Eating well
Keeping food fun and good for your heart
The British Heart Foundation and healthy eating

There are lots of good reasons for you and your family to eat healthily. A good diet, in combination with being physically active, is an important part of staying healthy and making sure that children grow well. It can help you to maintain a healthy body weight and also keep your blood cholesterol levels and blood pressure down. So this means that, in the long term, it can also help to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, strokes, certain forms of cancer, and diabetes.

Eating well

The British Heart Foundation (BHF) thinks that, as well as being ‘good for you’, eating healthily should be enjoyable too. If it’s enjoyable, you’re more likely to carry on eating healthily. Eating a wide variety of foods means you won’t get bored with your food, as you’ll be able to eat foods with lots of different tastes and textures and maybe even try some new foods too.

Eating healthily is great for all ages. It’s a good idea to get younger family members in the habit early, but it’s never too late to start. Working on eating healthily as a family is a great challenge, and doing it together means you can support each other to make changes that last, too.

The BHF wants to help you choose the best sorts of foods for you and your family, and to be able to combine these into a balanced diet. This booklet will give you all the information you need, as well as practical tips and ideas for how you can put it all into practice.

Eating well is for everyone who wants to look after their health, eat more healthily and reduce their risk of heart disease. So – whether you’re eating at home or eating out, whether you’re having a lazy day or you’re on the run – we’re here to help you make healthier food choices… and enjoy doing it!

This guide does not replace the advice your health professionals may give you based on their knowledge of your condition.
Contents

What is heart disease? 2
What is healthy eating? 5
Feeding the family 29
How do I know what changes I need to make? 35
Making it happen! 39
Going shopping 45
Weight management – overweight and underweight 53
What does a healthy diet look like? 57
Planning meals 63
Small changes add up! 73
Eating out 79
Keeping it going 82
Getting creative in the kitchen 84
How the British Heart Foundation can help you 100
Index 105
What is heart disease?

The most common form of heart disease among adults is called **coronary heart disease**. It happens when the coronary arteries – the arteries that bring oxygen-rich blood to your heart muscle – become blocked or narrowed because of fatty deposits called atheroma.

**Angina** is the chest pain or discomfort that can occur when your heart does not get enough blood and oxygen because the coronary arteries have become narrowed. Angina can be brought on by physical activity or emotional stress, or it can sometimes happen when you are resting.

If a piece of atheroma breaks off it may cause a blood clot to form. This blood clot may block the coronary artery, causing part of the heart to be starved of oxygen-rich blood and may become permanently damaged. This is a **heart attack**.
What increases the risk of heart disease?

Coronary heart disease is more likely to happen if you have certain risk factors. (A risk factor is something that increases the risk of getting a disease.) The main risk factors for coronary heart disease are:

- smoking
- high blood pressure
- high blood cholesterol
- physical inactivity
- being overweight
- diabetes, and
- having a family history of coronary heart disease.

High blood cholesterol can increase your risk of developing coronary heart disease. A common cause of high blood cholesterol levels is too much fat in the diet, especially saturated fat. Occasionally people can have high levels due to an inherited condition. Cholesterol is carried around the body by proteins. These combinations of cholesterol and proteins are called lipoproteins.

There are two main types:

**LDL** (low density lipoproteins) is the harmful type of cholesterol. This is sometimes called LDL cholesterol.

**HDL** (high density lipoproteins) is a protective type of cholesterol. It is sometimes called HDL cholesterol.

High blood pressure (hypertension) can increase your risk of getting coronary heart disease, and having a stroke. The following can all increase the risk of high blood pressure: being overweight, eating too much salt, drinking too much alcohol, and physical inactivity.
The eatwell plate shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group. This includes everything you eat during the day, including snacks.

**So, 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 foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar**

Look at the eatwell plate to see how much of your food should come from each food group. You don’t need to get the balance right at every meal. But try to get it right over time such as a whole day or week.

**Try to choose options that are lower in fat, salt and sugar when you can.**

The Eatwell plate appears courtesy of the Food Standards Agency. © Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and Queen’s Printer for Scotland.
What is healthy eating?

There are no single foods or ‘one size fits all’ menus that you need to follow to eat healthily. All foods can be included in a healthy, balanced 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 foods from some food groups, and less foods from other groups. The eatwell plate above shows how to balance the different food groups to make up a healthy, balanced diet.
Despite what many people think, healthy eating really isn’t about excluding foods. It’s about eating a wide variety of foods, but just eating them in the right proportions.

A lot of people say healthy eating is about eating everything in moderation, but this isn’t strictly true. We need to eat more of some things and less of others.

**So how much should we be eating of the different food groups each day and why?**
Fruit and vegetables

It’s important to eat fruit and vegetables, because research has shown that eating a diet that includes a wide range of fruit and vegetables is good for your heart and can help to reduce the risk of developing coronary heart disease. These foods provide us with vitamins and minerals and contain a lot of water, which means that their energy (calorie) content is relatively low. The fibre they contain also makes them filling to eat and helps keep our digestive system healthy.

About a third of the food we eat should be made up of fruit and vegetables. **Aim to have at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day.** Also, try to eat a variety of different types of fruit and vegetables, so that you can benefit from all the different nutrients they can offer.

**There are five ways to get your five a day – they can be fresh, frozen, tinned (in juice or water), dried or juiced.**

Juice only counts as one portion a day. Pulses like kidney beans, chick peas and haricot beans can also be included in your five a day, but only as one portion a day, however much you eat.
How much is a portion?

An adult portion is 80g (about 3oz) of fresh, frozen or tinned fruit or vegetables (or the equivalent if it is dried fruit), or 150ml (about 30g, 1oz) if you are having juice. Some examples of one portion are given in the box below. **Or, a good guide is that a portion is about a handful.**

Children should also have five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, but the portion size should be adjusted to the child. The handful measurement works well for children too. Use your child’s handful as a guide for the right portion for them. This means that as they grow, so will their portion size. It’s good to get children in the habit of having fruit and vegetables five times a day from an early age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much is one portion?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fresh fruit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small fruits: 2 or more – for example, 2 plums, 2 satsumas, 2-3 apricots, 7-8 strawberries or 14 cherries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium fruit: 1 medium fruit – for example, 1 apple, banana, pear, orange or nectarine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large fruits – for example, half a grapefruit, 1 slice of papaya, 1 slice of melon (2-inch slice), 1 large slice of pineapple, or 2 slices of mango (2-inch slices)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dried fruit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tablespoon of raisins, currants, sultanas or mixed fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 dried figs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 dried prunes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**What is healthy eating?**

An adult portion is 80g (about 3oz) of fresh, frozen or tinned fruit or vegetables (or the equivalent if it is dried fruit), or 150ml (about 30g, 1oz) if you are having juice. Some examples of one portion are given in the box below.

Or, a good guide is that a portion is about a handful.

Children should also have five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, but the portion size should be adjusted to the child. The handful measurement works well for children too. Use your child’s handful as a guide for the right portion for them. This means that as they grow, so will their portion size. It’s good to get children in the habit of having fruit and vegetables five times a day from an early age.

### Portion sizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tinned or frozen fruit and vegetables</th>
<th>Roughly the same quantity of fruit or vegetables that you would eat as a fresh portion – for example: 2 pear or peach halves 8 segments of tinned grapefruit 3 heaped tablespoons of carrots, peas or sweetcorn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juices</td>
<td>A glass (150ml) of 100% juice (pure, unsweetened fruit juice, or vegetable juice, or smoothie*).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only counts as one portion a day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green vegetables</td>
<td>2 broccoli spears 4 heaped tablespoons of cabbage, spring greens or green beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooked vegetables</td>
<td>3 heaped tablespoons of cooked vegetables – for example, carrots, peas or sweetcorn 3-8 cauliflower florets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salad vegetables</td>
<td>2-inch piece of cucumber 1 medium tomato 7 cherry tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulses and beans</td>
<td>3 heaped tablespoons of baked beans, haricot beans, kidney beans, cannellini beans, butter beans or chick peas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only counts as one portion a day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Smoothies can also be counted as two portions a day provided a portion contains 80g whole fruit and 150mls juice.
Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods

These are the foods you should base your meals around. As well as bread, rice, potatoes and pasta, this food group includes chapattis, naan, yam, plantain and cous cous. **Choose wholegrain or higher-fibre versions of these starchy foods whenever you can.**

Starchy foods are filling to eat, especially if you choose the higher-fibre and wholegrain versions. The fibre is important to keep your digestive system healthy. These foods also provide energy that is released slowly, so they will keep you going until your next mealtime and make you less tempted to snack in between meals. Foods in this group often get a bad reputation for being fattening, but that’s only really true if you add lots of fat to them while you’re cooking or preparing them to eat. Bake, boil or steam starchy foods, rather than frying them. And avoid adding fat once they are cooked – for example, don’t add butter to mashed potatoes or chappatis, or creamy sauces to pasta or rice.

**About a third of the food you eat needs to be made up of the foods in this food group, and you should include some with each meal.** The exact quantity needed varies from person to person. The more active you are, the more you will need to eat.

