



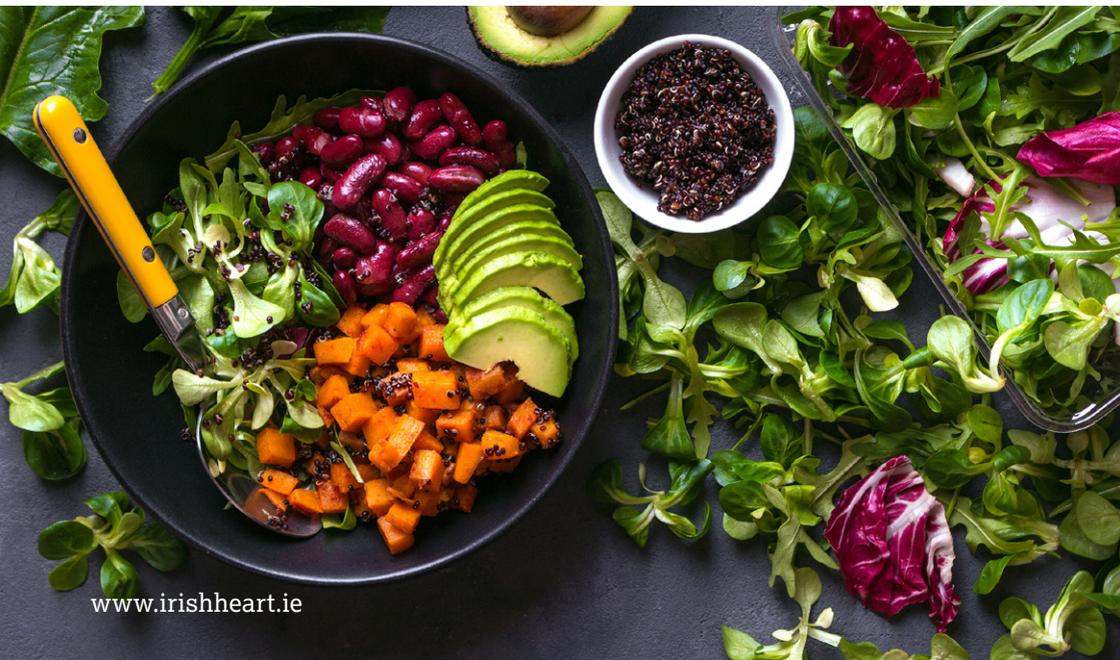
## Healthy eating and being physically active are essential for good health. What you eat can either protect you or increase your chances of getting heart disease or having a stroke.

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. Filling out a food diary will also help understand patterns in your eating that you may not have noticed before. 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?



## 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 the circumstances in which you consume food can help you realise trigger situations where you may eat for reasons other than hunger. Some people eat out of habit, boredom, for emotional reasons or because companions 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

- Fill in the diary as you go – try not to wait until the evening or the next day before you fill it in.
- Write down everything you eat or drink, no matter how big or small.
- Aim to keep the diary for five days and try to include at least one weekend day as our eating patterns often vary between weekdays and weekends.
- Be as specific as possible. Try to include the portion sizes and cooking methods for example.
- Include any alcohol that you drink as it is high in calories.
- Think about why you are eating. Many people eat when stressed, bored or upset. If you are eating for any reason other than hunger think about why this is and write it down- it can help you see what might be triggering your eating.
- 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 daily healthy food choices everyday and watch your portion sizes.

Food Pyramid for adults and children aged 5 years and over.

Not needed for good health.

Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt



NOT every day

Most people consume snacks high in fat, sugar and salt and sugar sweetened drinks up to 6 times a day (Healthy Ireland Survey 2016). There are no recommended servings for Top Shelf foods and drinks because they are not needed for good health.

Fats, spreads and oils



In very small amounts

Use as little as possible. Choose mono or polyunsaturated reduced-fat or light spreads. Choose rapeseed, olive, canola, sunflower or corn oils. Limit mayonnaise, coleslaw and salad dressings as they also contain oil. Always cook with as little fat or oil as possible – grilling, oven-baking, steaming, boiling or stir-frying.

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts



2 Servings a day

Choose lean meat, poultry (without skin) and fish. Eat oily fish up to twice a week. Choose eggs, beans and nuts. Limit processed salty meats such as sausages, bacon and ham.

Milk, yogurt and cheese



3 Servings a day

5 for children age 9–12 and teenagers age 13–18

Choose reduced-fat or low-fat varieties. Choose low-fat milk and yogurt more often than cheese. Enjoy cheese in small amounts. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding need 3 servings a day.

Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice



3-5\* Servings a day

Up to 7\* for teenage boys and men age 19–50

Wholemeal and wholegrain cereals are best. Enjoy at each meal. The number of servings depends on age, size, if you are a man or a woman and on activity levels. Watch your serving size and use the Daily Servings Guide below.\*

Vegetables, salad and fruit



5-7 Servings a day

Base your meals on these and enjoy a variety of colours. More is better. Limit fruit juice to unsweetened, once a day.

## \*Daily Servings Guide – wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

Active	Child (5–12)	Teenager (13–18)	Adult (19–50)	Adult (51+)	Inactive	Teenager (13–18)	Adult (19–50)	Adult (51+)
		3–4	4	4–5		3–4		3
	3–5	5–7	5–7	4–5		4–5	4–6	4

There is no guideline for inactive children as it is essential that all children are active.

## Serving size guide



**Cereals, cooked rice and pasta, and vegetables, salad and fruit**

Use a 200ml disposable plastic cup to guide serving size.



**Cheese**

Use two thumbs, width and depth to guide serving size.



**Meat, poultry, fish**

The palm of the hand, width and depth without fingers and thumbs, shows how much you need in a day.



**Reduced-fat spread**

Portion packs found in cafes can guide the amount you use. One pack should be enough for two slices of bread.



**Oils**

Use one teaspoon of oil per person when cooking or in salads.



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



**Get Active!**

To maintain a healthy weight adults need at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on 5 days a week (or 150 minutes a week); children need to be active at a moderate to vigorous level for at least 60 minutes every day.

## Average daily calorie needs for all foods and drinks for adults

**Active** 2000kcal **Inactive** 1800kcal **Active** 2500kcal **Inactive** 2000kcal



# What You Can Do for A Healthy Heart

- Be a healthy weight
- Choose at least 5-7 portions of fruit and vegetables everyday
- Eat less fatty foods
- Eat less salt and processed foods
- If you drink, keep within the recommend 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 Freephone 1850 25 25 50.
- Have a regular blood pressure check with your doctor.



The Irish Heart Foundation leads the fight to save lives and make life better for those suffering from heart disease and stroke.

**Irish Heart Foundation**  
17-19 Rathmines Road Lower, Dublin 6  
[www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie)

**National Heart and Stroke Helpline**  
Freephone 1800 25 25 50  
Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Thur til 7pm