Contents

Why eating well is important 2

About healthy eating 8

Getting started 22

Have regular meals 32

Eat your five a day 34

Cut down on fat 44

Eat less salt 52

Eat more fish 58

Keep your eye on portion sizes 60

Swap your snacks 64

Think about drinks 66

Be a savvy shopper 72

Eat smart when eating out 78

Get planning 80

Resources from the BHF 96

Why is eating well important?

Eating well can improve your health and affect how you feel.

Healthy eating helps you to maintain a healthy weight and reduces your risk of diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. It can help to reduce your risk of developing coronary heart disease and some cancers. If you already have heart disease, eating well can help to protect your heart from further problems.

Healthy eating has many other benefits too. You may find you sleep better, have more energy and better concentration – and this all adds up to a healthier, happier you!

It can be simple too. Just follow our top ten tips to get started.

Top ten tips for eating well

1. Have regular meals
2. Eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day
3. Cut down on fat, especially saturated fat
4. Eat less salt
5. Swap meat for fish
6. Keep an eye on portion sizes
7. Swap your snacks
8. Think about drinks
9. Be a savvy shopper
10. Eat smart when eating out

Facts about heart disease

Coronary heart disease is the most common form of heart disease among adults and the single biggest killer in the UK.

Coronary heart disease begins when your coronary arteries – the arteries that supply your heart muscle with oxygen-rich blood – become blocked or narrowed because of a build-up of fatty deposits.

In time, your arteries may become so narrow that they can't deliver enough oxygen-rich blood to your heart muscle. This can cause **angina** and symptoms can include chest pain or heaviness and discomfort.

If a piece of the fatty deposit in your artery breaks off, it may cause a blood clot to form. If this blood clot blocks the coronary artery, part of the heart will be starved of oxygen-rich blood and may become permanently damaged – this is a **heart attack**.

To learn more about your heart and how it works, go to **bhf.org.uk/knowyourheart** and play our interactive learning tool presented by Dr. Hilary Jones.

What increases your risk of heart disease?

A risk factor is something that increases your likelihood of getting a disease.

The main risk factors for coronary heart disease are:

- smoking
- high blood pressure
- high blood cholesterol
- physical inactivity
- being overweight or obese
- age (your risk increases as you get older)
- ethnic background (people from South Asian or black African backgrounds are at higher risk)
- having diabetes
- having a family history of coronary heart disease

The more risk factors you have, the more likely you are to develop coronary heart disease.

Even though you can't change all your risk factors, there is plenty you can do to reduce your risk and help protect your heart.

Stopping smoking, being more physically active, eating well and maintaining a healthy weight and blood pressure will all help you reduce your risk of developing coronary heart disease.

To learn more about changes you can make to reduce your risk of coronary heart disease and stroke, order our booklet *Keep your heart healthy* (code HIS25).

What if I need to lose weight?

Eating well may result in weight loss and it will definitely improve your heart health. However if you need specific advice about losing weight download or order our booklet *So you want to lose weight... for good* (code M2).

What is healthy eating?

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 no single foods you must eat or menus you need to follow to eat healthily. All foods can be included in a healthy diet. You just need to make sure you get the right balance.

The best way to understand it is to think of foods in food groups. We need lots of food from some food groups and less food from other groups. The eatwell plate shows you how much of what you eat should come from each food group. This covers everything you eat during the day, including snacks.

For a balanced diet you should try to eat:

- plenty of fruit and vegetables
- plenty of bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods – choose wholegrain varieties whenever you can
- some milk and dairy foods
- some meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein
- just a small amount of food and drink high in fat and/or sugar

You don't need to get always the balance right at every meal, but try to get it right over a longer time such as a whole day or week. **Try to choose foods that are lower in fat, salt and sugar when you can.**

HEARD ABOUT THE 'MEDITERRANEAN DIET'?

Research has shown that eating a 'Mediterranean style' diet can help keep your heart healthy. A typical Mediterranean diet has lots of vegetables, fruits, beans, cereals and wholegrain foods like wholegrain bread, pasta and rice.

It contains a moderate amount of fish, white meat and some low-fat dairy foods, and in some cases, nuts, along with smaller amounts of red meat and sweet desserts. Unsaturated fats like olive oil are used instead of saturated fats such as butter, lard or ghee.

The proportions of different food groups in the Mediterranean diet are the same as the balance of food groups recommended in the UK and you can use the eatwell plate to help you eat a Mediterranean style diet.

So let's look in more detail at how much we should be eating of the different food groups each day and why.

Fruit and vegetables

About a third of the food you eat should be made up of fruit and vegetables – and you should try to eat at least five portions of fruit and veg every day.

It's important to eat fruit and vegetables because there's evidence to show that people who eat more than **five portions** of fruit and veg a day have a lower risk of developing heart disease.

Fruit and vegetables also contain a variety of **vitamins and minerals** which your body needs to keep healthy. They are a good source of fibre which makes them filling to eat and will help keep your digestive system healthy.

Aim to eat at least **five portions** of fruit and vegetables every day. Try to choose a variety of fruit and vegetables over the day so that you can benefit from all the different nutrients they give you.

See page 34 for more details of what makes up a portion of fruit or veg

Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods

About a third of your plate should be starchy foods – this food group is your body's main source of energy and should be part of all meals. Choose a variety of different foods from this group, rather than having the same ones all the time.

As well as bread, rice, potatoes and pasta, this food group includes chapattis, naan, yam, plantain and cous cous. Choose **wholegrain versions** of these starchy foods whenever you can as they will contain more **fibre, vitamins and minerals.**

High fibre foods have many health benefits and can help keep your digestive system healthy. These foods also **provide energy** that is released slowly, making you feel fuller for longer and less likely to snack in between meals. This makes wholegrain foods a good choice if you are trying to lose weight.

MYTH BUSTER

Aren't starchy foods fattening?

Foods such as bread, rice and pasta often get a bad reputation for being fattening, but there's virtually no fat in them. The trick is not to add lots of fat when you're cooking or preparing them to eat. Bake, boil or steam starchy foods, rather than frying them. And avoid adding fat once they're cooked – for example don't add butter to potatoes or chappatis, or creamy sauces to pasta or rice.

Fibre and cholesterol

Eating foods high in a certain kind of fibre (soluble fibre) can also help reduce your cholesterol levels. Good examples are oats, pulses such as baked beans and kidney beans, lentils and chickpeas.

Use our portion advice on page 60 to guide you on how much starchy food you should eat

Milk and dairy foods

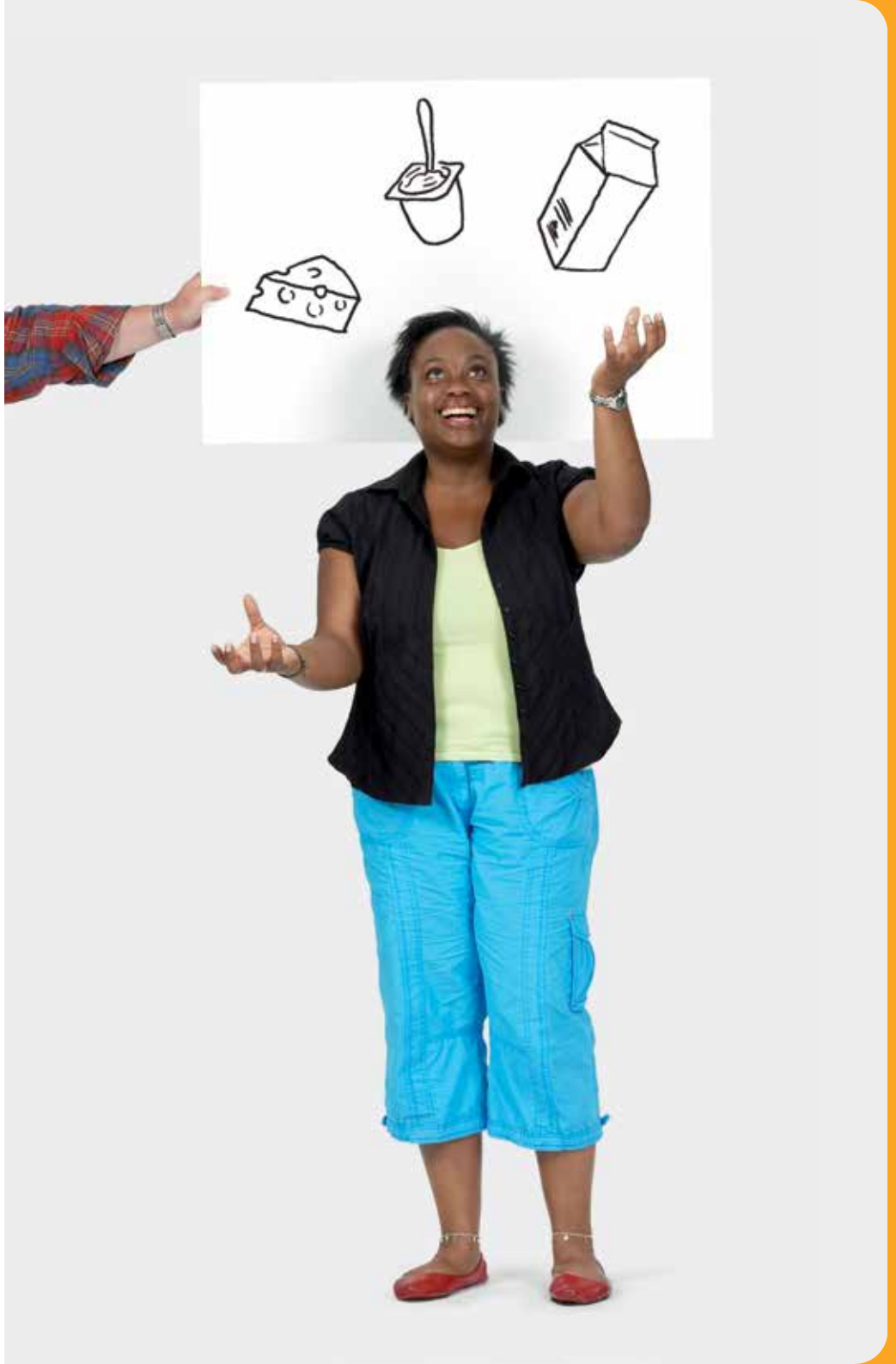
You should have two to three portions of milk and dairy foods a day to get the calcium your body needs – choose lower-fat versions when possible.

This food group includes milk and milk products such as cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais – but not butter, margarine or cream which are part of the high in fat food group. As well as **calcium and protein,** which are essential for healthy bones, milk and dairy foods also provide you with vitamins A and B12. However, the fat content varies a lot between different foods in this group and much of the fat they contain is saturated fat.

Choosing **lower-fat dairy foods** will mean that you can benefit from protein, calcium and other nutrients, but have less or virtually no saturated fat to go with it. So go for foods containing semi-skimmed, 1% or skimmed milk or low-fat yoghurts.

