

Healthy Eating for Cardiac Rehabilitation



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Aims and objectives

- To increase awareness of healthy eating
- To increase knowledge of the cardioprotective diet
- To be aware of dietary and lifestyle risk factors



Why is diet important?

- Following a cardioprotective diet can help to improve your recovery and reduce your chance of a further cardiac event.
- Improves mental health



The EatWell guide



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

Fruit and Vegetables



- It's recommended that you eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day.
- They can be fresh, frozen, canned, dried or juiced. 1 portion is a handful, or 3 tablespoons, 150ml or 80g.
- Try to vary the types of fruit & veg you eat.
- Fruits and vegetables are good sources of fibre and micronutrients



Starchy Carbohydrates

- This food group includes breads, rice, pasta, couscous and potatoes.
- These foods are your body's main source of energy and you should try to eat some at every meal.
- Choose wholegrain or wholemeal varieties such as brown rice. They contain more fibre, and usually more vitamins and minerals, than white varieties.
- Potatoes with the skins on are a great source of fibre and vitamins.



Proteins

Fish

Fresh, frozen or canned fish all count. Remember fish canned in brine and smoked fish are high in salt. Oily fish are good sources of omega -3 fats which are good for your heart – try to have at least one portion each week.

Beans and Pulses

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

Nuts and Seeds

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

Meat

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

- Choose leaner meats where possible and avoid adding extra fat or oil when cooking - grill instead of frying.
- Cut the fat off meat, remove the skin from chicken.
- Limit processed meats such as sausages, bacon and cured meats.

Dairy and alternatives

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

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

Easy changes:

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



Fats

- Too much saturated fat can increase the amount of cholesterol in the blood, which can increase the risk of developing coronary heart disease. Replace saturated fats with small amounts of mono and polyunsaturated fats.
- Cut down on foods containing trans fats as these raise the amount of cholesterol in the blood.
- It's also important to remember that all fats and oils are high in calories, so even the unsaturated fats should only be used in small amounts.



Different types of fat

Type of fat	Source	
Monounsaturated	Avocados, olives, olive oil, rapeseed oil. Almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, peanuts, pistachios and spreads made from these nuts.	
Polyunsaturated	Oily fish, corn oil, sesame oil, soya oil, and spreads made from those oils. Flaxseed, pine nuts, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, and walnuts.	
Saturated Have in moderation	Processed meats like sausages, ham, burgers. Fatty meat. Hard cheeses including cheddar. Whole milk, cream, butter, lard, ghee, suet, palm oil and coconut oil.	
Trans fats Have very occasionally	Fried foods, takeaways, snacks like biscuits, cakes or pastries. Hard margarines.	



Sugar

- In nature, foods containing sugars usually also contain fibre, vitamins and minerals and are diluted by water (e.g fruit and veg) and are not harmful
- Processing means that it's easy to extract the sugar and leave the fibre and nutrients behind
- Many processed foods have added sugars (biscuits, cakes, sweets, drinks, chocolate, cereals)
- Also known as glucose, sucrose, maltose, corn syrup, honey, hydrolysed starch, fructose
- Try limiting the amounts of these foods that you have in your diet.
- **Too much sugar is linked to heart disease, diabetes, weight gain and tooth decay**



Salt

- Recommended intake is <6 g /day
- **Our bodies need even less than this**
- **High intake can lead to increased blood pressure**
- Try not to add salt in cooking or at the table, cut down on salty snacks, be sparing with stock cubes.
- Alternative flavourings – herbs, spices, lemon juice, pepper, vinegar



Alcohol

- Guidelines are 14 units for both men and women
- You are advised not to regularly drink more than 14 units weekly
- Try to have at least 2-3 alcohol-free days each week
- Alcohol is also high in calories so can lead to weight gain.



Food Labelling



PUT A TRAFFIC LIGHT ON EVERY FOOD LABEL

Traffic light labels on foods make it easier to choose healthy options.

Some supermarkets are using labels with % Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) instead.

To apply traffic lights to a product, look at the 'per 100g' information panel on the pack and use this grid to make a healthier choice.

All measures per 100g	Low – a healthier choice	Medium – ok most of the time	High – just occasionally
Sugars	5g or less	5.1g – 15g	More than 15g
Fat	3g or less	3.1g – 20g	More than 20g
Saturates	1.5g or less	1.6g – 5g	More than 5g
Salt	0.30g or less	0.31g – 1.5g	More than 1.5g



Obesity

BMI	Nutritional status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5–24.9	Normal weight
25.0–29.9	Pre-obesity
30.0–34.9	Obesity class I
35.0–39.9	Obesity class II
Above 40	Obesity class III



Exercise

- Adult exercise recommendations:
- Be physically active every day
- Do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity a week
- Reduce time spent sitting or lying down and break up long periods of not moving with some activity.



Example meal plan

Breakfast – porridge made with skimmed milk with fresh fruit

Lunch – chicken and salad sandwich on wholemeal bread

Afternoon snack – handful of nuts

Dinner – baked salmon, new potatoes and assorted roasted vegetables

Dessert – low fat yoghurt with fresh fruit and chocolate chips



Useful Links

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/publications/healthy-eating-and-drinking/eat-better>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/support/healthy-living/managing-your-weight>

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/food-facts-portion-sizes.html>

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/fruit-and-vegetables-how-to-get-five-a-day.html>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/risk-factors/high-cholesterol>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/support/healthy-living/staying-active/exercise-calorie-calculator>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/publications/healthy-eating-and-drinking/taking-control-of-food-portion-sizes-and-labels>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/support/healthy-living/healthy-eating>



SUMMARY

- Aim to follow a balanced diet
- Include plenty of fruit and veg
- Include fibrous foods
- Reduced saturated fats and replace with mono & poly unsaturated fats
- Reduce salt intake
- Reduce free sugar intake
- Alcohol in moderation
- Increase physical activity



**“BY MAKING SMALL
CHANGES EVERY DAY,
YOU CAN REALLY
IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH
AND REDUCE THE RISK
TO YOUR HEART. THE
BEST TIME TO START IS
RIGHT NOW.”**

Tracy Parker, senior dietitian, BHF