“If I buy wholemeal bread, the kids won’t eat it.”

It can be difficult, but do persist. Try giving them wholegrain products in different ways, to get them used to the taste and texture. Wholegrain cereals, pitta breads, wraps or rolls are all good options. Or try ‘half and half’ sandwiches with one slice of white bread and one of wholegrain.
Milk and dairy foods

These foods are important for protein and calcium, and also provide vitamins A and B$_{12}$. However, the fat content varies a lot between different foods in this group and much of the fat they contain is saturated. Choosing lower-fat options – such as semi-skimmed, 1% or skimmed milk, and low-fat yoghurts – will mean that you can benefit from protein, calcium and other nutrients in the milk, but have less or virtually no saturated fat to go with it.

**As a guide, two to three portions of milk and dairy foods a day should be enough to meet the average adult’s requirements for calcium.** This includes milk in hot drinks and on cereal, and milk that you have as a drink, as well as yoghurts and cheese.

If you don’t drink milk or eat dairy foods, it may be useful 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

It’s important to include meat, fish, eggs and vegetarian alternatives in your diet, as these provide vitamins and minerals including iron, and also provide protein. **So include these foods two or three times a day.**

Both red and white meat can be included within a balanced diet, but choose lean cuts, remove visible fat and skin, and cook them without adding fat wherever possible. If you’re using minced meat, go for the extra lean version.

It’s also important to have fish, especially oily fish. Oily fish includes, for example, salmon, sardines, trout and pilchards. **Aim to have one portion of oily fish a week.** People who have had a heart attack will need to eat more oily fish than this. If you have had a heart attack, have two to three portions of oily fish a week.

If your family isn’t keen on eating fish, try making baked fish cakes or a fish pie to gradually get them used to the taste and texture. Or try the recipe for oven-baked salmon on page 97. Try to choose fish that has been sustainably caught and farmed. You can do this by checking the information on the packaging and on supermarket websites.
**Processed meats** like chicken nuggets, burgers, pies, fish fingers, sausages and ham are popular choices. While it is fine to include these foods in a varied diet from time to time, they can sometimes have a lot of added fat or salt.

Use the traffic-light labels on the front of the pack, or read the nutrition information labels carefully, to find out more about how much fat and salt they contain. See page 47 for more information on what to look for on labels.

If you or your family are **vegetarian**, or if you include vegetarian meals as part of a varied diet, it’s important to include foods from this food group – such as beans and pulses – and not to rely too heavily on dairy foods for your protein.

This will help to make sure you get enough iron and protein in your diet and also help to keep the saturated fat content down. Make sure you choose a variety of foods from the wide range of beans, lentils, tofu, micoprotein like Quorn, and eggs and nuts.

**How many eggs can you eat a week?**

There is no recommended limit on how many eggs people 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. Try to eat a variety of foods each week to get the wide range of nutrients you need.
Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar

The smallest section on the eatwell plate on page 4 – but needing a big mention – are the foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar. This group includes things like cakes, crisps, sweets, chocolate, and sugary, fizzy drinks. These tend to be the items we need to cut down on, or make changes to, in order to eat more healthily. While they are nice to eat and can be included within a balanced diet, they are not essential, everyday foods. **Aim to have only small amounts of these foods.**
You can use food labels to guide you to healthier versions of these foods or healthier alternatives (see page 47). Also, 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 by avoiding them altogether on other days.

This food group includes not only the foods that are high in fat and sugar, but also the fats and sugars that we add to food ourselves. This means the oils and fats we use in cooking, spreads and butter that we use for spreading or baking, as well as the sugar, syrup, treacle and honey that we add to some foods and drinks. Try to keep down the amount of fats you add by using only a thin spread on breads and toast, and by measuring oil with a spoon or using spray oil.

**Barriers to healthy eating**

“The biscuits I like are often on special offer, so it’s cheaper to buy three packets than to buy them singly.”

This is often the case but, if you don’t need three packets, it can mean you end up eating more than you had planned. Think about splitting the offer with a friend so that you benefit from the cost saving, but don’t end up eating three times the amount of biscuits. Or even better, try looking for alternative snacks that are lower in fat, and sugar.
Fats explained

As well as keeping an eye on the total amount of fat you eat, **choosing the right type of fat is also important for heart health.** We explain more about the different types of fats below. Keep to a minimum the amount of saturated fat you have, by avoiding fats like butter, lard, ghee and dripping. Instead, choose unsaturated fats like olive, rapeseed, sunflower, corn and soya oils and spreads.

All fats and oils are high in calories, so they should be used only in small amounts. However, it’s also important to know about the different types of fats and which foods they are found in.

*Saturated fats – Avoid these wherever possible.*
Saturated fats are found in high amounts in fats like butter, lard, ghee, palm oil, coconut oil and dripping. Saturated fat can increase total cholesterol and the harmful LDL cholesterol. (LDL cholesterol increases the risk of fatty deposits developing in your arteries.)

*Monounsaturated fats – Have these in small amounts.*
The main sources of these fats in the diet are olive oil and rapeseed oil and spreads made from these oils, as well as meat, and some nuts and seeds. Monounsaturated fats can help to lower the LDL cholesterol level.

*Polyunsaturated fats – Have these in small amounts.*
Polyunsaturated fats are found, for example, in soya, sunflower and corn oil and spreads, as well as in nuts and seeds and in oily fish. They are an important part of the diet, as they provide essential fatty acids. **Omega-3 fats** found in oily fish are a particular type of polyunsaturated fat that can help protect heart health. Try and have at least one portion of oily fish a week. Or, if you have had a heart attack, have two to three portions a week.
Trans fats – Avoid these wherever possible.
Trans fats occur naturally in small amounts in dairy foods and meat, but individually produced trans fats are produced when oils are processed into a solid fat through the hydrogenation process. The trans fats formed in this way have a different effect on the body to the original liquid oils and instead have a similar effect to saturated fats. These fats are most likely to be found in foods like biscuits, cakes, pastries and deep fried foods but the good news is that many food manufacturers now remove trans fats from the fats and oils they use.

What about foods with added plant stanols and sterols?
Plant ‘stanols’ and ‘sterols’ are substances that are added to some foods, including spreads, soft cheeses and yoghurts. Plant stanols and sterols are not routinely recommended, but there is evidence that consistently eating 2g of plant sterols and stanols a day can help reduce cholesterol. Research studies have suggested that having this amount on a regular basis could reduce LDL cholesterol levels by 10% to 15%, but the effect varies between individuals. (LDL cholesterol is the harmful type of cholesterol. See page 3.)

However, it’s important to remember that plant stanols and sterols are not a substitute for a healthy diet, and are not a replacement for cholesterol-lowering drugs. If you decide to use these products, follow the manufacturer’s instructions on how much of the food you need to have each day in order to get 2g of the plant stanol or sterol.

Plant stanols and sterols are not recommended for children under five, or for breastfeeding or pregnant women.
Flavouring food – Salt

Eating too much salt can increase the risk of developing high blood pressure, but it can be a difficult habit to break because we get used to a certain amount of salt in our food.

The recommended maximum amount of salt for adults is 6 grams a day – about a teaspoon – but at the moment adults in the UK, on average, have more than that. It’s also important for children to cut down on salt, to help prevent them becoming used to a high-salt diet from an early age. If they don’t get used to salty foods when they are young, they are more likely to carry on a preference for less salty foods into adulthood.

But it’s not just about the salt that you add to your food yourself. You may be surprised to know that most of the salt we eat comes from processed foods. There can be a lot of salt not just in ready meals and fast foods, but also in everyday foods like bread and breakfast cereals.

Although salt levels in foods in the UK have been getting lower, we’re still eating too much salt, so make sure you check the food labels to see how much salt is in the products you are buying and go for the ones with the least salt in them. (See Salt labelling on the page below.)
It is the sodium in salt that contributes to high blood pressure, so some food labels give figures for sodium rather than salt.

To convert sodium into salt you need to multiply by 2.5. For example, 0.5g sodium = 1.25g salt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended maximum amounts of salt per day – for adults and children</th>
<th>Salt</th>
<th>Sodium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men and women</td>
<td>6g</td>
<td>2.5g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 years and over</td>
<td>6g</td>
<td>2.5g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10 years</td>
<td>5g</td>
<td>2.0g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>3g</td>
<td>1.2g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>2g</td>
<td>0.8g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Salt labelling – high and low salt**

To find out if a particular food is low, medium or high in salt, find the ‘per 100g’ figure for salt or sodium on the Nutrition information panel on the food packaging, and compare it with the figures below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A healthier choice</td>
<td>OK most of the time</td>
<td>Just occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>0.3g or less per 100g</td>
<td>More than 1.5g per 100g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td>0.1g or less per 100g</td>
<td>More than 0.6g per 100g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is healthy eating?
A pestle and mortar is a great (and fun) way to combine herbs and spices. Create your own combinations.
Variety is the spice

Instead of automatically reaching for the salt, why not think of other ways to pack flavour into your food? Fresh herbs add both colour and flavour, while dried herbs and spices are convenient to keep in the store cupboard to add flavour when you need to. Don’t forget to use other flavourings too – like lemon, garlic, ginger, chilli or a grind of black pepper.