See page 48 for tips to reduce the amount of saturated fat you eat

If you don't drink milk or eat dairy foods, it's good to use a milk substitute like soya milk, with added calcium. Try to go for the unsweetened versions.



Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

You should eat foods that provide you with protein two or three times a day. Choose plant sources such as pulses and beans as well as meat and fish.

Protein foods include:

- meat
- poultry
- fish
- shell fish
- eggs
- pulses
- nuts
- seeds
- soya products.

Protein is important for your body to work properly and these foods also give you **vitamins and minerals.**

Red meat is a good source of iron and B12, but some **meats are high in saturated fat,** which can increase your blood cholesterol level. Making healthier choices such as choosing lean cuts, removing the visible fat and skin and cooking them without adding fat can help you eat meat as part of a balanced diet.

Go to page 50 for more information on healthier meat choices

A Mediterranean style diet is linked to a range of health benefits including longer life and lower risk of heart disease. It includes the basics of healthy eating, but has more fish and less meat.

By eating more fish, including oily fish, you will be likely to reduce your intake of meat and the saturated fat and salt that can come with it.

What if I'm a vegetarian?

If you are vegetarian, or if you eat vegetarian meals as part of a varied diet, it's important to include foods from this protein food group and not to rely too much on dairy foods. This will help to make sure you get enough iron and protein in your diet and keep the saturated fat content down. Make sure you eat a variety of foods from beans and lentils to tofu, micoprotein (like Quorn), eggs and nuts.

Watch out for processed and convenience foods

These are foods that have been made into a product and need very little preparation before you eat them – for example, ready meals, fish fingers, burgers, sausages and pies. They often contain a lot of hidden fats and salt. It's fine to include these foods in your diet from time to time, but generally try to cook meals using basic ingredients that you prepare yourself. And if you do buy processed food, always check the label for the salt and saturated fat content.

Learn more about what to look out for on food labels on page 74

MYTH BUSTER

There's a limit to how many eggs you can eat in a week

There's no recommended limit on how many eggs you should eat. Eggs can be included in a healthy, balanced diet, but remember that it's a good idea to eat as varied a diet as possible and to use healthier cooking methods when you do have eggs. Boil or poach them rather than frying and avoid adding butter to scrambled eggs.

Soya and cholesterol

Soya is a good source of protein and soluble fibre, which may help to lower your cholesterol. It also contains lots of vitamins and minerals and its low in saturated fat, so it's a good addition to a healthy diet.

Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar

You should aim to have only small amounts of foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar – swap these for healthier versions or keep them for special occasions only.

This food group includes cakes, crisps, sweets, chocolate and sugary, fizzy drinks. These tend to be the foods we **need to cut down on** or change to eat more healthily. While they can be included in a balanced diet, they are not essential everyday foods.

You can **use food labels** to guide you to healthier versions of these foods or healthier alternatives. And remember that, if you have more of these foods on certain days of the week or for special occasions, you should try to balance this out by avoiding them altogether on other days.

Look at page 74 for more info on food labels

This food group doesn't just include the foods that are high in fat and sugar, but also the fats and sugars that you **add to food** yourself. This means the oils and fats you use in cooking and the spreads and butter you use for spreading or baking, as well as the sugar, syrup, treacle and honey you add to food and drink. Try to keep down the amount of fat you add by using only a thin spread on bread and toast and by measuring oil with a spoon or using spray oil.

As well as keeping an eye on the total amount of fat you eat, **choosing the right type of fat** is important for heart health.

Find out more about the different types of fat and reducing your fat intake on page 44

It's also important to think about what you drink. Many **fizzy drinks contain a lot of sugar** – and therefore calories – so you should only have them occasionally. If you add sugar to your tea and coffee, try gradually reducing the amount you have by half a teaspoon first so you get used to the taste before cutting it out completely.

Find out more in our drinks section on page 66

Making changes

Now you know the basics of healthy eating, it's time to think about what you eat and see if you need to make any changes.

It can be tricky to remember everything you usually eat so try filling out a **food diary** for a week. It will help you:

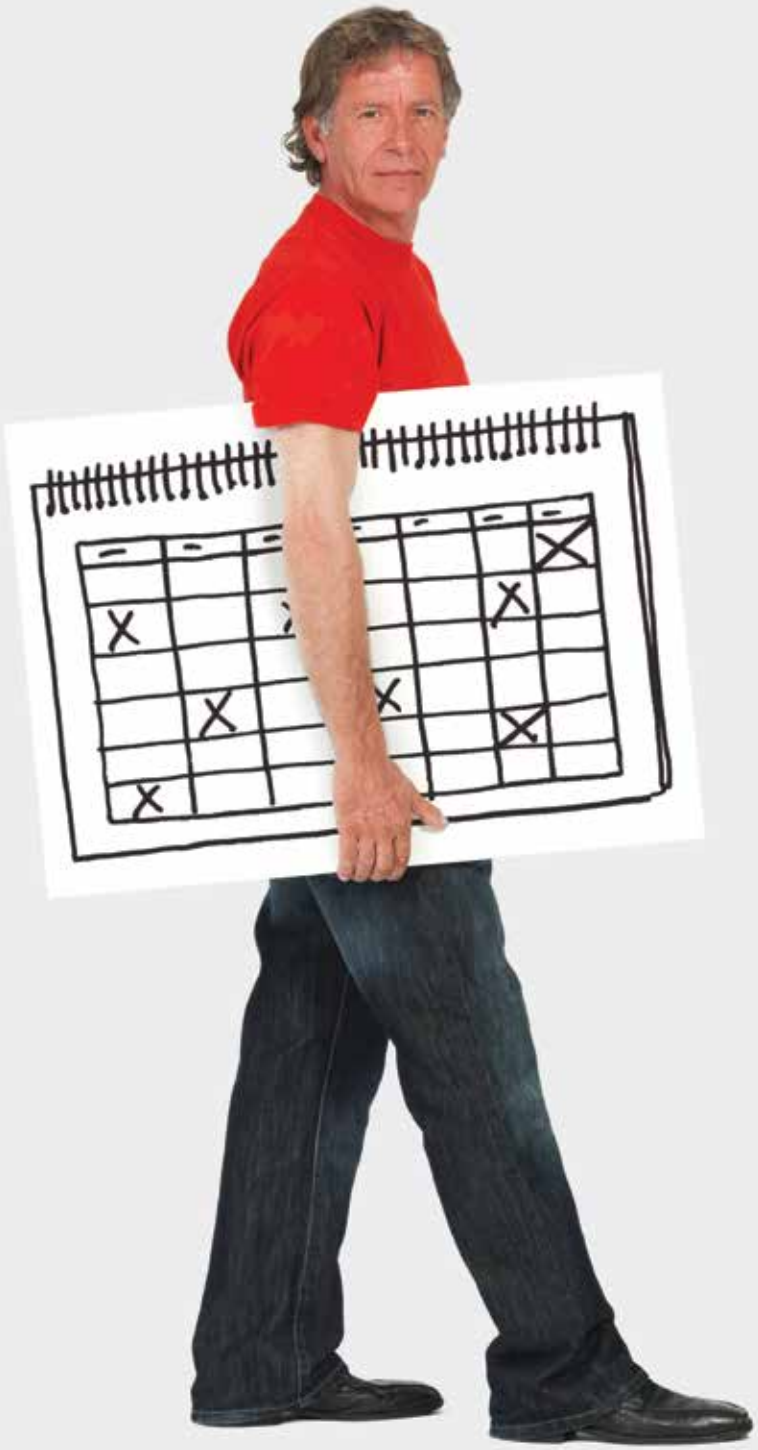
- know which changes you need to make to your diet
- understand patterns in your eating that you may not have noticed before
- work out whether you have achieved your healthy eating goals.

It's very easy to keep a food diary. Just use the table on the following pages to write down everything you eat and drink throughout the day.

Tick the column to show which of the food groups your food comes from and then you'll be able to see if you are having the right amount of each.

There's also space for extra comments so you can note down if you were eating in or out, if you were in a rush or anything else about how you were feeling at the time.

Don't worry too much about what the results look like, just be honest with yourself and you'll be taking the first step to eating well for your health.



Your food diary

If you'd rather print your food diary on a separate sheet or need extra pages, you can download a copy from **bhf.org.uk/eatingwell**

Day of the week	**Time of day/ meal**	**What I ate or drank** *Include how much e.g. 1 cup, 2 slices*	**Food groups** *Tick all that apply*					**Comments** *e.g. where I was, how I was feeling*
			Fruit and veg	Starchy foods	Meat, fish, eggs and vegetarian alternatives	Milk and dairy foods	Foods high in fat and sugar	

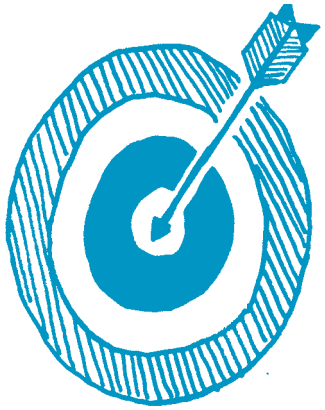
What's next?

Once you have completed your food diary, you can compare your eating habits to the eatwell plate on page 8. Use the information from your diary to help you identify which areas you might need to work on.

Look out for any habits you've fallen into – for example do you eat more fatty food when you're stressed or do you forget to eat your fruit and veg at the weekends?

Once you've decided what changes you need to make to your diet and feel ready to make them, it can be really helpful to set yourself goals. Goals help you focus on making realistic changes that will make a difference to your lifestyle and will be personal to you. **That means that you're more likely to achieve them.**

When setting your goals, make sure they are S.M.A.R.T.



Specific

Be clear about the change you are making. Instead of saying "I'm going to eat more healthily" think about exactly how that will happen. For example, do you need to eat more fruit and vegetables, make sure you eat breakfast or perhaps change the foods you have as snacks?

Measurable

Be able to measure your success. For example, decide how many portions of fruit and vegetables you are going to eat or how many days you will eat breakfast. By making your goal measurable, you'll be able to check whether you've been successful in making the change.

Achievable

Be realistic about the changes you plan to make. You're more likely to succeed if you make small, gradual changes rather than trying to do everything at once. For example, you could start by switching to skimmed milk, reducing the type of fat you cook with or swapping one of your salty snacks for fruit, and build up from there.

Relevant

Make sure your goals focus on what you need to change. For example, if you already eat five or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day, there's no need to set a goal for this.

Time-specific

Make your goals time-specific. Write down when or how often you will make the change. For example, every day or every weekday morning or twice a week. Write down when you want to have achieved the change. This will make it easier for you to work out if you have achieved your goal.

Your S.M.A.R.T goals

Use the space below to set yourself some goals. To start with, you could think about a few goals that you can achieve in the short term and then once you've achieved them you can set yourself some more.

If you'd rather write your S.M.A.R.T goals on a separate sheet or if you run out of space, you can download a goal sheet from **bhf.org.uk/eatingwell**

Remy's story

"I decided I wanted to make changes to my lifestyle as I had been yo-yo dieting for a while and just wanted to feel healthy. I set myself a goal each month and kept a record of my food intake and exercise which was really helpful.

