



**Irish Heart
Foundation**

The National Stroke & Heart Charity

HEALTHY EATING

**to reduce your risk
of heart disease
and stroke**



Healthy eating is essential for good health. What you eat can either protect you or increase your chances of getting heart disease or having a stroke.

This leaflet will give you tips for a healthy and enjoyable eating plan which is also good for your heart.

The key to healthy eating is to eat a wide variety of foods.



The Food Pyramid way

The key to healthy eating is to eat a wide variety of foods. Using the Food Pyramid (on page 5) as a guide will help make sure you get all the vitamins, minerals and goodness you need from your food. Choose most foods from the bottom two shelves, smaller amounts from the next two shelves and the smallest amount from the next shelf. Foods on the top shelf are high in fat, salt and sugar and are not necessary in the diet. Limit to no more than one serving a day maximum and ideally not every day.

The number of servings you need each day (for adults and children over five years) is given for each shelf on the Food Pyramid. Choose whatever foods you like to make up the total number from each shelf.

Does your diet add up?

Do the foods you eat every day add up to the Food Pyramid way? Just write down everything you had to eat or drink yesterday. Then add up the number of servings for each shelf and compare them with the servings on the Food Pyramid. How did you do? What changes could you make?

Use the Food Pyramid to plan your healthy food choices every day and watch your portion size.

Tips for each shelf of the Food Pyramid

Vegetables, salad and fruit (5-7 servings a day)

Fruit and vegetables are almost fat-free, packed with vitamins, minerals and fibre. Overcooking vegetables destroys vitamins. Try steaming, microwaving or boiling vegetables in a little water with the saucepan lid on. Frozen vegetables are just as good as fresh. Try the many ways of enjoying fruit - fresh, dried, stewed, tinned in its own juice or as fruit-juice.



Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice (3-5 or more servings a day)

These foods are high in energy, but low in fat. It's what you put on bread or the sauce you use with pasta or rice that makes them high in fat. Choose mostly wholegrain and wholemeal varieties of bread, rolls and breakfast cereals. Try leaving the skin on potatoes.

Milk, cheese and yoghurt (3 servings a day for young children and adults. Children aged 9-18 years need 5 servings a day)

These foods are good sources of calcium and vitamin D for strong bones and protein, the building block for all parts of the body. Choose low-fat varieties, especially if you live with overweight or have high cholesterol. Low-fat options contain the same amount of calcium as full-fat varieties.

The Food Pyramid

Not needed for good health.

Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt



NOT every day

For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over

! 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.

Average daily calorie needs for all foods and drinks for adults

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

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.
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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.

The top shelf of the Food Pyramid (maximum one serving a day and ideally not every day)

Crisps, savoury snacks, biscuits, cakes, sweets and chocolate - These foods are high in fat, including saturated fat, sugar and salt and so should be avoided. Too much saturated fat in the diet increases cholesterol levels and high salt foods can increase blood pressure. These foods can also promote overweight and obesity.



Alcohol - Small amounts of alcohol may provide some protection against heart disease, but there is not enough evidence to recommend including alcohol as part of a heart healthy diet. Alcohol is high in calories. Drinking more than your weekly limit can increase your weight and blood pressure and may damage your heart and liver.

If you do drink, spread your drinking over the week, keep some days alcohol-free and do not drink more than the recommended upper limits: for men 17 standard drinks a week and for women 11 standard drinks a week.

- 1 standard drink (10 grams of alcohol)
- = one half pint of beer, stout or lager
- = one small glass of wine
- = one pub measure of spirits (whiskey, vodka or gin)

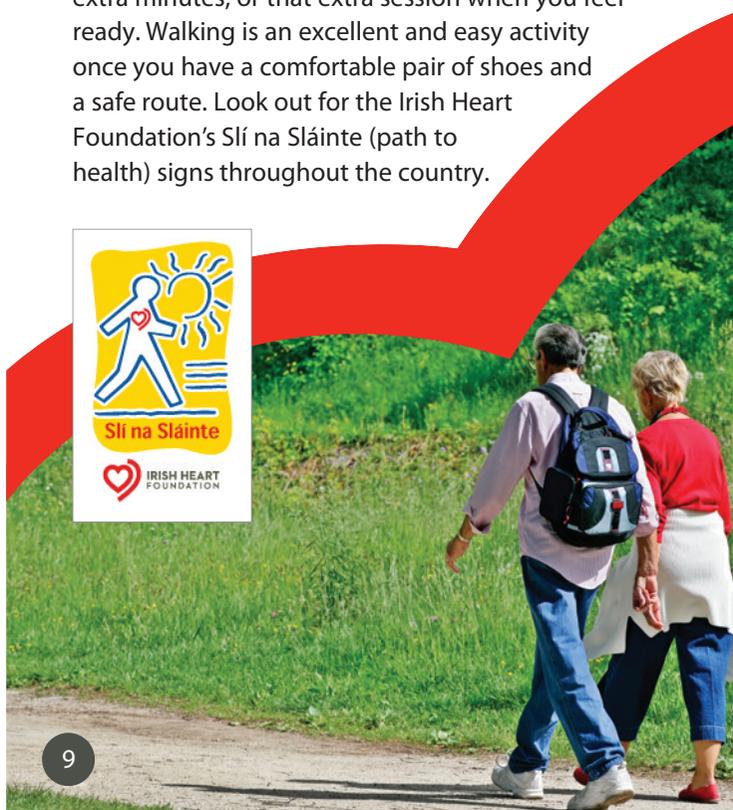
Remember that alcohol is a drug and may be a risk for other health problems.

