



British Heart
Foundation

THINK FIT! EAT WELL!

Eat for your heart! challenge

BEATING HEART DISEASE TOGETHER

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To download this *Eat for your heart!* challenge, see bhf.org.uk/thinkfit
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This booklet was produced by the British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity and Health
as part of the *Think fit! Eat well!* pack. See bhf.org.uk/thinkfit for more information.

About the *Eat for your heart!* challenge

The *Eat for your heart!* challenge explains how what you eat and drink affects your heart and how, over a five-week period, you will earn *Heart points* by:

- Eating more fruit and vegetables
- Including oily fish in your weekly diet
- Switching to foods containing healthier types of fat
- Cutting down on your salt intake
- Drinking a sensible amount of alcohol.

Use the *Eat for your heart!* challenge to see how well you are already feeding your heart, and to help build changes into your meals and snacks so you can have a healthy heart in the future!



How to do the *Eat for your heart!* challenge

Check out the weekly food challenge

- Each week focuses on a different aspect of your diet that can improve your general health. If you have coronary heart disease, it brings important extra benefits too.
- Using the information provided each week, allow some time to plan your meals and snacks for the week ahead and look for ways to put the recommendations into practice.

Record what you eat and drink

- Following the instructions for each challenge, record what food and drink you have each day – including breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. You'll be asked to record something different each week. You can use the record sheets in this document for each week you take part.
- At the end of each day, work out how many *Heart points* you've earned against the weekly challenge set.
- Add up your total *Heart points* for the week. Aim for as many *Heart points* as possible.

Challenge yourself

- **Week 1** See how many *Heart points* you can achieve in a week.
- **Week 2** Set yourself a *Heart points* goal based on your score for Week 1.
- **Week 3** Be realistic. Set yourself a new goal.
- **Week 4** Challenge yourself: increase your goal.
- **Week 5** When you reach your goal, reward yourself!

Heart points

You can earn *Heart points* by meeting the weekly challenges set out in the following pages.

Week 1... Eating more fruit and vegetables

There is good evidence that eating a diet that is rich in a range of vegetables and fruits lowers the risk of coronary heart disease.

To eat for your health:

- Aim to eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- Try to eat a wide variety of fruit and vegetables.
- Try to eat different coloured fruit and vegetables.

Week 1 challenge

Challenge	Heart points available
Eat 1 portion of fruit with your breakfast.	1 Heart point per breakfast
Eat 2 portions of fruit and/or vegetables with your lunch.	1 Heart point per lunch
Eat 2 portions of fruit and/or vegetables with your dinner.	1 Heart point per dinner
Eat 1 fruit and/or vegetable snack during the day.	1 Heart point per day

- Fruits and vegetables can be fresh, frozen, tinned or dried.
- Fruit juice counts, but only as 1 portion a day.
- Potatoes are a good source of starch and vitamin C but they don't count towards your 5-a-day target.
- Beans and pulses can also be counted towards your 5-a-day target, but they only count as 1 portion a day.

WEEK 1... EATING MORE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

What is a portion?

1 portion of fruit or veg = 80g (a handful), or any of the following:

- 1 apple, banana, pear, orange or similar size fruit
- 2 plums or similar size fruit
- ½ grapefruit or avocado
- 1 slice of large fruit, such as melon or pineapple
- 1 handful of grapes, cherries or berries
- 3 heaped tablespoons of vegetables
- 3 heaped tablespoons of fruit salad
- 1 heaped tablespoon of dried fruit
- 1 dessert bowl of salad
- 1 glass (150ml) of fruit juice (counts as a maximum of 1 portion a day)

Tips to increase your intake

- Slice a banana and add it to your cereal at breakfast.
- Start the day with a fruit juice.
- Add some salad to your sandwiches for lunch.
- Snack on some grapes instead of sugary snacks.
- Nibble on some carrot sticks while preparing your evening meal.
- Serve at least two types of vegetables or pulses with your evening meal.
- Have tropical fruit salad for dessert.
- Use up ripe fruits in fruit smoothies.

Week 1

Write down the fruit and vegetables you eat this week and work out how many *Heart points* you earn.

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks	Comments
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
<i>Heart points earned</i>					

Heart points earned this week: _____ Maximum *Heart points* available this week: 28

Week 2... It's time to get oily!