At the end of each month I reviewed how I'd got on and made changes so I kept improving. This really helped me keep track and motivated me to plan my meals. I also found the tools and information on the BHF website invaluable and I'm pleased to say I feel great and I've been a healthy weight for a few months now."

Remy Olasoji, 51, London

Top tips for achieving goals

1. Small changes add up to a big difference – changes to your eating habits don't necessarily have to be difficult or big
2. Look over your goals and think about anything you need to do before you can achieve them – for example, talking to your partner, clearing out your cupboards or looking up some recipes
3. Don't let one slip-up ruin your hard work – just remind yourself of your goals and keep going the next day
4. Make sure you plan something (healthy!) to reward yourself when you reach your goals – this will also keep you going if it does get tough

Now that you've set your goals you can read the relevant sections of this booklet to help you achieve them – go to page 81 to see where to start and look out for the top tips throughout which are there to help you.

Have regular meals

Planning regular meals will help you eat more healthily and stop you snacking in between meals. It's especially important to start the day with breakfast.

Try to make sure that you and your family have a regular meal pattern and eat at around the same time each day. It's important to choose a routine that fits with your lifestyle, but **three meals a day** is a good guide – with healthy snacks in between if you need them.

Planning healthy meals and snacks at regular times will make sure you get the variety and amount of food you need to have a healthy, balanced diet. **Planning ahead** might take a bit of thinking to start with, but you'll soon get into the habit and it will make it easier to control how much you eat.

Avoid skipping meals too – especially breakfast – as this can make you feel tired and hungry and more likely to reach for high-fat, high-sugar snacks.

Eating breakfast is important as it helps your body to get off to a good start each day and will improve your concentration throughout the morning. In fact, people who eat breakfast are more likely to stay a healthy weight than people who don't.

Top tips for healthy breakfast habits

1. If you're not used to having breakfast a glass of pure unsweetened fruit juice, piece of fruit, pot of low fat yoghurt or a slice of toast with peanut butter is a good start
2. If you don't feel you've got time to eat breakfast or don't fancy eating first thing, then take a bowl and a box of wholegrain cereal into work and eat when you get in
3. Have breakfast on the go. Small boxes of wholegrain cereal, tubes of low fat yoghurt and fruit can fit in a bag or briefcase
4. When you are going for a bigger breakfast, try poached eggs instead of fried and grill your bacon and sausages
5. Just have small amounts of bacon and sausages and add grilled tomatoes, mushrooms and reduced sugar and salt baked beans instead

Getting your five a day

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).

Remember though:

- Juice only counts as **one** portion a day
- Potatoes, yam and plantain **don't** count towards your five a day – they are starchy foods
- Pulses like kidney beans, chick peas and haricot beans can be included – but **only as one** portion a day, however much you eat
- The fruit and veg in sauces, soups, puddings and yoghurts **can count** towards your five a day – but watch the salt and saturated fat in these foods

How much is a portion?

An adult portion is 80g (about 3oz) of fresh, frozen or tinned fruit or vegetables. It's 30g if it's dried or 150ml if you're having juice. Examples of what one portion looks like are shown over the next few pages, but a good guide is that a portion is about a handful. The handful measurement works well for children too and means that as they grow, their portion size will grow too.

AS A GUIDE
A HANDFUL = ONE PORTION

Fresh fruit

Small fruit
1 portion = 2 fruit

For example:

2 plums, satsumas, kiwi fruit	8 strawberries	12 grapes	14 cherries

Medium fruit
1 portion = 1 fruit

For example:

1 apple	1 pear	1 banana	1 nectarine or peach

Large fruit
1 portion = 1 slice

For example:

1 slice of melon	1 slice of papaya	2 slices of mango	½ a grapefruit

Greens

1 portion = 4 heaped tablespoons

For example:

4 heaped tablespoons of cabbage	4 heaped tablespoons of spring greens	4 heaped tablespoons of green beans	4 heaped tablespoons of spinach

Cooked vegetables

3 heaped tablespoons of carrots, peas or sweetcorn	4 broccoli florets	6 cauliflower florets
16 medium okra	4 heaped tablespoons of beansprouts	3-4 heaped tablespoons of mushrooms

Salad vegetables

1 medium tomato	½ an avocado	2-inch piece of cucumber
3 sticks of celery	1 handful of vegetable sticks	1 cereal bowl of mixed salad leaves

Dried fruit

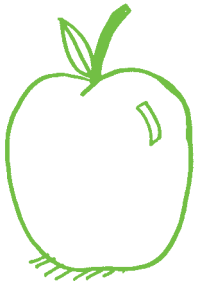
1 tablespoon of raisins, currants, sultanas or mixed fruit	2 dried figs	3 dried prunes	3 dried apricots

Tinned or frozen fruit and vegetables

1 portion = roughly the same quantity as a fresh portion

For example:

2 pear or peach halves	3 heaped tablespoons of carrots, peas, sweetcorn or mixed veg	2 heaped tablespoons of frozen berries
3 heaped tablespoons of fruit salad	8 segments of tinned grapefruit	12 chunks of canned pineapple or two pineapple rings



THIS IS AN APPLE.
IT'S YOUR FRIEND
NOT YOUR ENEMY

Pulses and beans

These only count as one portion a day

3 heaped tablespoons of baked beans, haricot beans, kidney beans, cannellini beans, butter beans, black eyes beans, broadbeans, lentils or chick peas	

Juices

These only count as one portion a day

A glass (150ml) of: • Fruit or vegetable juice (100% pure, unsweetened) • Smoothie (can be counted as 2 portions if it contains 80g of fruit and 150mls of fruit juice)	

Sign up to our free *Heart Matters* service and you can use our online portion finder to see what makes up a portion of other fruit and veg: **bhf.org.uk/heartmatters**

You can also download a copy of our *5 a Day Food Diary* (code Z158) from **bhf.org.uk/publications** to track your five a day intake.

Graham's story

"I started eating better after I found out I had high blood pressure. I'm eating lots more fruit now – I have a banana on cereal instead of sugar and snack on grapes, oranges and raspberries in the evening instead of biscuits.

We've started shopping weekly instead of monthly so we can buy fresh fruit every week. We buy small amounts of different types of fruit so we always have lots to choose from – you don't get bored that way!"

Small changes make a big difference.

Graham Hughes, 50, Staffordshire

We know it can sometimes feel tough to reach your five a day. Check out our tips and tricks to help you overcome some of the common challenges:

Fruit and vegetables are too expensive

- Fresh fruit and vegetables are usually cheaper when they're in season
- Buy loose fruit and veg rather than pre-packed so you just buy what you need
- Local markets are often cheaper than supermarkets for fruit and vegetables
- Opt for the supermarket's own-brand tinned, dried and frozen fruit and vegetables – including pulses and beans – to keep costs down

I've got no time to shop for fresh fruit and veg

- Stock up on tinned and frozen fruit and vegetables so you always have them ready to use
- Choose tinned varieties that have no added salt or sugar
- Dried fruit also keeps well and you can eat it as a snack or add to cereal and other recipes

My family don't like the taste of fruit and veg

- Set them the challenge of trying one new fruit or vegetable a week until you find some they enjoy
- Try adding veg like grated carrot, chopped peppers or sweetcorn to your meals such as stir frys, stews and even pizzas
- You can puree vegetables to really disguise them – this also works as a good thickener for sauces and soups
- Mashing vegetables such as swede, parsnips and carrots with potatoes is another option
- Cutting fruit and vegetables into easy-to-eat chunks and sticks often makes them more appealing than a whole piece

I take vitamins pills so don't need to worry

- Taking dietary supplements doesn't seem to have the same health benefits as eating fruit and vegetables
- Fruit and vegetables contain fibre, vitamin and minerals

Top tips to get your five a day

1 Breakfast

- Have a glass of 100% pure, unsweetened fruit juice
- Slice fresh fruit like apple or strawberries over your cereal
- If your breakfast is cooked, add mushrooms and tomatoes
- Make a smoothie by blending your favourite fruits with fruit juice or low fat yoghurt
- Add dried fruit such apricots or raisins to your cereal
- Just grab a piece of fruit as you leave the house

2 Lunch

- Add some extra crunch to your sandwiches with mixed leaves, tomatoes, peppers, cucumber or grated carrots
- Take an extra serving of vegetables or a side salad
- Make your own vegetable soup in colder weather
- Mix your favourite vegetables with pasta or rice – tasty and filling!
- Enjoy a piece of fruit with your lunch

3 Dinner

- Include at least two types of veg with your evening meal – peas and sweetcorn, especially frozen, don't take long to cook!
- Try adding canned tomatoes to a casserole or curry and grated carrot to bolognaise or stew
- Throw in extra vegetables to sauces, bakes, curries and stir fries
- Add a side salad to dishes like pasta, kebabs or jacket potato

4 Dessert

- Make a fresh fruit salad with a mix of your favourite fruit
- Try tinned fruit in their own juice for a quick and easy dessert
- Make fruit kebabs by threading chunks of fruit onto wooden skewers – eat them raw or warm under the grill
- Give jelly extra bite by adding fresh or canned fruit
- Mix berries with low fat yoghurt for an easy tasty treat

5 Snacks

- Keep a well-stocked fruit bowl at home and at work
- Cut carrots, celery and peppers into sticks and crunch them on their own or with a healthy dip
- Have individual portions of dried fruit and grapes in your bag for a snack on the go

6 Eating out

- Request a side order of vegetables or fresh salad
- Add extra vegetables like mushrooms or pineapple to pizza or ask for stir-fried vegetables at the Chinese
- Choose dishes that come in a tomato or vegetable-based sauce
- Order a fresh fruit salad or other fruit-based pudding for dessert

ANYTIME
IS A GOOD TIME
TO GET FIVE A DAY

EAT YOUR FIVE A DAY

Fats explained

Fats and oils are high in calories so you should only use them in small amounts. For your heart health, it's especially important to avoid saturated fats so switch to low fat milk and cheese and choose leaner meats.

As well as using fats and oils in small amounts when cooking and preparing food, you should keep an eye on how much of them are in the things you buy. There are several different types of fat and **choosing the right type** is also important for your health.

Most food labels show the total amount of fat in a product and then the amount of this that is saturated fat – so look out for this and read page 74 for more about understanding food labels

Fats to avoid

Saturated fats

Saturated fats can raise the amount of cholesterol in your blood, especially the harmful LDL cholesterol which increases the risk of fatty deposits developing in your arteries.

Found in: butter, lard, ghee, palm oil, coconut oil, dripping, hard cheeses, cream and fatty meat.

Trans fats

Trans fats occur naturally in small amounts in dairy foods and meat, but most trans fats we eat are industrially produced. Trans fats formed in this way have a similar effect on our bodies to saturated fats.

Found in: some biscuits, cakes, pastries and deep fried foods.

*The good news is that many food manufacturers now remove trans fats from their products.