How can I reduce weight?

- Follow the general guidelines in this leaflet and see our **Lose weight** leaflet for more information.
- Choose less foods from the top shelf of the Food Pyramid.
- Choose lower-fat foods from the other shelves.
- Watch the size of your portions.
- Choose five to seven servings from the vegetables, salad and fruit shelf and three to five servings from the cereals, bread, potatoes, pasta and rice shelf.
- Aim for a gradual weight loss of one to two pounds a week.
- Make small changes that you can keep up for life, not just for a few weeks.

Physical activity keeps your heart healthy

Any activity is better than none at all, particularly if you are not very active. So start small and add on extra minutes, or that extra session when you feel ready. Walking is an excellent and easy activity once you have a comfortable pair of shoes and a safe route. Look out for the Irish Heart Foundation's Slí na Sláinte (path to health) signs throughout the country.



Meat, poultry, fish and alternatives (2 servings a day)

These foods are a good source of protein and iron (for healthy blood) - red meat is the richest source of iron. Choose lean red meat (for example, beef, lamb or pork) about 3 times a week and frequently replace with poultry. Have oily fish such as sardines, mackerel, trout, herring or salmon at least twice a week. They help thin the blood and prevent clotting.



Reduced fat spreads and oils (2 servings a day)

Spreads - Choose low fat or reduced fat spreads. One heaped teaspoon or the size of one mini-pack is enough for two slices of bread. If using full fat spread or margarine, one heaped teaspoon is enough to cover three slices of bread. Butter should be limited to once a week at most.

Oil - All oils are 100% fat and all are high in calories so measure out the amount you use. Allow one teaspoon of oil per person when cooking.



The Irish Heart Foundation recommends that you are physically active for at least 30 minutes on five days of the week. Rather than one continuous session, you can build up 30 minutes or more of activity over two to three shorter sessions. For best results, do something you enjoy.

If you are trying to lose weight, you need to be active for a longer period of time. The goal is for 60 to 75 minutes at a moderate intensity on 5 days a week or to spread the 300 minutes or more over the whole week. This will take some time and determination to build into your routine.

Low-fat cooking for a healthy heart

- Oven-bake, grill, poach, stir-fry or dry-fry food with an oil spray instead of frying.
- If you are using oil, measure out the oil with a spoon, rather than pouring the oil. Use one teaspoon of oil per person when cooking.
- Buy the leanest mince that you can and drain off the fat, while cooking.



- For your main meal, 100-150g/4-6oz of cooked lean meat or poultry is equal to two servings from this shelf of the Food Pyramid and is all an adult requires per day. This is about the width and depth of the palm of your hand.
- Add plenty of vegetables to stews, casseroles, curries, sweet and sour, stir-fry and other dishes.
- Use tomato based sauces instead of creamy sauces.
- Use low fat-milk and low-fat cheese.
- Use light mayonnaise in coleslaw and salad dressing sparingly.

Please make a donation today

The Irish Heart Foundation is Ireland's national charity dedicated to the reduction of death and disability from heart disease and stroke. Over 90% of our funding comes from public and business donations. We depend on your goodwill and generosity to continue our work.

If you found this booklet useful, please help our charity to continue to provide heart & stroke information by donating today.

You can make your donation today:

By post: Irish Heart Foundation
17-19 Rathmines Road Lower, Dublin 6.

Online: www.irishheart.ie

By phone: 01 6685001

Personal Details

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Mobile: _____

Credit or debit card (one off donation)

Amount:

€250* €100 €50 €25 Other € _____

Card Number:

Exp Date: / Security Code**:

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

* If you donate €250 in one year (or €21 per month) we can claim tax back at no cost to you.

** Last 3 digits on the signature strip on the reverse of our card.

The Irish Heart Foundation is committed to best practice in fundraising and adheres to the **statement of guiding principles for fundraising** promoting transparency, honesty and accountability. Any personal information you provide will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.

SEPA Direct Debit Mandate

Unique Mandate Reference:

Creditor Identifier: IE02ZZZ306322

By signing this mandate form, you authorise (A) the Irish Heart Foundation to send instructions to your bank to debit your account and (B) your bank to debit your account in accordance with the instruction from the Irish Heart Foundation.

As part of your rights, you are entitled to a refund from your bank under the terms and conditions of your agreement with your bank. A refund must be claimed within 8 weeks starting from the date on which your account was debited. Your rights are explained in a statement that you can obtain from your bank.

Please complete all the fields below marked*

*Bank Name: _____

*Address: _____

*Account Number (IBAN): _____

*Swift BIC: _____

Creditor Name: **IRISH HEART FOUNDATION**

Creditor Address: **17-19 RATHMINES ROAD LOWER, DUBLIN 6**

*Type of Payment: Recurrent (Monthly) One-off Payment

* Signature: _____ *Date Signed: _____

Please return completed form to the Irish Heart Foundation.

My monthly instalment amount is:

€21* €18 €15 €10 Other € _____ per month

*A regular gift of €21 per month could be worth an additional €9 from the Revenue Commissioners per month at no extra cost to you.

Your first contribution will be taken on either the 2nd or the 20th of the next available month. Please select which date you prefer.

2nd 20th

You will be notified in writing ten days in advance of your first direct debit. If you wish to cancel within 7 days of a direct debit payment please contact your own bank.

Preferences

I would like to hear about other IHF events, activities, awareness campaigns and appeals. Yes

Do you need a postal receipt: Yes No



Irish Heart Foundation

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Funding:

The Irish Heart Foundation is the national charity fighting heart disease and stroke and relies on charitable donations for 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.

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Féidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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