



**Irish Heart
Foundation**

LOSE WEIGHT
and reduce your risk
of heart disease
and stroke



Weight loss, heart disease and stroke

Being overweight means that your heart has to work harder to pump blood around your body. This extra pressure can cause wear and tear on your heart and blood-vessel system.

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Many people who are overweight for a long time develop high blood pressure or diabetes, which are both risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

In the last 10 years there has been an increase in the number of people who are overweight or very overweight (obese). Being overweight and obese damages our hearts, blood vessels and our joints, and is mainly the result of too much energy (calories) in our diet and too little activity.

If you are overweight or obese, you should check with your family doctor if you have other risk factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol and smoking. Even losing a small amount of weight will improve your overall health and help reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.

You can get more information about other risk factors – see the back page for contact details.

If you are overweight, start now and use the tips in this leaflet to change your eating habits and get more physically active. Making small changes now will stop you from gaining extra weight over the next few years.

Do you need to lose weight?

- Is your weight creeping up each year?
- Do you have less energy than you used to?
- Do you get breathless running for a bus?

Your answer is likely to be 'Yes', as more than half of Irish adults are overweight or very overweight (obese).

By losing some of your extra weight you will:

- feel better
- look better
- lower your chances of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and high blood pressure and
- help to reduce or even stop your medication for angina, high blood pressure or raised cholesterol.

You may, of course, have your own reasons for wanting to lose weight.

If you have already had a heart attack, bypass surgery or an angioplasty, it's important that you follow the tips in this leaflet to lose weight. You should especially try to:

- choose oily fish (for example, sardines, salmon, mackerel or trout) twice a week;
- choose at least five or more portions of fruit and vegetables every day.

Making small changes now will stop you from gaining extra weight over the next few years.



Are you always on a diet?

Forget about dieting. Instead, follow a weight loss plan for life. Make small gradual changes to the food you eat and get more active. Even losing a small amount of weight has health benefits. Start with changes that are easy to make and that you can keep up for life – this will help you to reach a healthier weight and then to stay at this weight.

Being a healthy weight isn't about being as thin as a model, in fact it is quite the opposite. Find the right weight for you by making sure it is within a healthy BMI range, eating healthily, regularly taking brisk walks and being generally active.

Even losing a small amount of weight has health benefits.



Are you an apple or pear shape?

If you are overweight, it is where your body stores the extra fat that is the problem. If the extra fat is stored around your waist, this gives you an apple shape. This shape is linked with a higher risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes and some cancers. If extra fat is stored around your hips this gives you a pear shape and this shape is less harmful to your health.

Use a measuring tape to measure your waist and then check the table on the next page to assess your risk of heart disease and stroke.

No one weight is ideal, as there is a range of healthy weights for a particular height.



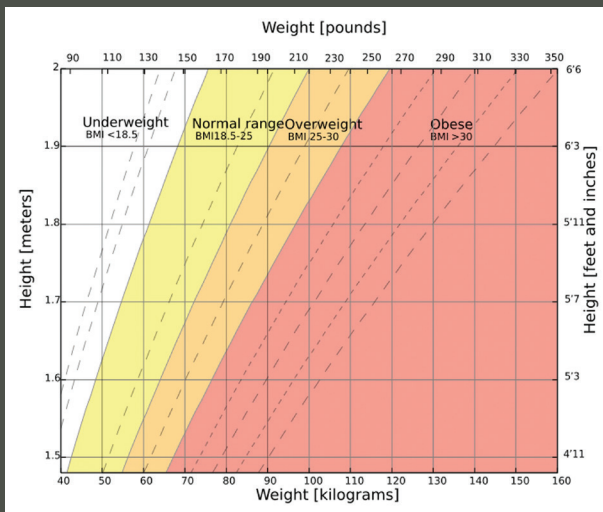
Waist measurement table

	Women	Men
Healthy waist measurement	Less than 80 centimetres (32 inches)	Less than 94 centimetres (37 inches)
Moderate risk	Between 80 and 88 centimetres (32 and 35 inches)	Between 94 and 102 centimetres (37 and 40 inches)
High risk	More than 88 centimetres (35 inches)	More than 102 centimetres (40 inches)

Check your body mass index.

Your body mass index (BMI) is an easy check to find out your weight range.

Draw a line across from your height and up from your weight. Where these two lines cross is your body mass index. No one weight is ideal, as there is a range of healthy weights for a particular height.



If you are in the 'overweight band' range, start to follow the tips in this leaflet. If you are in the 'obese' or 'very obese band' range, get help and advice from your family doctor or a dietitian. There is no quick way to lose weight. A steady loss of one kilogram (one to two pounds) a week is the safest and most effective way to lose weight and keep it off.

Are you ready to lose weight?

There are two important things you need to do to lose weight successfully:

1. **Get motivated** to lose those extra pounds. Keeping a diary of the food you eat and the activities you do will help get you focused and keep you motivated.
2. **Plan and be prepared.** Planning ahead helps you feel more in control of your weight loss. Have plenty of healthy foods in your fridge, lots of fresh fruit and vegetables, low-fat snack foods like low-fat yoghurt and a light oil spray for cooking. Have your tracksuit and trainers ready for your walking or activity programme. This will make it easier for you to start your new eating and activity plan.










Emergency supplies

- Have low-fat ready meals in the freezer – home-made or bought.
- Have a good supply of raw vegetables and plenty of fruit.
- Home-made soup is a great comfort food, especially on cold days. Freeze it in microwave-proof cartons so they are easy to thaw out and reheat as needed.
- Get into the habit of carrying a bottle of water. It is important to drink at least eight cups of fluid each day. Water can also help you feel full up between meals.