Fats to have in small amounts

Monounsaturated fats

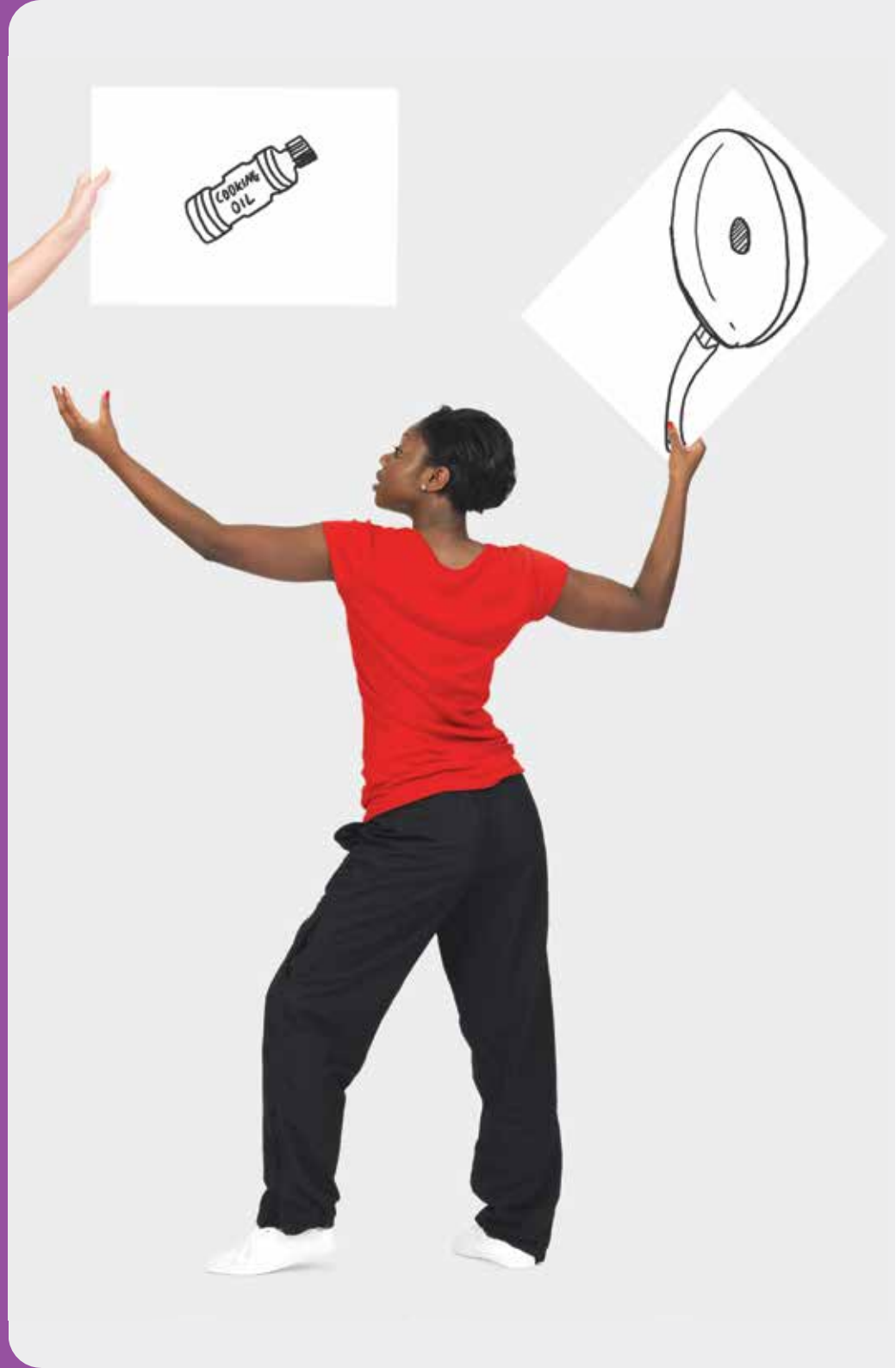
Monounsaturated fats can help to lower your LDL cholesterol levels.

Found in: olive and rapeseed oils and spreads made from these oils, as well as some nuts and seeds.

Polyunsaturated fats

Polyunsaturated fats provide essential fatty acids so they are an important part of your diet.

Found in: soya, sunflower and corn oil and spreads, as well as in nuts and seeds and oily fish.



Fats and cholesterol

Too much saturated fat can increase the amount of cholesterol in the blood so you should avoid saturated fats wherever possible and only eat them in small amounts.

There is some cholesterol in certain foods – for example eggs, liver, kidneys and prawns – but eating them doesn't usually affect your blood cholesterol level. It's more important to reduce your saturated fat if you want to keep your blood cholesterol levels in check.

Foods with added plant stanols and sterols

Plant stanols and sterols are substances added to foods such as spreads, soft cheeses and yoghurts. There is evidence that eating 2g of plant stanols and sterols every day can help reduce your cholesterol. Research suggests that having this amount on a regular basis could reduce harmful LDL cholesterol levels by 10% to 15%, but the effect varies between individuals.

It's important to remember that plant stanols and sterols are not a substitute for a healthy diet and they're not a replacement for cholesterol-lowering drugs. So if you decide to use these products, follow the manufacturer's instructions on how much of the food you need to have each day to get the 2g. Plant stanols and sterols are not recommended for children under five or for breastfeeding or pregnant women.

For more information about cholesterol, order or download our booklet *Reducing your blood cholesterol* (code HIS3).

Top tips to cut the amount of fat you eat

1. Cut down on high fat snacks like crisps, chocolates, biscuits, samosas, pakoras and pastries by choosing fruit, vegetable sticks, malt loaf or unsalted popcorn instead
2. Change to low fat dairy products: use semi-skimmed or skimmed milk and choose low fat yoghurts and cheese
3. Buy the leanest cuts of meat you can and avoid processed meat products like sausages and bacon
4. Remove the skin and visible fat from meat before cooking
5. Try baking, boiling, steaming, poaching or microwaving your food instead of frying, so that you don't need to add fat
6. Measure out oil with a teaspoon or use spray oil rather than pouring it straight from the bottle
7. Buy a non-stick frying pan and roasting tray so you can cook without adding fat
8. Spoon off fats and oils from casseroles and curries

Cheese facts

While most cheeses are high in saturated fat, it's possible to make healthier choices. Use the table below to find lower fat options and try grating cheese instead of slicing it so you use less.

Type of cheese	Total fat per 100g	Saturated fat per 100g
High fat (more than 17.5g per 100g)		
Mascarpone	44	29
Stilton	35	23
Cheddar, Red Leicester, Double Gloucester and other hard cheeses	35	22
Parmesan	30	19
Brie	29	18
Soft goat's cheese	26	18
Edam	26	16
Processed cheese e.g. cheese slices, cheese strings	24	14
Camembert	23	14
Medium fat (3.1g – 17.5g per 100g)		
Feta	20	14
Mozzarella	20	14
Half-fat cheddar	16	10
Reduced-fat processed cheese	13	8
Ricotta	8	5
Cottage cheese (plain or with additions e.g. pineapple)	4	2
Low fat (3g or less per 100g)		
Reduced-fat cottage cheese (plain)	2	1
Quark	0.2	0.1

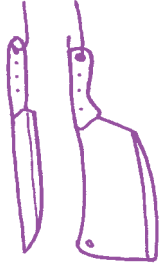
HIGH

MEDIUM

LOW

If you want to keep this info to hand, download and print our cheese fact sheet from **bhf.org.uk/eatingwell**

Better meat choices



The type of meat you use and the way you cook it can make a big difference to the amount of saturated fat you have. Use the table below to choose meat that is better for your health:

Type of meat	Higher fat ↑ ✗	Lower fat ↓ ✓
Pork	• Cooked pork belly joint with fat • Per 100g: 23.4g total fat, 8.2g saturated fat **293 kcal**	• Cooked lean pork leg joint • Per 100g: 5.5g total fat, 1.9g saturated fat **182 kcal**
Beef	• Fried rump steak with fat • Per 100g: 12.7g total fat, 4.9g saturated fat **228 kcal**	• Grilled lean rump steak • Per 100g: 5.9g total fat, 2.5g saturated fat **177 kcal**
Poultry	• Fried chicken breast in breadcrumbs • Per 100g: 12.7g total fat, 2.1g saturated fat **242 kcal**	• Grilled chicken breast without skin • Per 100g: 2.2g total fat, 0.6g saturated fat **148 kcal**

For more swaps and ideas, order or download our wall chart *Cut the saturated fat* (code M4).

MYTH BUSTER

Reduced fat options are always the best choice

Don't assume that 'low-fat' or 'fat-free' versions of products are healthy or better choices – many of these foods are very high in sugar. Always check the labels – find out more about what to look for on page 74.

Barbara's story

"My husband Noel was diagnosed with heart failure ten years ago, so we've made changes to what we eat since then to help improve our heart health. We've swapped butter for low fat spreads, full fat milk to semi skimmed and eat cheese just as a treat.

We've started steaming veg, potatoes and fish – you don't need any oil, and I think it's quicker too. We definitely eat more fish now instead of red meats. It was a challenge at first – change always is – but you just have to make your mind up and cut out the things that are no good for you!"

Barbara Hughes, 75, Stourbridge

Salt made simple

The recommended maximum amount of salt for adults is 6g a day – which is about a teaspoon. Most people don't realise how much salt they're having and go over this limit.

Eating too much salt can increase your risk of high blood pressure, and this increases your chance of developing coronary heart disease. So to keep your heart healthy it's important that you don't eat too much salt each day.

MYTH BUSTER
Food without salt has no flavour
Low salt food doesn't need to be tasteless or bland; there are lots of ways to add flavour to your meals without having to compromise on healthy eating.

Remember that all types of salt count including sea salt, flakes, crystals and garlic salt and it's not just about the salt that you add to food yourself. **Most of the salt we eat is 'hidden' in foods.** Foods high in salt include soups, sauces, cheese, savoury snacks, biscuits, pizza, ready meals and fast foods. There can also be a lot of salt in everyday foods like bread and breakfast cereals.

= 6g OF SALT

Check the labels

It's important to check food labels to see how much salt there is in the food you're buying. Try and choose the products with the least salt in them.

As it's the sodium in salt that contributes to high blood pressure, some food labels give figures for sodium rather than salt. To convert sodium into salt you need to multiply the number by 2.5. For example 0.5g sodium = 1.25g salt

Go to page 74 for more about what to look for on food labels

SALT = (SODIUM) X 2.5

Debbie's story

"I've cut out salt in my diet, which is easy after a while – now when we do have a shop-bought meal all we can taste is salt! I use a lot of herbs for flavour so now I grow them myself and I add lots of different vegetables into recipes such as soup for interesting tastes."

Variety is the spice

Fresh herbs add both colour and flavour to your food, while dried herbs and spices are handy to keep in the cupboard to add flavour when you need to.