Avoid ready-made mixed seasonings, as many of these include a lot of salt.

Barriers to healthy eating
“Food has no flavour if you take the salt out of it. Should I use a reduced-salt alternative?”
Replacing table salt with a reduced-salt alternative will reduce the amount of sodium you consume (although these products do still contain some sodium), but as it still tastes salty, it won’t help you to adjust to a less salty taste. Reduce the amount of salt you use gradually, to give your taste buds time to adjust. And try using herbs, spices or lemon juice to flavour your food instead of salt.

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 these products.
Drinks

It’s also important to think about what you drink. Keeping hydrated is an important part of keeping healthy, so you need to have regular drinks.

**The amount of fluid you need each day will vary.** If you do more activity than usual, or if you have a temperature, or if it’s a hot day, you will need to drink more. We get some of our fluid from the food we eat, but we need to drink some too.

**As a guide, we need about 6 to 8 drinks a day.** *(A drink is estimated as 150ml.)*
**Cold drinks**
Water is a good choice, but you can include other non-alcoholic drinks as part of your fluid intake. Pure unsweetened fruit juices are nutritious options and count as one of your five portions of fruits and vegetables. If you have these juices, it’s better to include them as part of a meal rather than as a drink to quench your thirst throughout the day.

Although pure fruit juices are nutritious, they are quite acidic so it’s better for your teeth if you have them as part of a meal. **Try to avoid fizzy drinks that contain a lot of sugar and therefore energy (calories),** and choose sugar-free alternatives instead. Again, because these drinks are acidic, it is 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 within your fluid intake but it’s important that this isn’t your only source of fluid. This is because there are compounds in these drinks that can bind with iron in the food you eat, making it harder for your body to absorb the nutrient. So try not to drink tea or coffee with meals.

This is particularly important for people who are vegetarian and for children, especially young children. If you’re pregnant, it’s important not to have too much caffeine. Pregnant women should have no more than 200mg of caffeine a day. A mug of instant coffee contains 100mg of caffeine, and a mug of tea contains 75mg.
Alcohol

If you drink alcohol, it is important to keep within the sensible limits – whether you drink every day, once or twice a week, or just occasionally.

**Men should not regularly drink more than 3 to 4 units of alcohol a day.**

**Women should not regularly drink more than 2 to 3 units of alcohol a day.**

---

**1 unit of alcohol =**

a small glass (100ml) of wine (10% ABV [alcohol by volume])

or

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

or

a pub measure (25ml) of spirits

---

There may be some benefits to 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.

It’s also important to remember that alcohol has quite a high energy (calorie) content and so this can be a factor if you’re trying to manage your weight.
How to find out how many units of alcohol there are in a drink?

Some drink bottles and cans now state how many units of alcohol are in the drink. Or, to work out how many units of alcohol there are in a drink, just multiply the volume in millilitres by the ABV (alcohol by volume) figure and divide by 1,000.

Example: For a 300ml can of beer of 5% ABV:

\[ 300 \times 5 \div 1,000 = 1.5 \text{ units of alcohol} \]

How many units are there in a glass of wine?

A standard small glass of wine in a pub is 175ml and a large glass is 250ml. So, a 175ml glass of a 12% ABV wine will contain 2 units of alcohol and a 250ml glass will contain 3 units. The ABV varies between different wines – check the label on the bottle.
Because my parents are French, we’d always have salad at mealtimes, and I like my greens. Having kids really helps to focus your mind on eating well too. We’re lucky because, although my children are picky eaters, they don’t like fat or cream and don’t even put salt on their food. Not that we’re perfect – far from it.

When we’re very busy we sometimes fall back on ready meals, but after a few days it really makes you want healthy, home-cooked food. Try growing your own veg if you can – they taste better and it gives you a real sense of satisfaction.

Claire Appleby
38, Berkshire
Feeding the family

Healthy eating is suitable for the whole family. But as well as thinking about what we eat, it’s also important to think about how we eat. Families are changing and our lives are getting busier, and this has undoubtedly had an impact on our eating habits.
Having regular meals

Try to make sure that you and your family – especially growing children – have a regular meal pattern. Having three meals a day, with nutritious snacks in between if required, is important to make sure they (and you) get the variety and amount of food needed to have a balanced, nutritious diet.

It’s also important not to go for long periods between meals, to **make sure that you don’t get too hungry**. This can help you to avoid over-eating when you have your next meal, or picking at unhealthy snacks in between meals.

---

**Barriers to healthy eating**

“We don’t have time to eat breakfast in the morning.”

Breakfast doesn’t have to be at home! Take a bowl and a box of cereal to keep on your desk at work for when you get in. If you find it difficult to eat in the morning, try having just a piece of fruit or a yoghurt to start with. Or try the recipe for a banana breakfast smoothie on page 86.

Once you get used to eating something in the morning, you can build it up to make a more balanced breakfast. If you have children, their school might have a breakfast club that they might enjoy, especially if they don’t like eating first thing in the morning.
Healthy eating for the under-fives

Children under five have slightly different dietary requirements to older children. They need a lot of energy (calories) relative to their size and they have small stomachs – which means that they can’t eat a lot of food in one go. As a result, young children need to eat more fat in order to meet their energy needs, and they should have nutritious snacks to supplement their main meals.

**A pattern of offering three meals and three to four snacks a day is about right**, but remember that their appetite will vary from day to day. It may be better to give them a smaller portion and let them have more if they want it, rather than giving them a large portion that they are overwhelmed by before they have even started to eat.
SNACK IDEAS FOR UNDER-FIVES

1. Mashed avocado on squares of toast
2. Fingers of toasted pitta and red pepper with hummus dip
3. Currant bun or malt loaf with unsaturated spread
4. Pieces of toasted bagel with cream cheese and cucumber
5. Chopped banana with natural yoghurt
Eating a diet that’s slightly higher in fat doesn’t mean that toddlers should have lots of cakes, crisps and biscuits. The early years are a time when children are learning about eating norms and are developing eating patterns, so it’s important to establish good eating habits early on.

Like older children and adults, toddlers can quickly develop a preference for sugary, salty and fatty foods, and while it is fine to have these foods every now and then, children’s energy (calories) should come from a variety of sources which not only provide energy and protein, but which will also give them vitamins and minerals, making the most of every eating opportunity.

While for older children and adults we recommend low-fat versions of milk and dairy products, it’s a good idea to keep young children on full-fat milk as a main drink until the age of two. After that, and if they are growing well, they can start having semi-skimmed milk. However, don’t start giving them skimmed milk or 1% milk until they are five.

As children move from being toddlers to school-aged children, the fat content of the diet can be gradually reduced so that, by the age of five, children are eating a mixed and varied diet that includes low-fat dairy products and lean meats as the norm.
How do I know what changes I need to make?

People tend to under-report what they are eating and over-estimate the amount of physical activity they do. So people can often think they are already eating foods in the right proportions for a healthy diet when really they’re not.

Try filling out a food diary for a few days and you might be surprised! See page 37.
Keeping a food diary is useful for three reasons...

- It can help to show you which changes to your diet are likely to be most useful to you.
- It can show you patterns in your eating that you may not have noticed before.
- You can use it to monitor whether you have achieved your healthy eating goals. (See pages 40-43.)

It’s very easy to keep a food diary. For a few days or a week, just write down everything you eat and drink throughout the day. Keep a food diary like the one below in a notebook that you can carry around with you, so you don’t forget to write things down. You can use the information on pages 9-17 to find out which food groups your food comes from.

Check to make sure that you are having foods from the first four food groups every day and that you are having the right number of portions. And keep an eye on the amount of food and drinks high in fat and sugar that you are having. See pages 16 and 17.

**Use the information you get from your food diary to help you to work out which areas you might need to work on.**
Fill in your food diary…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day and Time</th>
<th>What I ate or drank</th>
<th>Food groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include how much (for example, 1 cup, 1 teaspoon, 2 slices)</td>
<td>Fruit and veg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>SMALL BOWL OF WHOLEGRAIN CEREAL WITH SEMI-SKIMMED MILK. SMALL GLASS OF ORANGE JUICE.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do I know what changes I need to make?
Making it happen!

Sometimes, even if you have a key motivating factor for eating more healthily – such as losing weight, or preventing heart disease, or managing a heart condition – it can be difficult to stick to the changes you want to make.

When you’re trying to make any changes to your eating habits, you might find it helpful to set yourself some goals.
Setting goals

Once you are ready to make a change, it can be really helpful to set yourself goals, as they help you to focus on making realistic changes that will make a difference to your lifestyle. **If you set your own goals, they will be personal to you – which 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 “Our family is going to eat more healthily,” think about exactly how that will happen. For example, do you need to eat more fruit and vegetables, or make sure everyone eats breakfast, or perhaps change the foods you have as snacks?

