

How healthy is your diet?

Questionnaire

MISSION **VERY**
POSSIBLE!

This questionnaire is designed to allow you to assess the nutritional value of your diet. Answer **yes** or **no** to the questions below and then read the supplementary information that will help you to consider making changes to your diet.



Eating habits		Yes	No
1	Do you skip breakfast more than once a week?		
2	Do you skip lunch more than once a week?		
3	Do you skip evening meals more than once a week?		
4	Do you skip meals and snack instead on most days?		

If you have answered yes to most of these questions, you may want to consider making some changes to your diet:

It's not necessarily bad for you to skip meals and replace them with snacks, as long as the snacks you eat provide sufficient nutrients to replace those of a complete meal. Many people, particularly those who do lots of physical activity, snack throughout the day to maintain their energy levels.

Skipping meals on a regular basis, particularly breakfast, disturbs the body's metabolism and can affect the way that you feel in a variety of different ways. It can also make it more difficult for you if you are trying to lose weight. Try to establish a regular eating pattern with no longer than 3 or 4 hours between meals and snacks.

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Fruit and vegetables		Yes	No
5	Do you eat more than 5 portions of fruit and/or vegetables every day? <i>Remember that fruit juice only counts as 1 portion a day, regardless of how much you drink. The same applies to dried fruit. Potatoes count as starchy foods and not as vegetables. As a guide, a portion is about a handful.</i>		
6	Do you eat more than 4 different varieties of fruit each week?		
7	Do you eat more than 4 different varieties of vegetables each week?		

If you have answered *no* to most of these questions, you may want to consider making some changes to your diet:

Aim to eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day:

- Fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruit or vegetables and fruit or vegetable juices, all count.
- A portion is about 80g.
- Enjoy fruit and vegetables with meals and/or as snacks.
- Watch out for sugar or syrup in some canned fruits and vegetables, and for salt in some canned vegetables.
- Fruit juice counts as only 1 portion a day, however much you drink.
- Beans and pulses count as only 1 portion a day, however much you eat.
- Try to include lots of different varieties of fruit and vegetables.
- Try to avoid adding fat or rich sauces to vegetables.

Eating at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day can help to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. They provide a variety of different vitamins and minerals, as well as being a good source of fibre.

ROUGH GUIDE TO PORTION SIZES

- Vegetables – 3 heaped tablespoons
- Salad – 1 dessert bowlful
- Grapefruit or avocado – ½ fruit
- Apples, bananas, pears, oranges and other similar size fruits – 1 fruit
- Plums and similar size fruit – 2 fruits
- Grapes, cherries and berries – 1 handful
- Fresh fruit salad – 3 heaped tablespoons
- Dried fruit – ½1 heaped tablespoon
- Fruit juice – 1 glass (150ml)

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Fat		Yes	No
8	Do you choose low-fat products when available?		
9	Do you choose baked, steamed or grilled options when available, rather than fried foods (such as crisps and snacks, or fish and chips)?		
10	Do you opt for lean cuts of meat or remove visible fat – for example, removing the skin on chicken or the rind on bacon?		
11	Did you eat any oily fish last week? <i>Examples of oily fish include salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines, trout, and fresh tuna.</i>		
12	Do you include some unsalted nuts and seeds in your diet?		

If you answered *no* to most of these questions, you may want to consider making some changes to your diet:

Most people would benefit from eating less saturated fat. This is the type of fat found in many common foods including meat and dairy products and in many processed foods. Eating too much fat in general may contribute to weight gain, and too much saturated fat can contribute towards coronary heart disease.

Foods containing fat should be eaten in moderate amounts:

- Choose lower-fat and/or leaner versions whenever you can. 'Lower-fat versions' means things like meat with the fat cut off, poultry without the skin, and fish without batter.
- Avoid frying foods and instead opt for grilled, baked, boiled, steamed, dry-fried or microwaved choices.
- Replacing some saturated fats with monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats will help to improve the ratio of 'protective' cholesterol to 'harmful' cholesterol in your blood.
- Eating oily fish regularly can help reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.
- Beans and pulses are good alternatives to meat as they are naturally very low in fat.