You'll be surprised at all the tasty combinations you can try when you ditch the salt and reach for the herbs and spices! Don't forget to use other flavourings too – like lemon, garlic, ginger, chilli or a grind of black pepper. Avoid ready-made mixed seasonings though, as many of these include a lot of salt.

MYTH BUSTER

Can't I just use a reduced-salt alternative?

Replacing table salt with a reduced-salt alternative will help you reduce the amount of sodium you consume (although these products do still contain some sodium). However as your food will still taste salty, it won't help you get used to a less salty taste. Reduce the amount of salt you use gradually, to give your taste buds time to adjust, and try different ways to flavour your food instead.

Reduced-salt alternatives are not suitable for some people – for example, people with kidney problems or heart failure – so check with your doctor before using them.

Order or download our booklet *Cut down on salt* (code G160) for more details about how to reduce the salt in your diet.

Top tips for reducing your salt intake

1. Add less salt when cooking – don't use it when you're boiling vegetables or pasta for example
2. Don't add salt to your food at the table – your taste buds will soon adapt to the taste
3. Choose foods labelled 'no added salt'
4. Try making sauces and seasonings using low salt stock cubes, soy sauce or jerk spices
5. Swap salty snacks such as crisps and salted nuts for fruit and vegetables
6. Avoid saltier foods such as bacon, cheese, takeaways, ready meals and other processed food
7. Experiment with herbs and spices to add extra flavour – low salt food doesn't need to be tasteless or bland

Paul's story

"I was diagnosed with Dilated Cardiomyopathy in 2011 and that was my prompt to try eating more healthily to look after my heart. I've made a real effort to cut down on my salt intake by not adding salt in cooking or on my food. At first I did miss it but you do get used to the taste.

I was surprised to learn how much salt was in bread. I had to really look at the labels to find the ones with a low salt content.

Along with my medication, improving my diet has made me feel healthier than at any time in the last five or six years. I definitely have more energy, which my six year old son appreciates when it comes to playtime!"

Paul Beales, 54, Chepstow

Eat more fish

A Mediterranean style diet, which can help keep your heart healthy, includes more fish and less meat.

White fish is a great source of lean protein and oily fish is also a healthy choice as it contains a type of polyunsaturated fat that can help to maintain healthy cholesterol levels and it's also a good source of vitamins A and D.

Aim for **two portions of fish each week** and make one an oily fish.

ONE PORTION = 140g/5oz

Oily fish includes mackerel, salmon, fresh tuna, sardines, trout, kippers, pilchards and herring.

You can choose **from fresh, frozen or canned,** but canned and smoked fish can be high in salt.

Fish tinned in water, sunflower oil or tomato sauce is lower in salt than fish tinned in brine and you should **steam, bake or grill** your fish rather than fry it to keep the fat content down. Try to choose fish that has been sustainably caught and farmed – check this information on the packaging.

Top tips to get more fish in your diet

1. Have a simple lunch of tinned pilchards or mackerel on toast, topped with slices of tomato
2. Make tinned sardines into a pâté by mixing them with fromage frais/natural yoghurt, lemon zest and herbs
3. Stir-fry fresh salmon with noodles and mixed vegetables for a quick dinner
4. Add fresh tuna steaks to the BBQ and serve them with a jacket potato and colourful salad
5. If you or your family aren't too keen, try making baked fish cakes or a fish pie to get used to the taste and texture

For these and more tasty fish recipes, download our *Healthy Heart Recipe Finder* app to your iPhone or Android smartphone or sign up to our free *Heart Matters* service to use our online recipe finder **bhf.org.uk/heartmatters**

There are recommendations for the maximum number of portions of oily fish you should eat each week, as oily fish can contain low levels of pollutants that can build up in the body. Men, boys and women past reproductive age should have a maximum of four portions of oily fish a week and pregnant or breastfeeding women and women of childbearing age should eat no more than two portions per week.

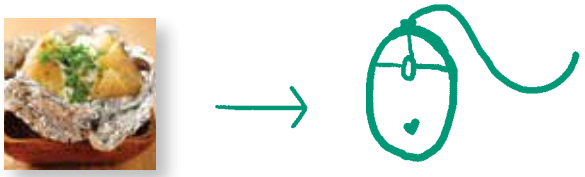
Keep an eye on your portion sizes

While a balanced diet is the most important thing for your health, it's very easy to eat too much so keeping an eye on your portion sizes is important too.

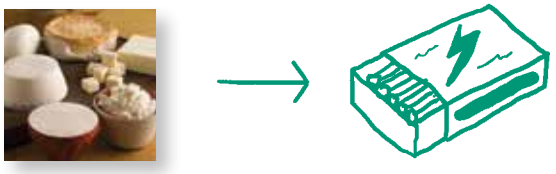
We know when you're busy that last thing you want to worry about is weighing out all your food, so this guide will help you remember how much is the right amount so you only eat what you need.

A serving of meat or fish should be about the size of a deck of cards or the palm of your hand

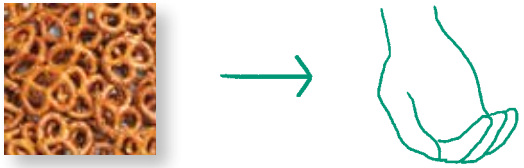
One cupful is the right amount of cooked starchy food such as pasta and rice – this is about the size of a tennis ball



A portion of potato (baked or mashed) should be about the size of a computer mouse or two eggs



A serving of cheese should be the size of a matchbox



Fill your cupped hand with nuts or pretzels to see one portion

Use the tip of your thumb as a guide for how much oil to use

Top tips to reduce your portions

1. Put snacks in a bowl and put the rest away so you don't eat them all
2. Eat off a smaller plate – you're likely to eat less food
3. Check the recommended portion sizes on food labels as many products are packaged for sharing
4. Remember you don't have to finish all the food on your plate – stop when you feel full
5. Put leftovers in the fridge or freezer straight away so you're not tempted to have seconds
6. Think about your intake over the day – if you know you're having a big dinner, have a smaller lunch

Swap your snacks

Healthy snacks can keep you going between meals and help you get the variety of food you need. But when you're busy, tired or bored it can be easy to slip into bad snacking habits.

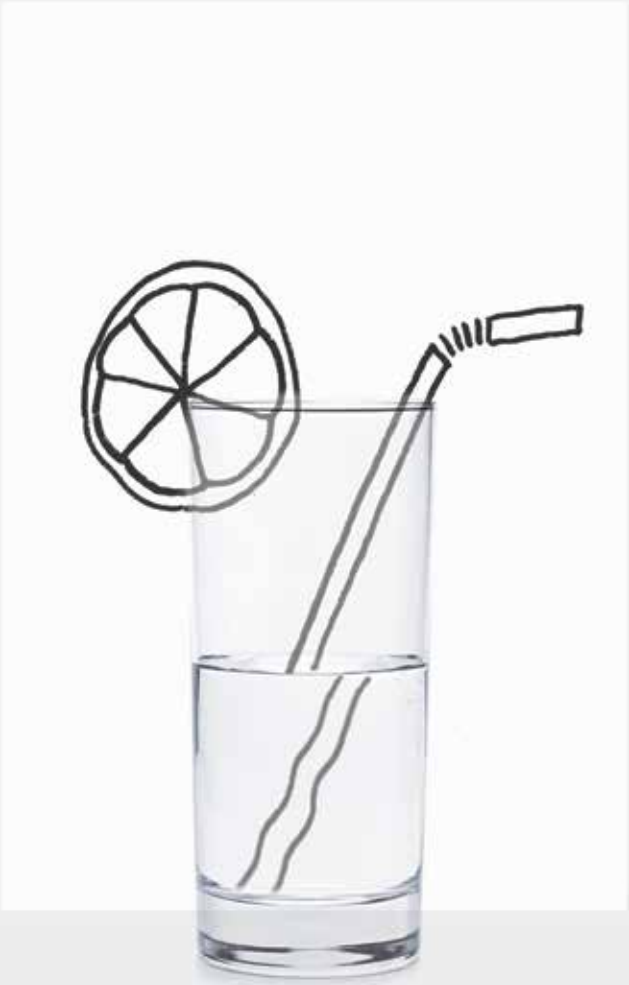
Use the guide below to swap you snacks and improve your diet:

Instead of…	Try…
Crisps	Breadsticks, dry cereal, rice cakes or crunchy vegetable sticks
Cream cakes	Toasted currant buns, teacakes, crumpets or English muffins with a little unsaturated spread
Boiled sweets	Dried fruit such as raisins, dried apricots or dried figs
Slice of pizza	Wholegrain pitta bread dipped in reduced-fat hoummus or tzatziki
Bar of chocolate	A banana or some chunks of fresh pineapple
Biscuits	Canned fruit in its own juice such as peaches or pears
Ice cream	Low fat yoghurt or rice pudding – but make sure it doesn't contain added sugar

If you want to keep this info to hand, download and print our snack swaps sheet from **bhf.org.uk/eatingwell**

Top tips to stop snacking too much

1. Serve yourself a portion of food for a snack and then put the rest away
2. Ask yourself if you're really hungry, or if you're just thirsty – try having a glass of water before reaching for a snack
3. Don't eat when you're distracted – for example while watching TV – as it's easy to eat too much without noticing
4. Keep to regular meals times – especially breakfast
5. Always have fruit to hand – it's the healthiest snack and will count towards your five a day
6. Don't shop on an empty stomach and make a list before you go



Think about drinks

Drinking enough is an important part of keeping healthy so you need to have regular drinks – around 6 to 8 drinks a day.

The amount of drink you need does vary though – for example if you do more activity than usual or if it's a hot day you will need to drink more. You will get some water from the food you eat, but you still need to drink too.

Cold drinks

Water is the best choice, but you can include other non-alcoholic drinks during the day such as sugar-free squash or fruit juice.

Pure unsweetened fruit juices are nutritious and count as one of your five portions of fruit and veg. However, they are quite acidic so it's better for your teeth if you have them as part of a meal, rather than on their own.

Try to avoid fizzy drinks that contain a lot of sugar – choose sugar-free alternatives instead. Again, because these drinks are acidic, it's best to have them only at mealtimes to help protect your teeth.

Tea and coffee

You can include a moderate amount of tea and coffee among your drinks, but it's important that this isn't your only source of fluid. This is because they make it harder for your body to absorb the iron you need from the food you eat and also contain caffeine, which is a stimulant. Try to avoid drinking tea or coffee with meals and in the evening.

Alcohol

Drinking too much alcohol can be harmful to your health. It can lead to muscle damage, high blood pressure, stroke and some cancers. If you drink alcohol, it's important to keep within the sensible limits, however often you drink.

Men	...should not regularly drink more than **3 to 4 units of alcohol in a day.** That's not much more than a pint of strong lager, beer or cider.
Women	...should not regularly drink more than **2 to 3 units of alcohol in a day.** That's no more than a standard 175ml glass of wine.

Most people don't drink alcohol every day – but if you do, try having some days off – aim for **at least two alcohol free days a week.** Just make sure you don't increase the amount you drink on the other days.