Eating oily fish regularly can help to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and to improve survival after a heart attack.

The particular oil in fish that has these good effects is known as 'omega-3'. It is found mainly in oily fish such as herring, kippers, pilchards, sardines, trout and fresh tuna (but not tinned tuna). Vegetarians, and those who don't eat fish, can get omega-3 from a variety of other foods including soya, hemp, flax and pumpkin seeds and green, leafy vegetables but there is evidence that the omega-3s from these vegetable sources do not have the same benefits to the heart as those from oily fish.

Non-oily fish includes pollock, plaice, sea bass, cod and haddock.

Week 2 challenge

Challenge	Heart points available
<p>Eat 2 portions of fish this week. One of these portions should be oily fish.</p> <p>Vegetarians – Eat some foods providing omega-3 fatty acids this week.</p>	<p>2 Heart points per portion of white fish and 4 Heart points per portion of oily fish, up to a maximum of 8 points for the week.</p> <p>Vegetarians – 2 points per portion of food providing omega-3 fatty acids, up to a maximum of 8 points for the week.</p>

- 1 portion of fish is about 140g (6oz).
- Adults should have no more than 1 portion of swordfish, shark or marlin a week. This is because these fish contain high levels of mercury.
- Women and girls thinking about conceiving, and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, should have no more than 2 portions of oily fish a week and should avoid swordfish, marlin and shark. (For more information visit www.eatwell.gov.uk/fish)
- Other adults and boys should not eat more than 4 portions of oily fish a week.
- These guidelines are provided because oily fish can contain low levels of pollutants that can build up in the body. This shouldn't be a reason to avoid oily fish. The health benefits are greater than the risk as long as you don't exceed the recommended maximum levels.

Tips to increase your intake

- Why not grill some fresh sardines, salmon or tuna?
- If you're looking for an alternative to burger and chips, try fishcakes (made with oily fish) and potato wedges.

Week 2

Write down the oily fish you have this week.

Day	Oily fish (or vegetarian alternative) eaten this week	Comments
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
Heart points earned		

Heart points earned this week: _____ Maximum Heart points available this week: 3



Week 3... Cutting back on saturated fats

Cholesterol is a fatty substance which is mainly made in the body. The liver makes it mostly from the saturated fats in food.

Eating healthily can reduce your total blood cholesterol level by between 5% and 10%. However, it is easier for some people to reduce their level of blood cholesterol by eating healthily than it is for others.

To help reduce your blood cholesterol level you need to do the following:

- Cut right down on saturated fats and replace them with moderate amounts of monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats.
- Reduce the total amount of fat you eat, to make sure you're not eating too much fat overall.

Week 3 challenge

Challenge	Heart points available
<p>Limit foods containing more than 5g of saturated fat per 100g.</p> <p><i>For example, limit the amount of these foods: butter, hard cheese, lard, dripping, suet, ghee, coconut oil, palm oil, pastry, cakes and biscuits, cream, fried foods, crisps and fried snacks. Remove visible fat from meat.</i></p>	<p>1 Heart point if any packaged food you buy – either a snack or a ready-made meal – has less than 5g of saturated fat per 100g on the nutrition information label, up to a maximum of 1 Heart point per day</p> <p>1 Heart point if you grill, steam, stir-fry or bake rather than fry your food, up to a maximum of 1 Heart point per day.</p> <p>1 Heart point if you use low-fat spread instead of butter or margarine, up to a maximum of 1 Heart point per day.</p> <p>1 Heart point if you use semi-skimmed or skimmed milk rather than whole-fat milk, up to a maximum of 1 Heart point per day.</p>



WEEK 3... CUTTING BACK ON SATURATED FATS

Tips to reduce your intake of fat

- Check food labels for fat content, and especially the amount of saturated fat.
- Use oil, butter and other fats sparingly.
- Use reduced-fat varieties of all foods wherever they are available.
- Skim the fat off gravy and sauces.
- Limit fried foods – grill, steam, stir-fry or bake instead.
- If you have chips, cut them thickly and straight so that they absorb less fat or oil.
- Use puréed vegetables to make soups and sauces thicker, rather than ‘roux thickenings’.
- Use vegetable-based sauces rather than creamy sauces.
- Remove visible fat from meat, and remove the skin from chicken.
- Limit fried snack foods such as crisps and chips, and switch to baked snacks such as bread sticks and baked crisps.

