



**IRISH HEART  
FOUNDATION**  
Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke

[www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie)

IRISH HEART FOUNDATION

**FOOD DIARY**



## Healthy eating and being physically active are essential for good health. What you eat can either protect you or increase your chances of heart disease and stroke.

The key to healthy eating is to eat a wide variety of foods. Using the Food Pyramid as a guide will help make sure you get all the vitamins, minerals and goodness you need from your food. Aim to eat regular meals throughout the day.

Choose most foods from the bottom two shelves, smaller amounts from the next two shelves and a very small amount from the next shelf. Foods on the top shelf should be avoided as they are high in fat, salt and sugar and not necessary for health.

### DOES YOUR DIET ADD UP?

Keeping a food diary for just three days can help you see how your diet compares to healthy eating guidelines. Write down everything you eat or drink during the day. Then add up the number of servings for each of the six shelves and compare them with the recommended servings on the Food Pyramid. How did you do? What changes could you make?



*Chicken stir fry*



*Spring vegetable risotto*

These healthy recipes and more can be found on [www.irishheart.ie/recipes](http://www.irishheart.ie/recipes)

## WHY KEEP A FOOD DIARY?

- Keeping a record of everything that you eat and drink for a period of time can help you to identify areas that you might like to change.
- Being aware of when you eat can help you identify trigger situations where you may eat for reasons other than hunger. Some people eat out of habit, boredom, for emotional reasons or because others are doing so.
- It can help you to keep track of any changes you've made to your diet and identify areas of success.



## TOP TIPS ON KEEPING A FOOD DIARY

- Aim to keep the diary for at least three days and try to include one weekend day as you may eat different foods on weekdays compared to weekends.
- Be as specific as possible. Try to include the portion sizes and cooking methods for example.
- The more information you note, the more useful the diary will be. Don't forget to include any snacks you eat during the day and any foods or drinks consumed on the go.
- Include any alcohol that you drink as it is high in calories.
- Aim to complete the diary throughout the day as filling it out last thing at night may mean that you forget to include something, especially unplanned snacks.
- Try comparing your daily intake against the Food Pyramid recommendations. Did you eat the recommended number of servings from each shelf of the Food Pyramid and in the recommended portion size?

Use the

# FOOD PYRAMID

to plan your diet



## Alcohol weekly lower risk limits

### Men:

17 standard drinks.  
(170g alcohol over a week)

### Women:

11 standard drinks.  
(110g alcohol over a week)

**Standard drinks (SD)** contain roughly 10g of pure alcohol

1 SD =  1/2 pint beer =  single measure spirit =  small glass wine

**Foods and drinks high in fat and sugar**  
Limit to sometimes, not every day



**Reduced-fat options**  
Use as little as possible. Choose low-fat cooking oils.



The foods on these shelves are essential for good health, enjoy a variety every day.

2



3



5+



6+



Drink at least 8 cups of fluid a day – water is best



Use a **200ml disposable plastic cup** to guide portion size of cereals, cooked rice and pasta, and even vegetables, salad and fruit.



A **matchbox** can guide you on a serving of cheese. Reduced-fat options are best.



The **palm** width and fingers can guide how much fish you need.

**Food Pyramid for adults and children**

# PYRAMID

## our daily healthy food choices

High in fat, sugar and salt  
Eat every day.

### Fat spreads and oils

Use as possible. Choose reduced-fat or light spreads, 1 portion pack for 2-3 slices of bread. Choose rapeseed, olive, canola, sunflower or corn oils, 1 teaspoon per person when cooking. Remember mayonnaise and salad dressing also contain oil.

### 1 Serving size =

(The actual portion you eat may be bigger or smaller than a serving.)

### Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

Choose lean meat and low-fat cooking methods (grilling, baking, steaming or boiling).

Choose fish twice a week – oily fish is best.

50-75g cooked (100g or size of a pack of cards uncooked)  
lean beef, pork, mince or poultry  
100g cooked fish, soya or tofu  
6 dessertspoons of peas, beans or lentils  
2 eggs  
40g unsalted nuts

### Milk, yogurt and cheese

Choose 3 servings a day.

Aged 9-18 years – choose 5 servings a day.

Reduced-fat or low-fat varieties are best.

1 glass milk (200ml)  
1 carton yogurt (125g)  
1 yogurt drink (200ml)  
1 matchbox size (25g) of hard or semi-hard  
cheese such as cheddar or edam  
50g soft cheese such as brie or camembert

### Fruit and vegetables

Choose 5 or more servings a day.

1 medium sized fruit – apple, orange, pear or banana  
2 small fruits – plums, kiwis, mandarin oranges or 10 grapes  
½ cup or 4 dessertspoons of cooked vegetables –  
fresh or frozen  
1 bowl of salad – lettuce, tomato, cucumber  
100ml unsweetened fruit juice

### Breads, cereals, potatoes, pasta and rice

Choose at least 6 servings. High-fibre varieties  
are best. Include in each meal.

1 thin slice of bread  
2 breakfast cereal wheat or oat biscuits  
3 dessertspoons of dry porridge oats or muesli  
4 dessertspoons of flake type breakfast cereal  
3 dessertspoons of cooked pasta, rice or noodles  
1 medium or 2 small potatoes

best

of the hand,  
depth without  
thumbs, shows  
meat, poultry or  
in a day.



**Portion packs** of reduced-fat  
spread found in cafes can guide  
the amount you use. One should  
be enough for 2-3 slices of bread.



**A 5ml teaspoon** can guide  
your portion size for peanut  
butter, jam, marmalade or  
honey.

Children aged 5 years and over.



# Food Diary - Try it for just three days

Date	Time	Food and Drink <i>(Types and Amounts)</i>	Was I hungry?	Circumstances <i>Where was I? Who I with?</i>	Food Groups <i>(Shelves on the Food Pyramid)</i>

[illegible]

When you run out of space please go to [www.irisheart.ie](http://www.irisheart.ie) to download and print more sheets.

# WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR A HEALTHY HEART

- Be a healthy weight.
- Choose at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day.
- Eat less fatty foods.
- Eat less salt and processed foods.
- If you drink, keep within the recommended limits.
- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes 5 days a week.
- If you smoke, try to stop. Contact the National Heart and Stroke Helpline Locall 1890 432 787.
- If you are over 30, you should have your blood pressure checked at least every 5 years. If your blood pressure is borderline (around 140/90) it should be checked more frequently by your family doctor.

For more information including leaflets on healthy eating, physical activity and heart-healthy recipes see **[www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie)**

## FUNDING:

The **Irish Heart Foundation** is the national charity fighting heart disease and stroke and relies on charitable donations for more than 90 per cent of its funding. We support, educate and train people to save lives, campaign for patients, promote positive health strategies, support research and provide vital public information. We need your support – through donations, as a volunteer or on our training courses.

The information provided by the Irish Heart Foundation in this booklet was correct and accurate at the time of publication to the best of the charity's knowledge.



Irish Heart Foundation  
50 Ringsend Road, Dublin 4.  
**Phone:** +353 1 668 5001  
**Fax:** +353 1 668 5896  
**Email:** [info@irishheart.ie](mailto:info@irishheart.ie)



**Heart and Stroke Helpline:**  
Locall 1890 432 787  
Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm

**Web:**  
[www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie)  
[www.stroke.ie](http://www.stroke.ie)