MYTH BUSTER

I can save up my units for the weekend

Drinking large amounts of alcohol in one go can cause additional damage to your body, so avoid heavy or 'binge' drinking – you can't save up your units!

Know your units

A unit is a measure of alcohol. The number of units is based on the size of the drink and its alcohol strength. The ABV (alcohol by volume) figure is the percentage of alcohol in the drink.

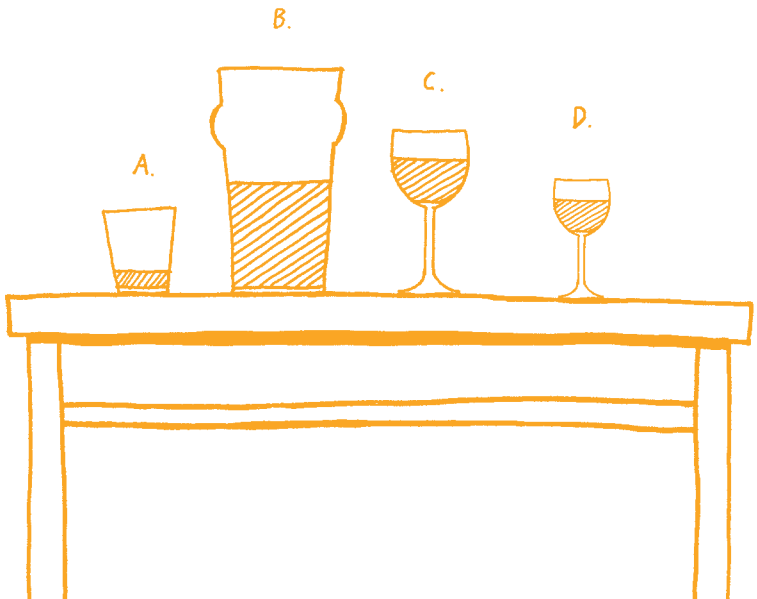
1 unit of alcohol =

A. One single pub measure (25ml) of spirits (ABV 40%)

B. One half a pint (about 300ml) of normal-strength lager, cider or beer (3.5% ABV)

C. One small glass (100ml) of wine (10% ABV)

D. One glass (50ml) of liqueur, sherry or other fortified wine (ABV 20%)

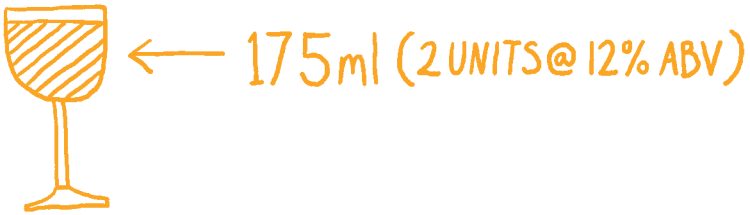


How do your drinks add up?

275ml bottle of alcopop (ABV 5.5%)	1.5 unit
330ml bottle of strong lager, beer or cider (ABV 5.2%)	1.7 units
440ml can of regular lager, beer or cider (ABV 4.5%)	2 units
Standard glass (175ml) of red, white or rose wine (ABV 13%)	2.3 units
Pint of strong lager, beer or cider (ABV 5.2%)	3 units
Large glass (250ml) of red, white or rose wine (ABV 13%)	3.3 units
Pint of extra strong lager, beer or cider (ABV 8%)	4.5 units
Bottle (750ml) of red, white or rose wine (ABV 13.5%)	10 units

Keep an eye on your glass size!

You can see that it's easier than you'd think for the units to add up when you're drinking wine or pouring your own drinks. A standard small glass of wine in a pub is actually 175ml, so that would be 2 units of alcohol if you're drinking 12% ABV wine.



How do I know how many units of alcohol there are in my drink?

Many bottles and cans now state how many units of alcohol are in the drink. You can also work this out by multiply the volume of the drink in millilitres by the ABV % figure and then dividing the result by 1,000.

For example: A 300ml can of beer of 5% ABV
= 300 x 5 ÷ 1,000 = 1.5 units of alcohol

MYTH BUSTER

Alcohol is good for your heart

There may be some benefits to your heart health from moderate drinking (1 or 2 units a day). But this is not a reason to start drinking alcohol if you don't already. There are healthier ways to protect your heart such as stopping smoking and doing more physical activity.

Drinking more than the recommended limits can have a harmful effect on your heart. For example, it can cause abnormal heart rhythms, high blood pressure and damage to your heart muscle. Additionally alcohol has a high energy (calorie) content so is important to consider if you're trying to manage your weight.

Use our online *Alcohol Calculator* to work out how many units you drink:
bhf.org.uk/alcoholcalculator

Be a savvy shopper

A trip to the shops to buy food sounds simple, but how often have you gone to buy one item, only to return with a basketful of food? Or how often have you come out with a range of foods which it's difficult to make meals from?

Follow our advice to make shopping easier and help you make healthier choices:

→ Write a list

It will make sure you have all the ingredients you need - and could save you time and money too

→ Never go shopping when you're hungry

You'll find it much easier to avoid temptation and just buy the foods you'd planned

→ Get smart about 'bargains'

We all love to save money, but if the special offers are on foods high in saturated fat, salt or sugar, ask yourself if you really need them

→ Be a food detective

Get to grips with food labels to help you to compare products and make healthier choices – see the next page for more details.

EAT FIRST, THEN SHOP

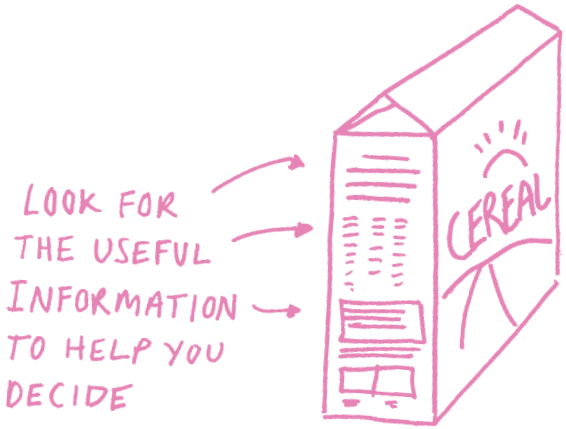
Know your labels

So what do you need to look out for on food labels? Most foods have a nutritional information panel either on the back or side of the pack.

Find the 'per 100g' column, and then compare them with the figures shown in the box below to see whether it's low, medium or high.

All measures per 100g	**Low** A healthier choice	**Medium** OK most of the time	**High** Just occasionally
Sugars	5g or less	5.1g – 22.5g	More than 22.5g
Fat	3g or less	3.1g – 17.5g	More than 17.5g
Saturates	1.5g or less	1.6g – 5g	More than 5g
Salt	0.30g or less	0.31g – 1.5g	More than 1.5g

Our Guide to food labelling booklet comes with a handy credit card sized guide you can pull off and keep so you can check your labels on the go!



To make it easier for you, some shops now also provide 'at a glance' nutritional information on the front of packs:

- Traffic-light coloured labels show you clearly if a food is a healthy choice (green), has high amounts of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt (red) or is an ok choice sometimes (amber)
- Some labels show as a percentage how much the food contributes towards the reference intake (%RI) for key nutrients.

  The reference intake is a guideline amount for the maximum amount of these nutrients (like fat or salt) that an adult should eat every day.

  The reference intakes for adults are shown below.

	Adults (figures used on packaging)
Energy (kJ)	8,400
Energy (kcal)	2,000
Fat	70g
Saturates	20g
Sugars	90g
Salt	6g

Don't forget to order or download our *Guide to food labelling* booklet and card (code G54).

MYTH BUSTER

Healthy foods are more expensive – the offers are always on ready meals and biscuits!

Eating a healthy balanced diet doesn't mean you always need to buy the most expensive foods. Follow our top tips to stock up cheaply and if you do get tempted by the deals to save some cash try splitting the offer with a friend or family member so you benefit from the saving, but don't end up eating three times the amount of food.

Judi's story

"I was very frightened when I found out I had to have heart bypass surgery. That fear made me turn my lifestyle around, but it wasn't easy at first, especially changing my diet. I had to learn to love a different kind of food. I feel much better now, and allow myself occasional treats, but I'm always careful to check the ingredients on food labels. We owe it to ourselves – and our kids – to eat healthily. I did it, and so can you!"

Top tips for eating healthily on a budget

1 Buy frozen fruit and veg

They tend to be cheaper than fresh but still count towards your five a day and you can use them when you want which cuts down on waste

2 Check out the cans

Canned tomatoes, beans and pulses are cheap and are great for adding bulk to casseroles, stews, pasta sauces or salads

3 Try tinned fish

Tinned oily fish like sardines and salmon is often cheaper than buying it fresh – and they have a long shelf life too

4 Go Italian

Pasta is healthy, filling and value for money. Use it in lots of different dishes like spaghetti bolognaise, lasagne or minestrone soup

5 Use your leftovers

Don't throw away food that doesn't get eaten; try turning it into another meal! Left over veg can go into soup, meat into a stew and over-ripe fruit is perfect blended to make a smoothie

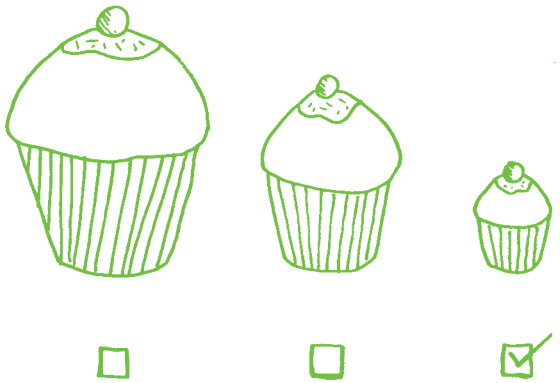
Eat smart when eating out

Eating out usually means we have little control over how food is prepared or how large the portion is. The food also tends to be high in fat, salt and sugar and the healthy choices are not that obvious

Having the odd unhealthy meal when you're eating out is unlikely to make a difference to your heart health in the long run. But these days it's not just the special occasion meals we eat away from home, **we are eating out more than ever.**

It's the coffee and a cake while you're shopping, the takeaways or fast foods when you don't want to cook, snacks in the pub, sandwiches bought on the run and sweets, ice cream or hot dogs when you go to the cinema.

All of that can add up. But eating out doesn't have to mean eating unhealthily – the following tips can help you choose the better options for your health.