**Measurable**

Be able to measure your success. How many portions of fruit and vegetables are you going to eat? Or, on how many days will you eat breakfast? By making your goal measurable, you will be able to check whether you have 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. Envisage your end goal and break it up into small, achievable steps that you can work towards until you reach your final goal.

**Relevant**

Setting goals to change things that don’t really need changing won’t help you. For example, if you already eat 5 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. Specify when or how often you will make the change – for example, every day, or every weekday morning, or twice a week, and when you will have achieved it by. This will make it easier for you to work out if you have achieved your goal.

---

**Making it happen!**
Test yourself

Which of the following are the S.M.A.R.T goals?

Question 1
☐ A  I will never eat chocolate again.
☐ B  I will only eat a fun-size chocolate bar after my evening meal twice a week.
☐ C  I will eat less chocolate.

Question 2
☐ A  I will eat ten different fruits and ten different vegetables every day (including weekends) from now on.
☐ B  I will eat an apple instead of a pear after my evening meal.
☐ C  I will swap my biscuits in the morning for a piece of fruit on weekdays.

Question 3
☐ A  I will draw up a list of healthy snacks with the kids this week so we can agree what to buy next week.
☐ B  I will make the kids eat healthily this week.
☐ C  I will give the kids carrot sticks in place of all other snacks from now on.
Answers

1 = B
‘A’ is unlikely to be achievable ‘C’ is not measurable or time-specific.

2 = C
‘A’ is unlikely to be achievable every day ‘B’ is not a relevant change.

3 = A
‘B’ is not measurable. ‘C’ is probably unachievable and unrealistic.

Write your first S.M.A.R.T goals here...
Just set yourself one or two goals to start with. Once you have achieved these, you can set yourself some more goals. If you need help with setting your goals, ask your practice nurse for advice.

1. ________________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________

2. _______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
Going shopping

A trip to the shops to buy food should be simple, but how often have you gone to buy one item, only to return with a basketful of food? Or how often have you gone shopping without a list and come out with a range of foods which it’s then difficult to make meals from?
Next time you go shopping, try these tips to help you.

1. Always take a list
Work out what you need and when you are going to use it. Doing this before you go shopping will help to make sure you have all the ingredients you need to make the healthy meals you’ve planned. It could also have a cost benefit. **If you only buy what you need, there’s likely to be less going to waste.**

2. Never go shopping when you’re hungry
It’s an old tip, but a good one. It’s much more difficult to avoid temptation if you’re hungry. Go to the shops after a meal, or have a healthy snack like a piece of fruit before you go. **You’ll find it much easier to buy just the foods you had planned to buy.**

3. When is a bargain not a bargain?
We all love to save money, but if the special offers are on foods that are high in fat, saturated fat, salt or sugar, you need to ask yourself whether you really need them. **Just because they are cheaper doesn’t mean you need to put them in your trolley.** With offers like ‘buy one, get one free’ or ‘three for two’, it also means that you might end up with large amounts of less healthy foods in your cupboards. And if they’re there, you’re more likely to eat them.

**Eat First, Then Shop**
Be a food detective!

There is a lot of information on food packets that we can use to inform our choices, but often we don’t use it. Get to grips with front-of-pack food labels, to help you to **compare products and make healthier choices**.

**Food labelling**

Use food labels to give you the inside information on the food you are buying. **There are several different types of labels.**

Most foods have a **Nutrition information** panel like the one on page 48, either on the back or side of the pack. Find the ‘per 100g’ figures, and compare them with the low, medium and high figures shown in the box below.

For example, this food contains 0.4g of saturated fat per 100g, so it is low in saturated fat and a healthy choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All measures per 100g</th>
<th>Low A healthier choice</th>
<th>Medium OK most of the time</th>
<th>High Just occasionally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sugars</strong></td>
<td>5g or less</td>
<td>5.1g - 15g</td>
<td>More than 15g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fat</strong></td>
<td>3g or less</td>
<td>3.1g - 20g</td>
<td>More than 20g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saturates</strong></td>
<td>1.5g or less</td>
<td>1.6g - 5g</td>
<td>More than 5g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salt</strong></td>
<td>0.30g or less</td>
<td>0.31g - 1.5g</td>
<td>More than 1.5g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Going shopping
## Watercress Soup

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Per 100g</th>
<th>Per Portion</th>
<th>GDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>36 kcal</td>
<td>153 kcal</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars</td>
<td>2.2 g (Low)</td>
<td>9.4 g</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>1.1 g (Low)</td>
<td>4.6 g</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates</td>
<td>0.4 g (Low)</td>
<td>1.6 g</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>0.2 g (Low)</td>
<td>1.0 g</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
But to make it easier for people to make healthy choices, many manufacturers and retailers now provide ‘at a glance’ nutritional information on the front of packs.

Traffic-light coloured labels show you if a food has high (red), medium (amber), or low (green) amounts of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt in 100g of the food.

**Some labels show how much a particular food contributes towards your guideline daily amounts (GDAs) for key nutrients.** The guideline daily amounts for the most important nutrients listed on the food labels are shown in the box below. For example, a serving of this food contains 8% of the guideline daily amount for calories, and 7% of the guideline daily amount for total fat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline daily amounts</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women (also used as general adult GDA figures on packaging)</th>
<th>Children (aged 5-10 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
<td>2,500kcal</td>
<td>2,000kcal</td>
<td>1,800kcal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total fat</td>
<td>95g</td>
<td>70g</td>
<td>70g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates</td>
<td>30g</td>
<td>20g</td>
<td>20g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>6g</td>
<td>6g</td>
<td>4g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>120g</td>
<td>90g</td>
<td>85g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research has shown that consumers find a labelling model that combines traffic-light colours, GDAs and the words ‘high’, ‘medium’ and ‘low’ the clearest and simplest way to understand nutritional information about the food they buy. See our booklet *Guide to food labelling* for more information.
Overcoming pester power

If you have children and you take them to the supermarket with you when you do the shopping, you may find that they often pester you to buy certain foods. **The following ideas may help you have a stress-free shop.**

- Get your children involved by letting them help you write the shopping list. Give them some choices about what goes on it. For example, let them decide what fruit to buy for their lunchboxes.

- Listen to them when they ask for certain foods, rather than immediately saying “No.” Sympathise, but then explain why they can’t have it.

- When you say “No,” mean it! If your children think you might change your mind, they’ll carry on asking.

- If you have older children, relieve the boredom of food shopping by giving them items from the list to go and get from different aisles. It will speed up the whole shopping trip too.

- Try to go to shops that don’t have sweets on the checkout. If you were a child, would you be able to resist the temptation?
I was very frightened when I found out I had to have a heart bypass. It never occurred to me I was at risk, even though I weighed 15 stone, smoked and didn’t exercise. The fear made me turn my lifestyle around overnight, 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!

“Judy Casey
66, Devon”
Weight management – overweight and underweight

It can be difficult for people to achieve and maintain a healthy weight for a variety of reasons. Some people find it difficult to put on enough weight, while others struggle to keep the weight off. But whether you are trying to lose or gain weight, it’s important not to forget the basics of healthy eating in the process.
Trying to lose weight?

If you want to lose weight, your aim is to consume less energy (calories) than you use up, so that you have a shortfall of around 600kcal per day.

- Make sure you have a regular eating pattern of three meals a day, including breakfast.
- Cut down on high-fat and high-sugar foods that are energy-dense (high in calories), and eat more fruit, vegetables and salad.
- Even if you already have a balanced diet, you can still have too much of a good thing. Check that your portion sizes haven’t crept up.
- Get moving. Try to reduce the amount of time you spend in sitting-down activities like working on the computer or watching TV. Use the stairs where you can, walk instead of using the bus or car for short journeys, and think of active leisure activities that you might enjoy.

It can be tempting to go for a diet that offers a quick fix, but gradual weight loss really is a better option.

**Aim to lose no more than 0.5kg to 1kg (1 or 2 pounds) a week.**

For more information on losing weight, see our booklets *So you want to lose weight… for good* which includes an eating plan that will help you to lose weight and make changes to your diet, or *Take control of your weight* which is helpful if you have a lot of weight to lose and want to know what options are available to you.
Trying to gain weight?

For some people, gaining weight can be a life-long struggle, but if you have lost weight suddenly or unintentionally you should see your GP.

If you want to increase your weight, you need to be consuming more energy (calories) than you are using up.

**Aim for a steady increase of 0.5kg to 1kg (1 to 2 pounds) a month.**

To achieve this, you will need to increase the amount of food you eat and increase the energy (calorie) content of your meals. The most efficient way to do this is by increasing the amount of starchy carbohydrates and fat that you eat.

- Make sure you have a regular meal pattern and eat three meals a day, including breakfast.
- Try slightly increasing the size of your portions. Have an extra slice of toast at breakfast, or another spoon of pasta, rice or potato with your evening meal.
- Include more healthy fats in your diet. For example, use unsaturated spreads on bread and toast and in salad dressings, and snack on unsalted nuts and seeds.
What does a healthy diet look like?