Week 3

Write down the details of any times you earn a *Heart point* this week.

See *Heart points* available (on page 9).

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks	Comments
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
<i>Heart points earned</i>					

Heart points earned this week: _____ Maximum *Heart points* available this week: 28

Week 4... Cutting down on salt

People who have a lot of salt in their diet are more likely to have high blood pressure.

Three-quarters of the salt we eat comes from processed foods, such as some breakfast cereals, soups, sauces, bread, biscuits and ready meals. People with high blood pressure are more likely to develop heart disease or have a stroke than people with normal blood pressure.

Week 4 challenge

Challenge	Heart points available
<p>Limit foods that contain more than 1.5g of salt per 100g and replace them with foods with less than 0.3g per 100g.</p> <p>(Or limit foods that contain more than 0.6g of sodium per 100g, and and replace them with foods with less than 0.1g of sodium.)</p>	<p>1 Heart point if any packaged food you buy – either a snack or a ready-made meal – has a green traffic light label for salt or sodium (or, if the nutrition information label says it has less than 0.3g salt per 100g, or less than 0.1g sodium per 100g). Up to a maximum of 1 Heart point per day.</p> <p>1 Heart point if you don't add any salt when cooking or eating your meal.</p>

Tips to reduce your salt intake

- Try not to have more than 6g of salt per day.
- Start the day by checking the salt content of your breakfast cereals and bread (toast).
- Remove the salt pot from the table and try not adding salt to your food at the table.
- Try cooking without adding salt – add more herbs and spices instead.
- Limit savoury snacks with a high salt content – choose 'low salt' or 'reduced salt' foods.
- Limit your intake of processed meats such as burgers or sausages.
- Limit your intake of smoked fish and meats.
- Reduce your dependence on processed foods.
- Check food labels on all processed food and choose lower-salt options.

Week 4

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks	Comments
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
Heart points earned					

Heart points earned this week: _____ Maximum Heart points available this week: 28



Week 5... Drinking sensibly

While moderate drinking – between 1 and 2 units of alcohol a day – provides the heart with protective benefits for men aged over 40 and women who have gone through the menopause, heavier drinking can contribute to disorders of the heart muscle, high blood pressure and stroke.

Alcohol is also high in calories. In fact one unit of alcohol contains at least 100kcal. You need to add to this the calories in any mixers.

What is 1 unit of alcohol?

1 unit of alcohol is equivalent to 100ml of a drink of 10% ABV. (ABV stands for alcohol by volume.) You will see an ABV figure on many bottles and cans of alcoholic drinks. It tells you what percentage of the drink is alcohol.

For example 1 unit is:



½ pint (300ml) of bitter, lager or cider (3% to 5% ABV), or



1 pub measure of spirits, 25ml (1fl oz), or



1 small glass of sherry, 50ml (2fl oz), or

1 small glass of white or red wine, 100ml (4fl oz), 10% ABV

Drinking within sensible limits

Men should drink **no more than 3 to 4 units a day**, and a total of no more than 21 units of alcohol a week.

Women should drink **no more than 2 to 3 units a day**, and a total of no more than 14 units of alcohol a week.

Saving up units of alcohol and then consuming more than the recommended daily amount in one session (binge drinking) is not good for your health. Aim to have at least two alcohol-free days a week.

Week 5 challenge

Challenge	Heart points available
Drink within sensible limits each day.	1 point per day
Have at least two alcohol-free days this week.	1 point per alcohol-free day – maximum of 2 points for the week

Week 5

Day	Drinks	Number of units
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
Heart points earned		

Heart points earned this week: _____ Maximum Heart points available this week: 9



See your progress!

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Maximum <i>Heart points</i> available	28	8	28	28	9
<i>Heart points</i> earned					

Look back at pages 5-14 to find your weekly *Heart point* totals. Write them in the boxes above. See how you have achieved against the targets set.

Don't stop now!

- Keep setting new goals.
- Why not try combining the challenges from different weeks together to step up the challenge?
- Why not add your own challenges, for example to reduce your intake of added sugar?



About the British Heart Foundation

The British Heart Foundation is the nation's heart charity, saving lives through pioneering research, patient care and vital information.


What you can do for us

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