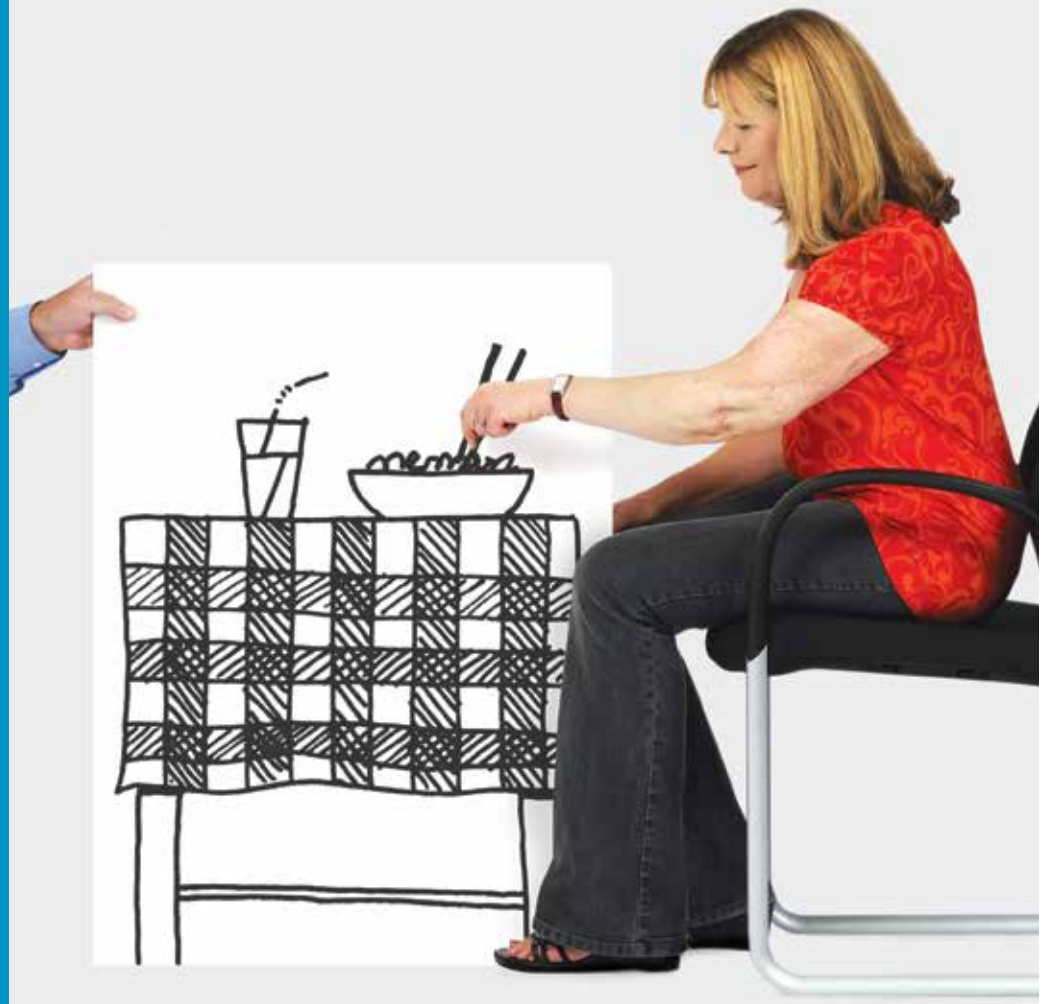
Top tips for eating out

At the cafe

1. Ask to go 'skinny' on coffees and hot chocolate
2. When buying sandwiches, check the nutritional information so you pick the healthiest
3. If sandwiches are being made deli style, say no to extra salt, cheese and mayo and always ask for salad

In a restaurant

1. Plan what you're going to eat before you go – some companies have online menus you can use to choose the healthier options
2. When you're with a group, be the first to order so you're not swayed by others' less healthy choices
3. Portion sizes are often bigger when you're eating out so don't feel you have to finish what's on your plate
4. Share a starter or pudding rather than having your own and don't order dessert until you've finished your main
5. Ask for dressings and sauces on the side so you can decide how much to add
6. Go for tomato or vegetable-based sauces rather than cream, coconut or cheese-based
7. Choose plain boiled rice instead of fried and go for boiled or jacket potatoes rather than chips or wedges
8. Remember the 'extras' you add like cheese, sour cream and dressings can be high in fat and salt



Get planning!

To help you reach the S.M.A.R.T. goals you've set, try to spend a bit of time thinking about what meals you are going to eat over the next few days or during the week.

Use the following pages to jot down your ideas and then make a shopping list based on this. Remember to check what you already have in your cupboards and freezer so you only buy what you need!

MYTH BUSTER

It's too hard to plan and I never have time to cook

It can sometimes be difficult to plan ahead, so it's a good idea to have some healthy meals tucked away in your freezer. When you do have time to cook, make extra portions of soups, stews or curries which you can freeze for another day. Make the most of your store cupboards by stocking up on tins of low sugar, low salt baked beans and other pulses, tinned tomatoes, cous cous and pasta for quick and easy meals in minutes.

Carole's story

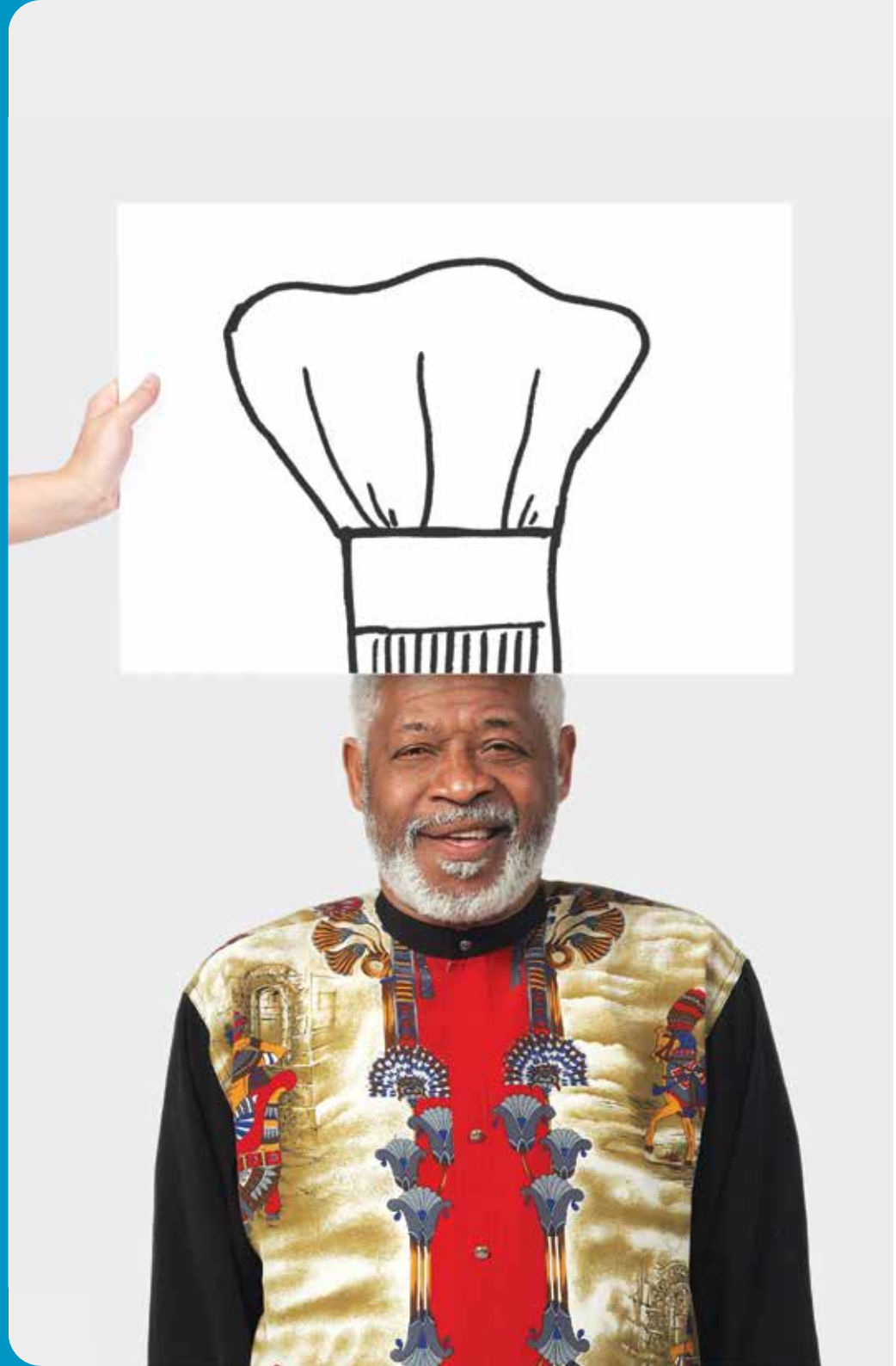
"I've learnt to cook a quick and easy Chinese stir fry without any oil at all. I use frozen veg, cooked in the microwave, and mix this with a grilled chicken breast without the skin and a packet of microwave rice. I add light soy sauce, then sprinkle in some bean sprouts and finely chopped spring onions. A perfect healthy stir fry with no added fat and plenty of heart friendly ingredients!"

Your weekly food plan

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Mon				
Tues				
Wed				
Thurs				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

If you want to print out more copies of the food planner, you can download a copy from **bhf.org.uk/eatingwell**

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Mon				
Tues				
Wed				
Thurs				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				



Be creative in the kitchen

Eating well means adding variety to your diet – combining lots of different tastes and textures and maybe even trying some new foods.

Eating a range of foods means you won't get bored and, by being in control of how much fat, salt and sugar goes into your meals, you're sure to enjoy them more.

Don't worry if you're not an expert cook. You can make healthy and interesting meals out of simple ingredients and it won't take as long as you think!

Getting started

If you haven't cooked much before, check you have the equipment listed below as this will make it a lot easier for you to get started. If you need to buy anything, keep an eye out in the supermarket as they often sell these items at a good price.

Saucepans

A small saucepan is great for boiling vegetables, eggs and potatoes and a larger one is good for cooking soup or stew

Knives

You'll need at least two knives – a small serrated one for fruit and vegetables and a larger knife for meat and fish

Frying pan

A good non-stick frying pan is essential – it will mean you don't need to add any extra oil or butter

Colander

Chopping board

Wooden spoon and spatula

Measuring jug

Vegetable peeler, potato masher and can opener

Stocking up your kitchen with some essential ingredients will also be a big help – you might have to spend a bit of money initially, but most of these items will last a long time and help you cook healthy meals with minimum effort.