Healthy diets are diets that vary from day to day and include a wide variety of foods. To give you an idea of what a healthy diet might look like, we’ve created an example ‘eating plan’ for a day.
Healthy eating plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Meal/Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>Wholegrain cereal with semi-skimmed milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 slice of toast with low-fat spread and jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small glass of orange juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-morning</td>
<td>3 dried apricots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Tuna and cucumber sandwich (using low-fat spread, on two slices of bread)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 slice of malt loaf or scone (no spread)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>2 rich tea biscuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Lean minced beef/soya/Quorn chilli cooked with a small amount of oil and tinned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 medium baked potato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broccoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fresh fruit salad or tinned fruit in juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low-fat yoghurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the evening</td>
<td>Cup of low fat milky drink or small glass of wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the day</td>
<td>Water or sugar-free squash with meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One third of a pint of semi-skimmed milk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Children and weight

We’re hearing more and more about our children’s weight and this is a real concern for parents these days. As children grow and develop, their body shapes change, so it can be difficult to tell if children are the right weight for their height.

If your child is overweight, or you are worried that they might be, it’s a good idea to get some advice from a trained health professional. Talk to your practice nurse or health visitor. They may be able to give you advice or refer you to a dietitian if necessary. Weight loss diets designed for adults are not suitable for children, so getting support from a health professional can help you to tackle this as a family.
Prevention is always better than cure, however, so get your children on the right path from the start. Simple ideas to help keep your children at a healthy weight

- Avoid fizzy drinks. Offer water or sugar-free squashes instead.
- Always have fruit available as a snack in an easy-to-reach place.
- Don’t give in to pester power at the supermarket, to avoid having tempting snacks at home later.
- Try to make the journey to school as active as possible by walking or using public transport rather than going by car.
- Get children involved in active hobbies outside school. They don’t have to be sports teams. Try any sort of activity clubs.
- Be a good role model. Your child is more likely to eat healthily if you do too!
Shopping list...
- Apples
- Eggs
- Rice
- Milk
- Chicken breast
- Fish
- Smaller notepad and pencil
Planning meals

Knowing what you and your family are going to eat is a great way to **make sure that your diet is balanced and healthy**, and it can save you money too!

To help you with your shopping, make a shopping list based on the meals you are going to eat over the next few days or during the week.
Weekly meal planner

Use the Weekly meal planner below to help make sure you get a variety of foods and meals throughout the week.

**Fruit and vegetables**
Eat at least five portions a day.

**Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods**
Basis of all your meals.

**Milk and dairy foods**
Drink and eat moderate amounts

**Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein**
Choose lower-fat versions. Grill or bake rather than fry.

**Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar**
Eat small amounts only.

**Fluid**
Have regular, sugar-free drinks.

**Some ideas for balanced meals...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakfast ideas</th>
<th>Snack meal ideas</th>
<th>Main meal ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereal and milk with banana</td>
<td>Baked potato with tuna or beans and a salad</td>
<td>Spaghetti bolognese and salad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toast and orange juice</td>
<td>Tuna pasta and broccoli</td>
<td>Baked chicken, potatoes and vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low fat yoghurt with muesli on top</td>
<td>Poached eggs on toast with glass of orange juice</td>
<td>Pasta with tomato and mushroom sauce and a little grated reduced fat cheddar style cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vegetable soup</td>
<td>Baked salmon, potatoes and vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chicken or ham salad sandwich</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Weekly meal planner

Use the Weekly meal planner below to help make sure you get a variety of foods and meals throughout the week.

**Fruit and vegetables**
Eat at least five portions a day.

**Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods**
Basis of all your meals.

**Milk and dairy foods**
Drink and eat moderate amounts

**Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein**
Choose lower-fat versions. Grill or bake rather than fry.

**Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar**
Eat small amounts only.

**Fluid**
Have regular, sugar-free drinks.

Some ideas for balanced meals...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Snack meal</th>
<th>Main meal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereal and milk with banana</td>
<td>Toast and orange juice</td>
<td>Low fat yoghurt with muesli on top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baked potato with tuna or beans and a salad</td>
<td>Tuna pasta and broccoli</td>
<td>Poached eggs on toast with glass of orange juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable soup</td>
<td>Chicken or ham salad sandwich</td>
<td>Spaghetti bolognese and salad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baked chicken, potatoes and vegetables</td>
<td>Pasta with tomato and mushroom sauce and a little grated reduced fat cheddar style cheese</td>
<td>Baked salmon, potatoes and vegetables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Snack meal</th>
<th>Main meal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sometimes it can be difficult to plan ahead, so it’s a good idea to have some healthy meals tucked away in your freezer by making extra portions of soups, stews or dahl to freeze for another day.

Make the most of your store cupboards by keeping tins of low-sugar, low-salt baked beans and other pulses, tinned tomatoes, rice and pasta for quick and easy meals in minutes.

Ideas for meals in minutes

- Couscous with tinned tuna and spicy tomato sauce (made with tinned tomatoes, onion and dried chilli or paprika)
- Baked beans on toast or with a microwaved jacket potato
- Chick pea curry served with rice that has frozen peas stirred through it.
Packing up a healthy lunch

Making an interesting and nutritious packed lunch every day can be a difficult task. But don’t resort to pre-prepared lunchbox foods, sweets and crisps! Packing a healthy lunch is vital to make sure you have the right energy and nutrients needed to get you through the afternoon.

One of the difficulties with the daily task of making a packed lunch can be finding the inspiration about how to offer variety while still keeping it healthy. To give you a hand, see the week of Lunchbox ideas on the following page. These include tried and tested favourites that the whole family will love and that are nutritionally balanced. Adapt our ideas or create your own using the guide below.

Get the balance right by remembering to…

- Include a good helping of fruit and vegetables. Aim for a portion of each.
- Have some starchy food – like bread, rice, potatoes or pasta.
- Choose some lean protein. Try tuna or salmon tinned in water, boiled eggs, beans or lean meat like chicken or turkey.
- Go for some low-fat dairy food – like low-fat yoghurt, fromage frais or reduced-fat cheese.
- Add in a drink – water, pure unsweetened fruit juice or low-fat milk.
- Use front-of-pack labelling to help you to make the healthiest choices in relation to saturated fat, total fat, salt and sugar (see page 49).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tues</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thurs</th>
<th>Fri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pitta bread stuffed with chicken and tomato slices</td>
<td>Egg and cress sandwich on wholemeal bread</td>
<td>Granary roll with hoummus, lettuce tomato and cucumber</td>
<td>Tuna (tinned in spring water) and sweetcorn pasta salad with red peppers</td>
<td>Home-made mini pizza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinned peaches in juice</td>
<td>Chopped tomato and cucumber</td>
<td>Pear</td>
<td>Two Satsumas</td>
<td>Small handful of dried apricots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low fat custard</td>
<td>Reduced-fat fromage frais</td>
<td>Low-fat fruit yoghurt</td>
<td>Low-fat fruit yoghurt</td>
<td>Tzatziki dip with sticks of red pepper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small handful of unsalted peanuts</td>
<td>Plain popcorn</td>
<td>Currant bun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Orange juice</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Pineapple juice</td>
<td>Apple juice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Planning meals
THE ANATOMY OF A SANDWICH.

COMPRESS IN DOWNWARD MOTION TOWARD BASE.

WHOLEMEAL BREAD
LETTUCE
LEAN MEAT
TOMATO (SLICED)
LEAN MEAT
LETTUCE
LOW FAT SPREAD
WHOLEMEAL BREAD
Children’s lunches

However balanced your lunchbox is when you make it, there will be no nutritional value to it if it remains uneaten. **Avoid soggy sandwiches by trying our tried and tested tips.**

**Tips to make sure your child’s lunchbox comes back empty**

- **Keep it cool.** If there is no refrigerator space for lunchboxes, use mini lunchbox coolers, or freeze cartons of juice or bottles of still water to put in the lunchbox and keep it cool.

- **Avoid soggy sandwiches.** Put wet vegetables like tomato slices in between the main filling and some lettuce, to protect the bread.

- **Make fruit and vegetables easy to eat.** Cut them into chunks, sticks or shapes rather than leaving them whole.

- **Make it fun.** Decorate sandwich bags or yoghurt pots with stickers, or draw funny faces on fruits like bananas, oranges and satsumas – ones with peel that you remove before eating.

- **Let your child choose their own lunchbox and add brightly coloured napkins and coloured plastic cutlery.**

- **Involve your children in deciding what goes into their lunchbox.**
My parents always tried to make sure I ate healthily. When I was young, I used to follow my mum around the kitchen. I was probably a bit annoying, but I picked up the basics.

Now I’m a student, I find cooking really therapeutic after a hard day. It’s great because my flatmates and I get together to prepare meals and I think my enthusiasm for healthy eating is a positive influence.

It’s difficult at exam time, but mostly I eat well. I think it’s important to try to make time to cook healthily. It makes me feel better – physically and mentally.

Haider Zaidi
20, London
Small changes add up!

