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?

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?
Your daily healthy food choices

1. High in fat, sugar and salt
   Eat as little as possible.

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

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. Fruit and vegetables
   Choose 5 or more servings a day.

6. Breads, cereals, potatoes, pasta and rice
   Choose at least 6 servings. High-fibre varieties are best. Include in each meal.

Children aged 5 years and over.

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

Circumstances
Where was I?  Who I with?

Food Groups
(Shelves on the Food Pyramid)

When you run out of space please go to [www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.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 Local 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

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.