Fridge

- Low fat milk (skimmed, 1% or semi-skimmed)
- Low fat, low sugar yoghurts
- Eggs
- Low fat margarine/spread
- Unsweetened fruit juice
- Reduced fat cheese
- Fresh fruits and vegetables

Freezer

- Wholegrain breads e.g. sliced loaf, pitta breads, rolls, wraps
- Vegetables e.g. green beans, peas, carrots, mixed vegetables
- Fish fillets
- Lean meat e.g. chicken, turkey, beef

Store cupboard

- Unsaturated oil e.g. olive or rapeseed oil
- Baked beans (low salt, low sugar)
- Tinned pulses e.g. chickpeas, kidney beans, lentils
- Tinned tomatoes
- Canned fish e.g. tuna, salmon, sardines (in spring water or tomato sauce)
- Tinned sweetcorn
- Tinned fruit (in its own juice)
- Tomato puree
- Stock cubes (reduced salt)
- Soy sauce (reduced salt)
- Dried herbs e.g. basil, oregano, parsley
- Ground spices e.g. paprika, cumin, five spice, ginger, curry powder
- Dried fruit e.g. raisins, sultanas, apricots
- Pasta
- Rice
- Noodles
- Porridge oats

Ideas and inspiration

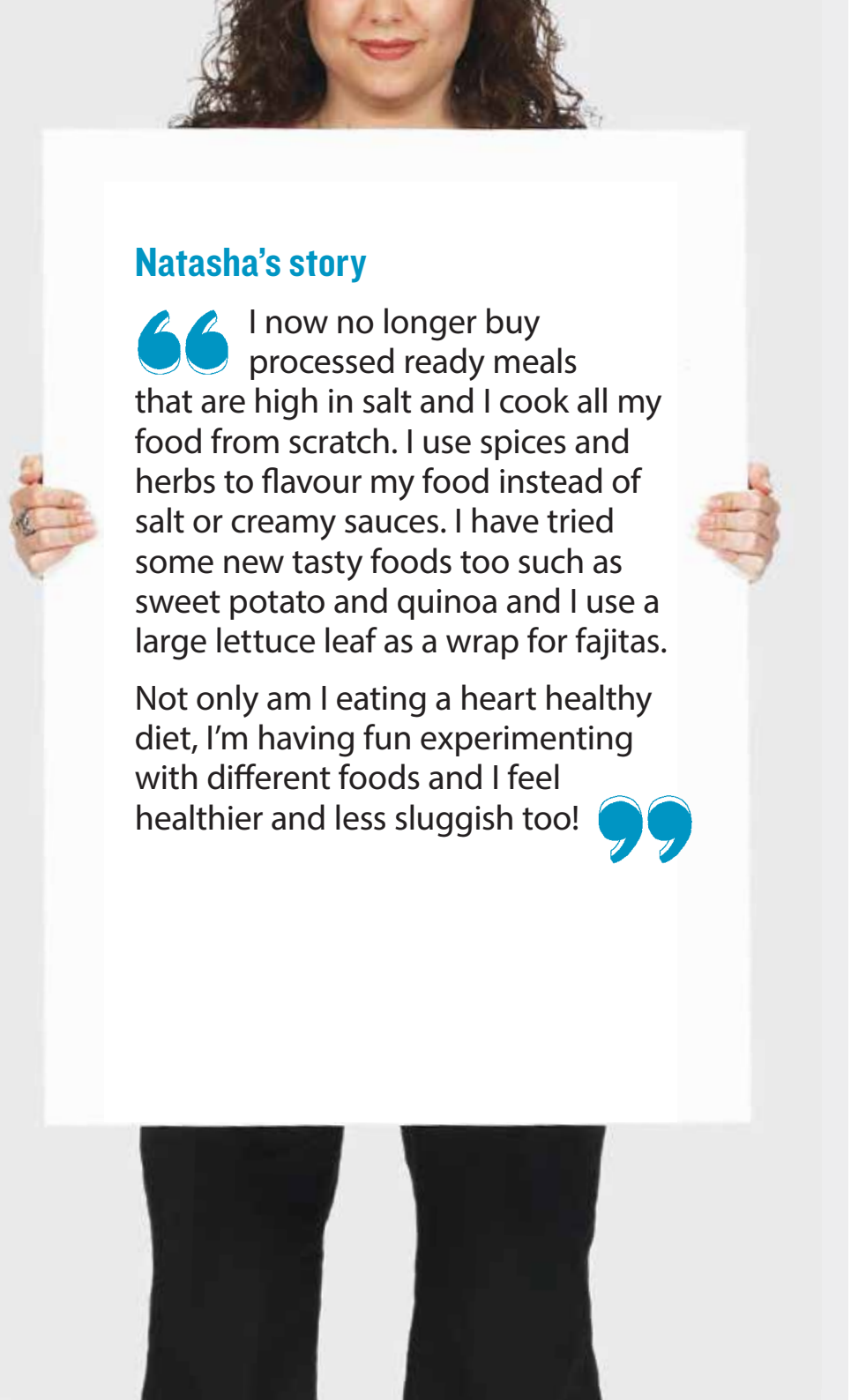
Here are some quick and easy balanced meals for you to try:

- Egg and tomato wraps
- Baked beans on wholemeal toast
- Potato salad with mackerel
- Carrot and coriander soup
- Pasta mixed with tuna and cherry tomatoes
- Spaghetti bolognese and salad
- Baked chicken, mashed potatoes and veg
- Chunky vegetable chilli
- Stir fry beef with ginger and peppers

For these and more heart healthy recipes, sign up to our free *Heart Matters* service. You'll be able to access our online recipe finder and also receive our heart matters magazine which is full of great meal ideas.

You can also download our *Healthy Heart Recipe Finder* app to your iPhone or Android smartphone. It has over 100 recipes from all over the world and a handy shopping list feature.

We also have a number of cookbooks available to buy which contain tasty recipes for healthier versions of your favourite foods. You can find them in our online shop **giftshop.bhf.org.uk** and all proceeds help to support our vital work.



Natasha's story

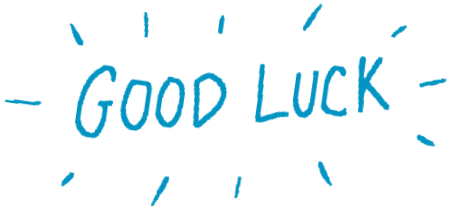
"I now no longer buy processed ready meals that are high in salt and I cook all my food from scratch. I use spices and herbs to flavour my food instead of salt or creamy sauces. I have tried some new tasty foods too such as sweet potato and quinoa and I use a large lettuce leaf as a wrap for fajitas.

Not only am I eating a heart healthy diet, I'm having fun experimenting with different foods and I feel healthier and less sluggish too!"

Keeping it going

Healthy eating shouldn't be difficult, but there may be times when you find it harder to make healthy choices or stick to your goals. Like anything new, healthy eating is a learning process. If you've eaten in a certain way for a long time, there will be times when it may feel easier to go back to your old habits.

But remember that the changes you make will benefit your health – and help your whole family too. Eating healthily will help you to **reduce your risk of heart disease** by helping to control your cholesterol levels and blood pressure and by keeping you a healthy weight. Sticking to a balanced diet will help you to stay healthy in all these ways and over time the choices you make **will become easier.**



Notes

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Resources from the British Heart Foundation (BHF)

The BHF is the nation's heart charity, dedicated to saving lives through pioneering research, patient care, campaigning for change and by providing vital information.

We produce a wide range of resources to help you and your family and friends look after your heart health – many have been mentioned throughout this booklet.

To order any of our heart health resources:

Call the BHF Orderline on 0870 600 6566
Email orderline@bhf.org.uk
Visit bhf.org.uk/publications

You can also download many of our publications from our website **bhf.org.uk**

For information about all of our resources, ask for a copy of *Our heart health catalogue* (code G5).

Inspired to make other lifestyle changes?

Eating well is only one part of keeping healthy to protect your heart. Being physically active, stopping smoking and managing stress are all important too and we have resources available to help you. Order or download the below booklets or visit **bhf.org.uk/prevention** for more information and advice.

- *Get active, stay active* (code G12)
- *Physical activity and your heart* (code HIS1)
- *Put your heart into walking* (code G26)
- *Coping with stress* (code G187)
- *Stop smoking* (code G118)

Our resources and services are free of charge, but we rely on donations to continue our vital work. If you'd like to make a donation, please call our donation hotline on 0300 330 3322 or visit our website at **bhf.org.uk/donate**. Or, please complete the form at the end of this booklet and send it to us at the address on the back cover.

Heart Matters

Heart Matters is our free, personalised service to help you live with a healthy heart. Join Heart Matters today to access benefits including *heart matters* magazine, a Helpline and an online members' area with recipes, articles and lifestyle tools. Register online at **bhf.org.uk/heartmatters** or call 0300 330 3300 (calls are charged at a similar cost to 01 or 02 numbers).

How you can help

As a charity we rely on the generosity of people like you to fund our vital work. Thousands of people with heart disease turn to us for help every year and even more will need us in the future. We want to be there for them.

There are many ways you can get involved and play a crucial role in our efforts to beat heart disease:

Become a **volunteer** and help run our shops, support local events and fundraising or even campaign for the UK's heart health – there's something for everyone.

Take part in one of our events – they're a great way for you to have fun, get fit, and save lives. Choose from cycles, runs, walks and many more.

Join our Heartstart initiative and **learn to save lives** with the skills of emergency life support. Over 2.6 million people already have.

Give to your local BHF shop – it's easy to **donate your unwanted items** to us and help us raise vital funds.

Make a one-off **donation**, set up a direct debit, give in memory or leave a gift in your Will – there's lots of ways to support us.

Shop from the heart with our **online shop** – all profits from the BHF Shop help fund our life-saving work.

For more information visit **bhf.org.uk/youcanhelp** or call 020 7554 0000.

Thank you.

Help the BHF save more lives by supporting us with a donation today

Title ☐ First Name ☐ Surname ☐

Address ☐

☐ Postcode ☐

Phone ☐

Email ☐

We would like to keep in touch with you to let you know how your support has made a difference.
By supplying your email address you agree that the BHF may use this to contact you about our work.

Please accept my gift of either £10 ☐ £15 ☐ £20 ☐ Other ☐

(Please make your cheque/postal order / CAF voucher payable to The British Heart Foundation.)

OR please debit the above sum from my:

☐ AMEX ☐ CAF Card ☐ Master Card ☐ Visa/Delta ☐ Maestro

Card No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐ (Maestro only)

Valid from ☐☐/☐☐ Expiry date ☐☐/☐☐ ☐☐☐ (security code) Issue no ☐☐ (Maestro only)

Signature ☐ Date ☐☐/☐☐/☐☐

The British Heart Foundation is the nation's heart charity, registered charity number 225971 (England and Wales) and SC039426 (Scotland).

Once completed, please return the whole of this form to:
Freepost RRZJ-LCHX-EKCR, British Heart Foundation, Greater London House, 180 Hampstead Road, London NW1 7AW.

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Make your gift worth almost a third more – at no extra cost to you!

Are you a UK taxpayer? If you are a UK taxpayer please tick the **first box** so we can claim back up to **25p** for every **£1** you give **at no extra cost to you.**

GA1 ☐ Yes, I am a UK taxpayer and would like the BHF to reclaim the tax on any of the donations I have made in the last four years and any future donations I may make.*

Date ☐☐/☐☐/☐☐

GA2 ☐ **No**, I am a non-taxpayer.

* To qualify for Gift Aid, you must pay an amount of UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the amount that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) will reclaim on your gifts for that tax year (6 April one year to 5 April the next) and you understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.

☐ If you do **not** wish to be contacted by post, please tick this box. (MP0074)

☐ If you do **not** wish to hear from us by phone, please tick this box. (MP0075)

☐ From time to time we allow other similar organisations to contact our supporters.
If you do **not** wish to be contacted by them, please tick this box. (MP0060)

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