Changes to your eating habits don’t necessarily have to be difficult or big. In fact, sometimes, making a few small changes – slightly reducing the amount of fat you add to meals, changing the type of milk or yoghurt you buy, swapping one of your fatty snacks for fruit, or being more careful about removing all the fat and skin from meat – can all add up to make a big difference.

Think of changes you and your family might benefit from – like reducing the amount of fat or saturated fat, or increasing the amount of fruit and vegetables you eat, and then come up with little tweaks you could make to your diet that could help you to achieve that.
Making healthier choices

Dairy products
You may already know that choosing lower-fat milks and yoghurts helps you to reduce the saturated fat content of your diet, but did you know that different types of cheese have different amounts of fat too?

**Most cheeses are high in fat, and saturated fat in particular, but it is still possible to make healthier choices.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of cheese</th>
<th>Total fat grams per 100g</th>
<th>Saturated fat grams per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High fat (more than 20g per 100g)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mascarpone</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stilton</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheddar/Red Leicester/Double Gloucester</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parmesan</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edam</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camembert</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium fat (3.1g - 20g per 100g)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feta</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozzarella</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-fat cheddar</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low fat (3g or less per 100g)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced-fat cottage cheese, plain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meat
The type of meat you use and the way you cook it can make a big difference to the amount of fat and saturated fat you have.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meat</th>
<th>Higher fat</th>
<th>Lower fat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pork</td>
<td>Pork belly joint with fat, cooked Per 100g: 23.4g fat, 8.2g saturated fat</td>
<td>Lean pork leg joint, cooked Per 100g: 5.5g fat, 1.9g saturated fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rump steak with fat, fried Per 100g: 12.7g fat, 4.9g saturated fat</td>
<td>Lean rump steak, grilled Per 100g: 5.9g fat, 2.5g saturated fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>Fried chicken breast in breadcrumbs Per 100g: 12.7g fat, 2.1g saturated fat</td>
<td>Chicken breast grilled without skin Per 100g: 2.2g fat, 0.6g saturated fat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Snacks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of...</th>
<th>Try...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crisps</td>
<td>Breadsticks, dry cereal, rice cakes or crunchy vegetable sticks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cream cake</td>
<td>Toasted currant buns, teacakes, crumpets or English muffins with a little unsaturated spread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiled sweets</td>
<td>Dried fruit. Try raisins, dried apricots or dried figs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slice of pizza</td>
<td>Wholegrain pitta dipped in reduced-fat hoummus or tzatziki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar of chocolate</td>
<td>A banana or some chunks of fresh pineapple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Small changes add up!
Changing cooking methods

- Try baking, boiling, steaming, poaching or microwaving instead of frying, so that you don’t need to add fat.
- Measure out oil with a teaspoon or use a spray oil, rather than pouring it straight from the bottle.
- Make sure you have a non-stick pan for dry-frying, or a non-stick roasting tray for roasting without adding fat.
My job as a freelance photographer made healthy eating pretty difficult – when you’re on the road you end up living out of service stations – but after my heart operation I knew I had to change all that.

My partner’s a naturally healthy eater, and she’s been a really positive influence. Now I’m teaching full-time, cooking together is a real pleasure. It gives me a sense of achievement, and I feel more energetic and alert. Just think about whether you’d rather have a healthy home-cooked meal or something horrible out of the microwave – it’s a no-brainer!

Paul Dauker
32, Lincoln
Eating out

Having the odd indulgent meal when you’re eating out is unlikely to make a difference to your heart health in the long run, but eating foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar on a regular basis can, and these days we’re eating out more than ever before.

Eating out has become much more accessible, to the point where for some people it is a regular part of the food they eat.
Nowadays, it’s not just the special occasion meals we eat away from home; it’s also the coffee and a cake while you’re shopping, the takeaways or fast foods when you don’t want to cook, meals or snacks in the pub, sandwiches bought on the run, and sweets and crisps or hot dogs when you visit the cinema or bowling alley.

All of that can add up. Also, when you’re eating out you may find you eat larger portions than you would at home. And often the healthy choices are not that obvious.

But eating out doesn’t have to mean eating unhealthily. Use some of the following tips to help you to choose wisely and stick to your healthy eating plan, wherever you’re eating.

- Portion sizes are often bigger when eating out. Don’t feel you have to finish what is on your plate just because it’s there.
- Think about sharing a starter or pudding rather than having your own.
- Ask for dressings and sauces on the side so you can decide how much to add, or ask if you can have salad or vegetables with your meal rather than chips.
- Look for vegetable-based or tomato-based sauces rather than cream, coconut or cheese-based sauces.
- Some companies now print the calorie content of dishes on their menus. You can also use the nutrition information on company websites to help to guide you towards the options on the menu with the least fat, salt and sugar.
Nowadays, it’s not just the special occasion meals we eat away from home; it’s also the coffee and a cake while you’re shopping, the takeaways or fast foods when you don’t want to cook, meals or snacks in the pub, sandwiches bought on the run, and sweets and crisps or hot dogs when you visit the cinema or bowling alley. All of that can add up. Also, when you’re eating out you may find you eat larger portions than you would at home. And often the healthy choices are not that obvious.

But eating out doesn’t have to mean eating unhealthily. Use some of the following tips to help you to choose wisely and stick to your healthy eating plan, wherever you’re eating.

- Choose plain, boiled rice or noodles rather than types that have been fried or have had coconut added. And have boiled or jacket potatoes rather than chips.
- Be aware of the fat and salt in the ‘extras’ or sauces that you add to your food, like grated cheese, pesto, sour cream or cream-based or cheese-based dressings.
- Ask to go skinny on milky coffees like cappuccino and latte to reduce the fat content. Or, even better, go for an Americano or tea and decide for yourself how much low-fat milk you add to it.
- When buying sandwiches out, use the front-of-pack nutritional information where possible, so you know which ones are the healthiest options.
- If sandwiches are being made especially for you deli style, say no thanks to extra salt, slices of cheese and mayonnaise, and always ask for some salad. If the sandwich is freshly made, there’s no need to worry about it making the sandwich go soggy.
- Plan what you are going to eat before you get there. This will help you avoid being tempted by less healthy choices, especially when you’re hungry.
- When eating out with a big group, be the first to say what you are going to eat, so you’re not swayed if the others make less healthy choices.
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. Remember that, as with anything new, eating healthily 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.

“Fall down seven times, stand up eight.”

— Japanese Proverb
But remember that your changes will benefit not only you, but the whole family. Eating healthily will help you to reduce the risk of heart disease by helping to control cholesterol levels and blood pressure, and by keeping you all a healthy weight. Sticking to it will help you to realise these benefits, and the choices you make will become easier too.

Need more help?
If you would like more information on healthy eating, there are lots of websites that can help you:

bhf.org.uk
www.eatwell.gov.uk
www.5aday.nhs.uk
www.nhs.uk/Change4Life
www.units.nhs.uk
www.msc.org

Find out if there are any local groups that focus on healthy eating. Your local authority or primary care trust may have some suggestions, or talk to your practice nurse.
Getting creative in the kitchen means you can **add variety to your eating as well as being in control** of how much fat, salt and sugar goes into your meals. It’s a great thing to do with children too – fun, but also helping them to develop skills that will set them up for life.
Recipes

The recipes on the following pages are easy and quick to make. They give you some ideas for breakfasts, lunches and evening meals which you can incorporate into a healthy eating plan.

**Breakfasts**
Banana breakfast smoothie
Porridge with mixed berry compote

**Light meals**
Tomato and lentil soup
Chicken and rice salad
Hoummus and vegetable dip

**Main meals**
Tuna and courgette risotto
Cottage pie
Bean and vegetable chilli
Oven-baked salmon with lemon and fresh herbs

**Desserts**
Spiced apricot bread pudding
Blackberry yoghurt fool
Banana breakfast smoothie

Smoothies are a great way to get reluctant breakfast eaters into the habit of making a healthy start to the day. **Serves 2**

You’ll need:

- 2 medium bananas, peeled and cut into chunks
- 300ml (½ pint) semi-skimmed milk
- 1 tablespoon clear honey
- 1-2 tablespoons smooth peanut butter (low-salt version)

Method

1. Blend all the ingredients together until mixed. You can use either a hand-held blender or jug blender for this.

2. Pour into glasses and serve immediately.
Porridge with mixed berry compote

The whole family will love this fruity breakfast. Make extra compote and freeze it so that you can have some ready at any time.

**Serves 4**

**You’ll need:**

**For the fruit compote:**
- 3 tablespoons unsweetened red grape juice
- 3 tablespoons unsweetened apple juice
- 1 tablespoon clear honey
- 350g (12oz) mixed fresh berries such as raspberries, blackberries, blueberries and small strawberries (halved)

**For the porridge:**
- 115g (4oz) porridge oats
- 400ml (14fl oz) semi-skimmed milk
- 400ml (14fl oz) water

**Method**

**To make the fruit compote**
1. Place the fruit juices and honey in a saucepan and heat until almost boiling, stirring. Remove the pan from the heat. Place the mixed berries in a bowl and pour the hot fruit juice mixture over them. Stir gently to mix and then set aside. Serve warm, cold or chilled.

