibre, compared to eating whole fruit and vegetables.

Easy changes:

Drink swaps to cut back on sugar and fat:



Eating out

Eating at a café or restaurant or ordering a takeaway can be a fun treat. But when you can't see how your food is being made, it's tricky to know if what you're eating is healthy.

Takeaways are often loaded with added salt, fat and sugar, so only eat them as an occasional treat. Some takeaways and restaurants now list the nutritional information on their menus, which helps you make a healthier choice. Here are some 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.

"I fill half my plate with salad"

Rangit, age 80

Easy 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 don't 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 doesn't add any extra calories as long as you don't add oils or fats. It's quick, easy and keeps washing up to a minimum. Try not to rely on ready meals though; they're often very high in salt, sugar and fat.

Ready meals

A lot of ready meals have added sugar, salt or fat. But if you read food labels carefully you can still find some healthier options. Many supermarkets have healthier ranges of ready meals.

Salads

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

If you're trying to eat more veg but don't 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

Build good habits

In this section we will cover:

- What is a portion and how to get it right 43
- What does 100 calories look like? 46
- Understanding food labels 48
- Food shopping 50
- Keeping costs down 52

What is a portion and how to get it right

Eating the right amount of food goes hand in hand with having a balanced diet. Often if you're struggling with your weight, your portion sizes could be the reason why.

Eating too much means you're eating more calories than you need. You need more of some foods and less of others. Eating too much or too little of any of the major food groups can be bad for your health.

There are recommended portion sizes for each food group. As everyone is different your recommended number of portions for each food will vary. This depends on how old you are, whether you're male or female, and how active you are.

We suggest daily portions for each food group in the table below based on a calorie intake for people who want to lose weight: **1500 kcal for women** and **1800 kcal for men**.

Food group	Daily portions (women)	Daily portions (men)
Fruit and vegetables	5 or more	5 or more
Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods	7	8
Milk and dairy foods	3	3
Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein	2	3
Spreading fats and oils	1	2

Easy changes:

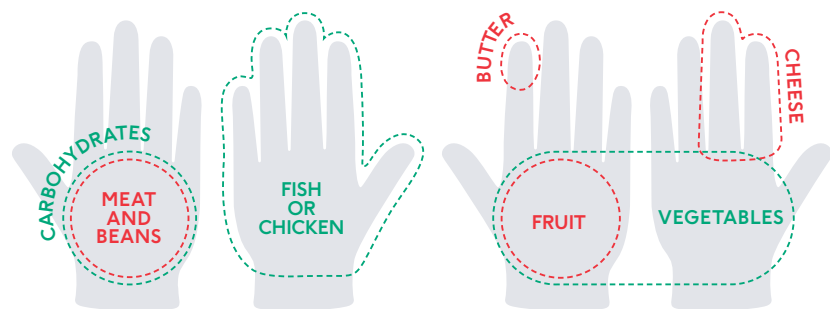
Here are some tips to help you stay on track:

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

Prepared foods

Prepared foods will usually have the portion size written on the packet, and it's often more than one portion. Portion distortion means that portion sizes are much bigger than they were 20 years ago. Make sure you know how much you're eating – keeping an eye on your portion sizes for fats, proteins and carbohydrates can really help you stick to a healthy weight.

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

GO bhf.org.uk/portionguide

What does 100 calories look like?

Unhealthy snacks



Chocolate brownie



Carrot cake



Chocolate



Hummus



Pork pie



Crisps



Scotch egg



Cheddar



Sausage roll

Healthy snacks

Choosing foods that are lower in calories will allow you to eat more and help you feel fuller for longer.



Bananas



Oranges



Blueberries



Broccoli



Strawberries



Olives



Peanuts



Peppers



Tomatoes

Understanding food labels

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

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

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

	FAT	SUGARS	SATURATES	SALTS
LOW Healthier choice	3g or less	5g or less	1.5g or less	0.3g or less
MED OK most of the time	3.1g to 17.5g	5.1g to 22.5g	1.6g to 5g	0.3g to 1.5g
HIGH Just occasionally	More than 17.5g	More than 22.5g	More than 5g	More than 1.5g

All measures per 100g



You can also read the ingredients list. Ingredients are listed in order from biggest amount to smallest. So the higher up in the list, then the more of that ingredient is in the food. This way you'll be able to see what's been added.



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 won't keep long enough, frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables are just as nutritious as fresh. Try to buy the varieties that don't have added fat, salt or sugar.
- Watch out for special offers on treat foods unless they're products you planned to buy.

“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"/> margarine/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 doesn't have to be expensive. You can enjoy some of your favourite meals without spending more than you'd like to.

Online

Go digital You can find lots of coupons and money-saving apps online. Find ones that cut the price of things you can make filling healthy meals with rather than unhealthy snacks.

Online shopping This helps you find the cheapest options by comparing different shops.

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.

Try buying seasonal fruit and vegetables, as they are often cheaper.

Avoid special offers on less healthy foods – it often adds 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 fast-track way to overspend. Often what we buy in supermarkets isn't packaged into portions. To avoid overeating, measure out your food ahead of time and freeze leftovers.



More support

We have plenty of information and support to help you live a healthy life and protect your heart health.



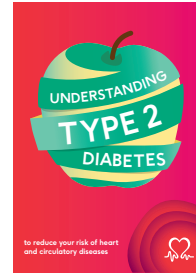
Understanding your Weight



Understanding Blood Pressure



Understanding Cholesterol



Understanding Type 2 Diabetes



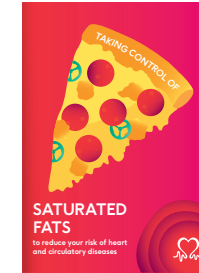
Taking Control of Alcohol



Taking Control of Salt



Taking Control of Sugar



Taking Control of Saturated Fats



Understanding Physical Activity



Understanding Smoking



Understanding Stress



Taking Control of Your Heart Health



Taking Control of Food Portions and Labels



Heart Matters Magazine

bhf.org.uk

Heart transplants. Clot busting drugs. Pacemakers.
Breakthroughs born from visionary medical research.
Research you fund with your donations.

Heart and circulatory diseases kill 1 in 4 people in Scotland.
They cause heartbreak on every street. But if research can invent
machines to restart hearts, fix arteries in newborn babies, build
tiny devices to correct heartbeats, and give someone a heart
they weren't born with – imagine what's next.

We fund research into all heart and circulatory diseases and
their risk factors. Heart attacks, heart failure, stroke, vascular
dementia, diabetes and many more. All connected, all under
our microscope. Our research is the promise of future
prevention, cures and treatments.

The promise to protect the people we love. Our children.
Our parents. Our brothers. Our sisters. Our grandparents.
Our closest friends.

You and the British Heart Foundation.
Together, we will beat heartbreak forever.

Beat heartbreak from  heart diseases  stroke  vascular dementia  diabetes