

## More tips

- avoid smoking, as it increases your risk of developing heart disease, which can lead to heart attack or stroke. If you need help to quit smoking, call the QUIT helpline
- be more active
- maintain a healthy weight and body shape
- choose fruit as a snack
- include wholegrain foods in your daily diet, e.g. wholegrain cereals, bread, rice and pasta
- cut down your sugar intake
- limit your alcohol intake.

# HEART HELPLINE

For information and support on anything heart-related



0300 330 3311

local rate number



bhf.org.uk

Phone lines open 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday

This service is available in English only.



British Heart Foundation  
Greater London House  
180 Hampstead Road  
London NW1 7AW  
Phone: 020 7554 0000  
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## HEALTHY EATING FOR A HEALTHY HEART

A healthy diet can help reduce blood cholesterol, lower blood pressure and prevent heart problems.

BEATING HEART DISEASE TOGETHER

# FOUR TIPS TO HELP PREVENT HEART DISEASE

eat more fruit and vegetables - reduce fat - eat oily fish - cut salt

## 1. **EAT** 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day

Eating a diet that includes a wide range of fruit and vegetables can help to reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

**Fruit and vegetables are:**

- high in fibre
- rich in vitamins and minerals
- low in calories, and filling, so help with weight control
- good for adding colour and variety to your diet.



## 2. **REDUCE** how much fat you eat

All types of fats are high in energy (calories) so can contribute to weight gain. Some fats, such as saturated fats, can also increase blood cholesterol levels. These are found in food such as dairy food, cakes, pastries, palm oil and coconut oil. You should try to limit these.

**Easy ways to reduce your fat intake and still enjoy your food are:**

- change to low fat dairy products; use low fat milk and cheese e.g. semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, cottage cheese and reduced fat cheese
- remove the skin from chicken and turkey before cooking
- cut down on high fat snacks like crisps, chocolates, biscuits, chips, samosas, pakoras and pastries
- buy the leanest cuts of meat and trim off any visible fat before cooking
- when cooking, use a spoon to measure oil e.g. 1 teaspoon per person per meal, or try using spray oil. Rapeseed oil and olive oil are healthier options
- skim or spoon off fats and oils from casseroles and curries.



## 3. **EAT** oily fish. It's rich in omega-3, a polyunsaturated fatty acid which is good for the heart

Examples of oily fish include mackerel, herring, fresh tuna, pilchards, sardines, trout, kippers and salmon.

Aim for at least two portions of fish a week, including a portion of oily fish (a portion is about 140g). You can choose from fresh, frozen or canned, but remember that canned and smoked fish can be high in salt.

**Omega-3 fatty acids help to protect the heart by:**

- making the blood less 'sticky'
- lowering levels of blood triglycerides - a type of fat found in the blood
- helping to regulate the heart rhythm.

Plant sources of omega-3 include: soya bean and tofu, rapeseed oil, walnuts and flax seeds. However these may not have the same effect as oily fish.



## 4. **SKIP** the salt

**Reducing the salt in your diet can prevent and lower blood pressure. So:**

- try to reduce or remove salt at the table and in cooking
- choose foods labelled with 'no added salt'
- experiment with herbs and spices to add extra flavour
- limit your intake of foods high in salt e.g. salted snacks such as crisps, Bombay mix and nuts, pickles, poppadoms, chutneys, yeast extract, ready-made processed foods and meals, cheese, stock cubes, tinned or packet soups and sauces.

Adults should eat no more than 6g of salt per day (about 1 teaspoon) and children less than this.