**To make the porridge**
2. Place the oats in a non-stick saucepan and stir in the milk and water. Bring gently to the boil, stirring all the time. Simmer for 3-5 minutes or until the desired consistency is achieved, stirring occasionally.
Tomato and lentil soup

This delicious, thick, wholesome soup creates a lovely winter warmer. It is ideal served with thick slices of wholemeal or granary bread. **Serves 2**

**These are generous portions – ideal for a main course or lunch.**

**You’ll need:**

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 leek, thinly sliced
- 1 stick celery, finely chopped
- 55g (2oz) dried split red lentils, rinsed and drained
- 227g (8oz) tin chopped tomatoes
- 550ml (20fl oz) vegetable stock
- 1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Chopped fresh parsley, to garnish

**Method**

1. Heat the oil in a medium non-stick saucepan. Add the onion, leek and celery, and cook gently for 5 minutes, stirring. Add the lentils and cook for 1 minute, stirring.

2. Add the tomatoes, stock, dried herbs and black pepper, and stir to mix. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat, cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 20 minutes or until the vegetables and lentils are tender.

3. Remove the pan from the heat and set it aside to cool slightly. Purée the vegetable mixture in a blender or food processor until smooth.

4. Return the soup to the rinsed-out pan, add most of the chopped parsley and re-heat the soup gently until hot, stirring occasionally.

5. Ladle into warmed soup bowls and garnish with the remaining parsley.
Chicken and rice salad

This makes an interesting change to sandwiches and provides a balanced mix of foods in one dish. Serve with a mixed green salad and fresh crusty bread. Serves 6

You’ll need:

- 225g (8oz) long grain brown rice
- 350g (12oz) cooked skinless, boneless chicken, chopped
- ½ cucumber, halved lengthways and thinly sliced
- 1 bunch of spring onions, chopped
- 1 red pepper, seeded and chopped
- 115g (4oz) sugar-snap peas, chopped
- 200g (7oz) tin sweetcorn kernels, rinsed and drained
- 8-10 tablespoons ready-made fat-free or reduced-fat French-style dressing
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil or flat-leaf parsley
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Fresh basil or flat-leaf parsley sprigs, to garnish

Method

1. Cook the rice in a pan of boiling water until just tender. Drain, rinse under cold running water, and drain again. Transfer to a salad bowl.

2. Add the chicken, cucumber, spring onions, red pepper, sugar-snap peas and sweetcorn kernels and stir to mix.

3. Add the French-style dressing, chopped herbs and black pepper and toss together to mix well.

4. Garnish with basil or parsley sprigs.

Variations

Use tuna (canned in spring water), a tin of chick peas, or chopped cooked turkey in place of chicken.

Use any ready-made fat-free or reduced-fat salad dressing of your choice, such as thousand island, herb and garlic, or honey and mustard dressing, in place of French-style dressing.
Hoummus and vegetable dip

You can vary the quantities of coriander and cumin to make this popular Middle Eastern dip as aromatic as you like. It is perfect for sharing with family and friends.

**Serves 4 as a starter or snack**

**You’ll need:**

- 420g (15oz) tin chick peas, rinsed and drained
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons light tahini (sesame paste)
- 1 or 2 cloves garlic, crushed (optional)
- ½-1 teaspoon ground coriander
- ½-1 teaspoon ground cumin
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

A selection of prepared fresh raw vegetables – such as pepper, carrot and cucumber sticks, baby sweetcorn or cherry tomatoes – to serve

**Method**

1. Blend the chick peas, lemon juice, olive oil, tahini, garlic (if using), coriander, cumin and black pepper together in a food processor or blender until they form a coarse paste.

2. Arrange the prepared raw vegetables on one large or four smaller serving plates. Spoon the hoummus into one large or four smaller serving bowls and serve with the vegetables.

**Variation**

Serve with hot toasted bread fingers, breadsticks or crackers and halve the quantities given in the recipe above.
Tuna and courgette risotto

The secret to making a good risotto is to keep adding just enough hot stock in stages throughout the cooking process and to stir the rice frequently while it is cooking. **Serves 2-3**

**You’ll need:**
- 1 tablespoon sunflower oil
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 small red or yellow pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 courgette (about 200g/7oz), diced
- 115g (4oz) chestnut mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 175g (6oz) arborio risotto rice
- About 600ml (1 pint) good-quality vegetable stock
- 125ml (4fl oz) dry white wine
- 200g (7oz) tin tuna chunks in spring water or brine, drained and flaked
- 2 tablespoons flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

**Method**

1. Heat the oil in a heavy-based saucepan. Add the onion, garlic and red or yellow pepper and cook for 5 minutes or until softened, stirring occasionally. Add the courgette and mushrooms and cook for 1 minute, stirring. Add the rice and cook for a further 1 minute, stirring. In a separate small pan, bring the stock to the boil, cover and keep the stock simmering gently.

2. Add the wine to the rice mixture and cook rapidly for 1-2 minutes or until the wine has almost totally evaporated, stirring continuously. Reduce the heat to medium-low. Gradually add the hot stock to the rice, a ladleful at a time, allowing each addition to be absorbed before adding more, and stirring very frequently, until the rice is tender. This will take about 20 minutes. You may not need to add all of the stock.

3. Gently stir in the flaked tuna and heat gently for about 2 minutes or until the tuna is hot, stirring once or twice. Stir in the parsley and season with black pepper. Serve hot.
Cottage pie

Extra-lean minced beef, additional vegetables and a low-fat potato topping all contribute to creating this tasty and healthier version of a traditional cottage pie. Serve with cooked green vegetables – such as broccoli, green beans or peas – for a hearty meal.

Serves 2-3

You’ll need:

1 small onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
225g (8oz) extra lean minced beef
1 carrot (about 85g-100g/3-3⅓oz), peeled and finely chopped
85g (3oz) button mushrooms, sliced
1-2 sticks celery, finely chopped
1 tablespoon plain flour
1 tablespoon tomato purée
225g (8oz) tin chopped tomatoes
1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
150ml (⅓ pint) good-quality beef stock
5 tablespoons red wine
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
750g (1lb 10oz) potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
2-3 tablespoons semi-skimmed milk
Method

1. Place the onion, garlic and minced beef into a non-stick saucepan. Cook over a medium heat stirring frequently for 4-6 minutes or until the mince is browned all over. Add the carrot, mushrooms and celery and cook for 4-5 minutes. Add the flour and tomato purée and cook for 1 minute, stirring.

2. Stir in the tomatoes, herbs, stock, wine and black pepper, mixing well. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove the lid for the last 10 minutes of cooking time to thicken the meat sauce a little more, if desired.

3. While the meat is cooking, pre-heat the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas mark 6.

4. Also while the meat is cooking, boil the potatoes in a separate pan for 15-20 minutes or until tender. Drain well and return to the pan. Mash or crush the potatoes, stir in the milk, mixing well, and season with black pepper.

5. Spoon the meat mixture into an ovenproof dish. Pile the mashed potatoes on top, covering the meat completely, and score the surface of the mash decoratively using a fork. Place the dish on a baking tray, if desired. Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes or until the topping is golden brown. Serve hot.

Cook’s tip

Use the minced meat mixture in this recipe as the basis for other dishes such as spaghetti bolognese or chilli con carne, adding additional ingredients and spices to suit your taste.
Bean and vegetable chilli

A delicious alternative to meat chilli, this nutritious bean and vegetable chilli can be served with crusty bread or on a bed of herby boiled brown rice or cous cous.

Serves 2 (These are generous portions)

You’ll need:

2 teaspoons olive oil
1 small red onion, sliced
1 small red pepper, seeded and diced
1 fresh red chilli, seeded and finely chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon hot chilli powder (optional)
1 carrot, sliced
175g (6oz) cauliflower florets
227g (8oz) tin chopped tomatoes
200ml (7fl oz) vegetable stock
1 tablespoon tomato purée
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
220g (8oz) tin red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
300g (10½oz) tin cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
Fresh coriander sprigs, to garnish

Method

1. Heat the olive oil in a medium non-stick saucepan. Add the onion, red pepper, fresh chilli and garlic, and cook gently for 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the coriander, cumin and chilli powder (if using) and cook for 1 minute, stirring.

2. Add the carrot, cauliflower, tomatoes, stock, tomato purée and black pepper, and stir to mix. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally.

3. Stir in the tinned beans. Bring the mixture back to the boil and cook for a further 10-15 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.