Alcohol

If you are serious about losing weight, you will be more successful if you cut out alcohol altogether until you reach your target weight. Alcohol is high in calories, can make you more hungry and can weaken your good intentions.

- Choose water or diet drinks every second drink. If you really need to have an alcoholic drink, try white wine spritzers or light beer instead of other drinks, and drink more slowly.
- Do not drink more than the recommended upper limits: 17 standard drinks (SD) a week for men and 11 standard drinks a week for women, spread out over the week with some alcohol-free days.

	standard drinks
 1 Pint =	2
 Half a pint =	1
 Bottle of wine (750ml) =	7
 1 small glass of wine (100ml) =	1
 Spirits - pub single measure =	1

One standard drink is 10g of alcohol
= one half pint of beer, stout or lager
= one small glass of wine
= one pub measure of spirits (whiskey, vodka or gin).

Support and reward

- Get support from your family and friends. They can help keep you motivated, become more active with you and help you limit the high-fat snack foods you eat.

- Reward yourself when you make positive progress. To check your progress, use a measuring tape or weighing scales (remember that scales vary and if you're retaining fluid for any reason they may not give you a true picture of your progress), or consider how your clothes fit. Weigh yourself once a week at the same time in similar clothes. Choose a non-food treat for your reward – a magazine, a DVD, a CD, a film, a football match, a new haircut or even a top or shirt when you have lost some weight.

Be active to lose weight

Regular physical activity is as important as what you eat for losing weight and keeping your heart healthy. Being active helps burn calories, tone your muscles and control your appetite.

To lose weight, you need to use up more energy (calories) than your body takes in from food and drink. The best way to lose weight is through a combination of:

- Eating and drinking fewer calories, and using up more calories by being more active.
- You should gradually build up to 60 to 75 minutes of physical activity on 5 days a week.
- Your activity should be aerobic, which means getting the whole body moving - walking, cycling and swimming are excellent examples.
- Your activity should be at a moderate intensity, which
 - causes your heart to beat faster,
 - means you are slightly out of breath but still able to talk, and
 - brings a little sweat to your brow.

On any day, the amount of activity can be spread over 2 to 3 shorter sessions, for example 45 minutes walking and 15 minutes swimming or the total of 300 or more minutes can be spread over the whole week.

Walking is an excellent way to lose weight, especially if you have not been active for a while. You should aim to walk 3 to 5 kilometres (1Km = $\frac{2}{3}$ mile) at a moderate pace on most days of the week. A three-kilometre walk should take 30 to 40 minutes to complete. Gradually increase the pace and duration and add in other activities such as swimming, cycling, dancing or football.

Vigorous intensity, such as jogging; running, swimming laps or cycling at more than 10 mph can also be effective in losing weight, provided you are fit and healthy enough. The advantage is that you need take only half the time to achieve the same results as moderate intensity. You can of course combine minutes of vigorous activity with minutes of moderate activity e.g. 30 minutes run or jog (vigorous) and 15 to 20 minutes gardening or brisk walking (moderate).

The amount of time and type of activity will work differently for each person in losing weight. As you get more active and fitter by increasing time or intensity, or both, you should achieve steady weight-loss and enjoy other health benefits such as increased energy or better sleep .

General guidelines

- Choose an activity, sport or exercise routine that you enjoy and find a friend or family member to join you.
- If you have not been active, build more activity into your daily life, take the stairs, walk to the shop, walk the dog or do some gardening. This way, being more active will become a lifetime habit.
- If you are not sure about your fitness level or general health, or have a specific health problem, it is important to contact your family doctor before you start exercising.

Daily menu plan

Regular meals stop you feeling hungry and ensure that you have a daily supply of essential nutrients. Try out the meal suggestions below and follow the food pyramid for serving size.

Breakfast

- One bowl of wholegrain cereal with chopped fruit and low-fat milk
- One slice of wholemeal bread or toast

Mid morning

- Fruit or raw vegetables

Lunch

- Plenty of cooked or raw vegetables
- Lean meat, poultry, fish (preferably oily fish, such as sardines or salmon), eggs or low-fat cheese
- Wholemeal bread or a roll
- Low-fat yogurt or a glass of low-fat milk
- Fresh fruit

Mid afternoon

- Fresh fruit or raw vegetables

Main meal

- Lean meat, poultry, fish (preferably oily), eggs, low-fat cheese or nine dessertspoons of peas or beans
- Plenty of vegetables
- Baked or boiled potato, pasta or rice
- Low-fat yogurt or a glass of low-fat milk
- Fresh, cooked or tinned fruit (in its own juice)

Supper

- Fresh fruit

Have about 8 to 10 glasses (1.5 litres) of fluids a day, preferably water.



If you feel hungry between meals, try drinking a glass of water first. If you are still hungry, choose fresh fruit or raw vegetables to snack on.

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.irisheart.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 you 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

Registered Charity Number: CHY 5507
Source Code: APP00248

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Irish Heart Foundation

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Email: info@irishheart.ie

Heart and Stroke Helpline:

Locall 1890 432 787

Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm

Web:

www.irishheart.ie

www.stroke.ie



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.

This booklet is part-funded by the Irish Heart Foundation and part-funded by the Health Service Executive.



Fóidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Published by the Irish Heart Foundation in 2014. For more information, contact the Irish Heart Foundation or your local HSE office:



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.



Registered Charity Number CHY 5507

HPUT00372