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Starchy foods		Yes	No
13	Do you base your main meals around starchy foods? <i>For example, potatoes, pasta, rice or bread.</i>		
14	Do you regularly choose wholemeal bread or rolls rather than white?		
15	Do you regularly eat wholegrain cereals, with no added sugar?		
16	Do you regularly include pulses in your diet? <i>For example, beans and lentils.</i>		

If you answered *no* to most of these questions, you may want to consider making some changes to your diet:

Aim to base all meals on a good-sized serving from this group, choosing wholegrain types when you can.

- Starchy foods contain carbohydrate mainly in the form of starch, which provides energy. They also contain some protein, minerals, vitamins and fibre.
- Fibre helps the digestive system function properly, preventing bowel disorders such as constipation.
- Try to avoid frying foods in this food group (eg, chips), or adding too much fat (eg, spreading butter on bread), or adding rich sauces or dressings (eg, cheese sauce on pasta).

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Sugar		Yes	No
17	Do you regularly eat sugar-coated breakfast cereals or add sugar to your breakfast cereals?		
18	Do you add sugar to your drinks?		
19	Do you regularly drink sweet fizzy drinks?		
20	Do you regularly eat cakes, sweets, chocolate or biscuits at work?		

If you have answered yes to most of these questions, you may want to consider making some changes to your diet:

Foods high in added sugar include soft drinks, sweets, jams, cake, puddings, biscuits, pastries and ice-cream. If you eat foods and drinks containing sugar, eat them mainly at mealtimes rather than in between meals, to reduce the risk of tooth decay.

Sugar can count for a lot of additional calories during the day, especially if you add sugar to every drink.

The guideline daily amounts for sugars are:

Men	Women
120g	90g

Guide to food labelling

A lot of sugar	A little sugar
15g or more of sugars per 100g	5g of sugars or more per 100g

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Salt		Yes	No
21	Do you regularly add salt to food during cooking?		
22	Do you regularly add salt to meals at the table?		
23	Do you regularly eat savoury snacks at work? For example, crisps or salted nuts.		
24	Do you regularly eat pre-prepared meals? For example, pre-prepared sandwiches, ready meals or canned soups.		
25	Do you regularly eat processed meats such as ham or bacon, or smoked fish?		
26	Has your GP advised you that you have high blood pressure?		

If you have answered yes to most of these questions, you may want to consider making some changes to your diet:

Reducing the amount of salt in your diet can help keep your blood pressure down, especially if this is part of a healthy diet that includes plenty of fruit and vegetables. Reducing your blood pressure reduces your risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

The guideline daily amounts for salt are:

Men	Women
6g	6g

Guide to food labelling

A lot of sugar	A little sugar
1.5g of salt or 0.6g of sodium	0.3g of salt or 0.1g of sodium

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Drinks and alcohol		Yes	No
21	Do you drink plenty of fluids at regular intervals during the working day?		
22	Do you opt for a variety of different drinks, including water, at work?		
23	Do you avoid sugary fizzy drinks?		
24	Do you drink less than 2-3 units of alcohol a day if you're a woman, or less than 3-4 units of alcohol a day if you're a man? 1 unit of alcohol is equivalent to 100ml of 10% ABV (alcohol by volume) For example 1 unit is: <i>1/2 pint (300ml) of bitter, lager or cider (3% to 5% ABV), or 1 small glass of white or red wine, 100ml (4fl oz), 10% ABV, or 1 pub measure of spirits, 25ml (1fl oz), or 1 small glass of sherry, 50ml (2fl oz)</i>		

If you answered *no* to most of these questions, you may want to consider making some changes to your diet:

In climates such as in the UK, we should drink about 1.2 litres (6 to 8 glasses) of fluid every day to stop us getting dehydrated.

Too much alcohol can lead to damage to the heart muscle, high blood pressure, stroke and some cancers. Alcohol is high in calories too, and so it can lead to weight gain. However, moderate drinking – between 1 and 2 units a day – may help protect the heart in men aged over 40 and women who have gone through the menopause.