4. Garnish with coriander sprigs.
Oven-baked salmon with lemon and fresh herbs

Oily fish – such as salmon, sardines, trout and pilchards – all contain omega-3 fats that are thought to be an important part of a heart-healthy diet. The colour and mild flavour of salmon make it a good fish to start with to get people used to the taste of oily fish. Serve with cooked vegetables such as green beans, baby sweetcorn and new potatoes. Serves 4

You’ll need:

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- Finely grated zest and juice of 1 large lemon
- 1 teaspoon clear honey
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 4 salmon steaks, about 140-175g (5-6oz) each
- Fresh tarragon sprigs and lemon slices, to garnish

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 200ºC/fan 180ºC/gas mark 6.
2. Place the oil, lemon zest and juice, honey, chopped herbs and black pepper in a small bowl and stir until thoroughly mixed.
3. Place the fish in an ovenproof dish and pour the lemon mixture over it. Cover the dish loosely with foil, making sure the foil does not touch the fish.
4. Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes or until the fish is cooked and tender and the flesh is just beginning to flake.
5. Using a fish slice, place the fish on serving plates. Drizzle a little of the cooking juices over the fish, and garnish with tarragon sprigs and lemon slices.
Spiced apricot bread pudding

You will find this lightly spiced, healthier version of a traditional bread and butter pudding hard to resist. We have replaced the butter with a smaller quantity of reduced-fat spread and apricot jam, and using semi-skimmed milk also helps to keep the fat content down. Dried apricots add extra flavour and nutrients. **Serves 2-3**

**You’ll need:**

- 3 medium slices (pre-sliced) wholemeal or white bread
- 15g (½oz) reduced-fat spread, plus a little extra for greasing
- 25g (1oz) apricot jam
- 100g (3½oz) ready-to-eat dried apricots, chopped
- ½ teaspoon ground mixed spice
- 25g (1oz) light soft brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 300ml (½ pint) semi-skimmed milk

**Method**

1. Lightly grease a shallow ovenproof dish, and set it aside. Thinly spread one side of each slice of bread with fat spread, and spread jam over the top. Cut each slice into triangles. Arrange half of them in the base of the prepared dish, jam-side up.
2. Mix together the apricots, mixed spice and half of the sugar, and sprinkle this apricot mixture evenly over the bread in the dish. Arrange the remaining bread triangles over the top, jam-side up, and sprinkle evenly with the remaining sugar.
3. Beat the egg and milk together in a bowl or jug, and pour evenly over the bread. Set aside for 30 minutes to allow the bread to absorb some of the liquid.
4. Meanwhile, pre-heat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas mark 4. Bake the bread pudding in the oven for 35-40 minutes or until lightly set and golden brown. Serve either hot or at room temperature.
Blackberry yoghurt fool

This refreshing fruit fool is easy to prepare and makes the most of autumn blackberries. Freeze them when they are in season to enjoy this dessert all year round. Serve with oat biscuits or sponge fingers.

Serves 2

You’ll need:

- 225g (8oz) fresh ripe blackberries
- 1-2 tablespoons clear (runny) honey, or to taste
- 100ml (3½fl oz) thick low-fat plain yoghurt
- 2 tablespoons reduced-fat crème fraîche

Method

1. Put the blackberries in a blender or food processor, and blend until smooth. Press the purée through a sieve into a bowl, reserving the juice and pulp and discarding the seeds. Or, thoroughly mash the blackberries in a bowl and press the purée through a sieve as above.

2. Add the honey to the blackberry pulp and mix well. Gently fold in the yoghurt and crème fraîche until well combined.

3. Spoon into serving glasses or dishes. Chill before serving.

Variations

Use mixed fresh berries such as strawberries, raspberries and blueberries in place of the blackberries. Or use the same quantity of peeled, stoned ripe mango flesh instead of the blackberries.

For a blackberry custard fool, purée and sieve the blackberries as above. Add 1 tablespoon of honey, if desired. Fold in 100ml (3½fl oz) of ready-made, cold, low-fat custard instead of the yoghurt, and then fold in the crème fraîche. Serve chilled.
How the British Heart Foundation can help you

We are the nation’s heart charity, dedicated to saving lives through pioneering research, patient care, campaigning for change, and providing vital information.

You might find some of the following resources helpful:

**Booklets**

**Our heart health catalogue**
For you, for family and friends, for health professionals

**Get active, stay active**
Enjoy being active and keep your heart healthy

**Be active for life**
Over 50? Keep your heart healthy with physical activity

**Put your heart into walking**
It’s easy, it’s free, it’s great for your heart

**Physical activity and your heart**
For people who have a heart condition or are at risk of developing heart disease

**Take control of your weight**
Safe ways to lose weight for heart health

**Cut down on salt**
It’s easy to do and good for your heart

**Stop smoking**
How to quit for a healthy heart

**Coping with stress**
How to manage stress and help your heart
DVD

Risking it
This DVD follows five ordinary people, all of whom have one or more risk factors for coronary heart disease. They have decided to start taking responsibility for their health and take positive action.

For information on other BHF booklets and DVDs ask for a copy of Our heart health catalogue.

How to order our resources
To order any of our booklets or DVDs:

- 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.

Our booklets are free of charge, but we would welcome a donation so we can continue our vital work. (Turn the page to see how you can make a donation.)

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** (a local rate number).
We need your help…
to continue our life-saving work

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.**

Please donate today and together we can beat heart disease for good.

If you would like to make a donation:

- please call our donation hotline on **0300 330 3322**,  
- contact us through our website at [bhf.org.uk/donate](http://bhf.org.uk/donate)  
- or fill in the form on the next page and post it to us at the address on the back cover.

Other ways you can help

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

- Become a volunteer and help run our shops, events or services for local communities. To find out more, call **0845 130 8663** or visit [bhf.org.uk/volunteer](http://bhf.org.uk/volunteer)  
- Have fun on a sponsored run, bike ride or walk. For more on this, call **0844 477 1181** or visit [bhf.org.uk/events](http://bhf.org.uk/events)  
- Join our Heartstart initiative and learn to save lives with the skills of emergency life support. Over 2.3 million people already have. For more information contact [heartstart@bhf.org.uk](mailto:heartstart@bhf.org.uk)  
- Donate goods to your local BHF shop. To find out where your nearest BHF shop is, call **0844 412 5000**.  
- Give in celebration by offering your party guests the chance to donate to us instead of buying gifts, for example for your wedding anniversary or birthday. Visit [bhf.org.uk/celebrate](http://bhf.org.uk/celebrate) for more information.

Thank you.
Your support will help us prevent early deaths

Here is my gift to help more people recover from heart problems £10 ☐ £15 ☐ £20 ☐ Other £ ☐

Please make your cheque / postal order/ CAF voucher payable to the British Heart Foundation.

Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other) ☐ First name ☐ Surname ☐

Address ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Postcode ☐

Email ☐

We would like to keep in touch with you, to let you know 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.

OR please debit the above sum from my:

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

Card number ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ (Maestro only)

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

Signature ☐ Date ☐ / ☐ / ☐

☐ Please tick here if you do not wish the British Heart Foundation to contact you. (MP0059)

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

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

**giftaid it**

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 28p 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 six years and any future donations I may make.*

Date ☐

GA2 ☐ No, I am not a UK 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 tax that the BHF will reclaim on your donations in the appropriate tax year. Your donation must be of your own money and cannot be a collection.
Please send this form to:
British Heart Foundation
Greater London House
180 Hampstead Road
London NW1 7AW

Thank you.
Index

A
alcohol ..................................... 26–27

C
caffeine .......................................... 25
cheese ............................................ 74
children .......... 31–33, 50–51, 60–61, 71
cholesterol ...................................... 3
coffee ............................................. 25
cooking methods .............................. 76–77

D
dairy foods ..................................... 13
drinks ....................................... 24–25

E
eating out ................................. 79–81
eatwell plate .................................... 4

F
fat ............................................. 18–19
fish ............................................ 14–15
food labels ................................ 47–49

G
goals ........................................ 40–43
groups: food groups .................... 5–17

L
lunchboxes ............................... 68–69
lunches .................................... 63–71

M
meat ......................................... 14–15
milk ................................................ 13
monounsaturated fat ...................... 18

O
oily fish ........................................... 14
omega-3 ......................................... 18
overweight ..................................... 53–54

P
planning meals .......................... 63-71
polyunsaturated fat ..................... 18

R
recipes ..................................... 85–99

S
salt ........................................... 20–21
saturated fat ................................... 18
snacks ........................................ 75
stanols ........................................... 19
sterols ............................................ 19
sugar ......................................... 16–17

T
tea ................................................. 25
trans fats ........................................ 19

U
under-fives ............................... 31–33
underweight .............................. 53, 55
unsaturated fat ............................... 18

V
vegetarians ..................................... 15

W
weight ...................................... 53–55
Have your say

We would welcome your comments to help us produce the best information for you. Why not let us know what you think? Contact us through our website at bhf.org.uk/contact. Or, write to us at the address on the back cover.

Acknowledgements

The British Heart Foundation would like to thank all the individuals and organisations that have given their time and support to developing this resource.
Do you want the kids in your family to be more active and eat healthier? Help them make some changes now by encouraging them to visit the following websites:

- cbhf.net  
a website for 7-11 year olds
- yheart.net and yoobot.co.uk  
websites for 12-19 year olds

Do any of the teenagers in your family have a heart condition? Visit yheart.net/meet

You can also order resources from Our kids’ and schools’ catalogue: visit bhf.org.uk/publications, call 0870 600 6566, or email orderline@bhf.org.uk