



Changes you can make to help lower your blood pressure



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About us



We are British Heart Foundation.



We work with doctors and scientists to find treatments for heart problems.



We want to learn how to treat heart problems and stop them from happening.



We have lots of information and support to help keep your heart healthy.



This booklet tells you about changes you can make to help lower your blood pressure.

About this booklet



Your doctor or nurse might have told you about high blood pressure.



The way you live your life can make you have high blood pressure.



This booklet tells you about things you can do to lower your blood pressure.

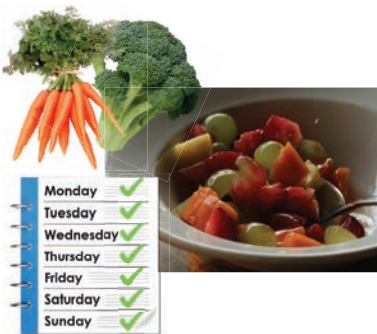


Eat well

It is really important to eat and drink the right things.



Here are some things you could try:



Eat more fruit and vegetables

You should try to eat lots of fruit and vegetables every day.



Eat less sugar

Sugar is in things like fizzy or fruity drinks, cake, sweets and chocolate.



Too much sugar can make you put on weight. This means you have more chance of getting ill.



You should try to eat foods with healthy sugar instead. Things like fruit and plain yogurt.



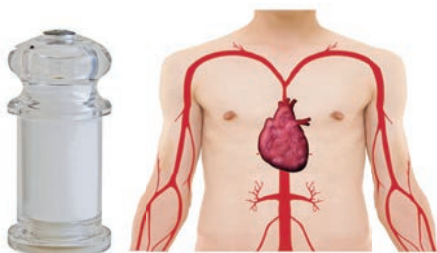
And you should drink water or have diet or sugar free drinks.

Eat less salt



Most of the salt we eat comes in the food we buy.

Things like bacon, sausages, crisps and some sauces and cheeses.



Too much salt can cause heart problems and make you poorly.

Here are some things you could try to eat less salt:



- Eat less things like bacon, sausages and crisps.



- Do not put any salt on your meals.



- Add less salt to your cooking.

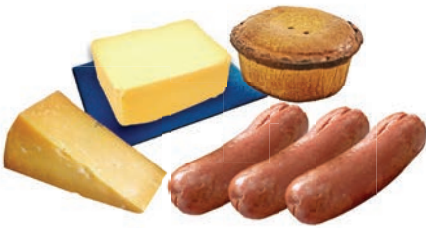


- Use herbs and spices instead of salt.



- Choose snacks that have less salt in them. Things like rice cakes, unsalted popcorn or fruit.

Eat less bad fat



Some kinds of fat are bad for you. Bad fats are in things like sausages, pies, butter and cheese.



You should try to eat things that have less bad fat in them. Things like:

- Margarine and vegetable oil.



- Low fat cheese.



- Semi skimmed milk.



- Nuts with no salt in them.



You should try not to fry food.



You could grill or bake it instead.



You should try to eat healthy fats.
Healthy fats are in foods like
avocados and salmon.



Look at food labels

Labels tell you how much salt, fat
or sugar is in a food or drink.



Food labels have coloured signs on
them.



A **green** sign means there is not much of that thing in it. So if a label has green for sugar, there is not much sugar in it.



A **yellow** sign means there might be more of something in it. So if a label has yellow for fat, there is a bit more fat in it.



A **red** sign means there is a lot of the thing in it. So if a label has red for salt, there is a lot of salt in it.



Some foods might have a mix of red, yellow and green signs on the label. If a food has mostly:



Green labels then it is good for you.
You should try to eat lots of food with green labels if you can.



Yellow labels then it is ok for you.
But you should not have too much of it.



Red labels then it is bad for you.
You should not eat this food too often.



If you have high blood pressure it is important to check food labels for salt.
You should try not to eat food with a lot of salt in it.

Eat the right amount of food



Eating healthy is not just about what you eat. It is also about how much you eat.



The amount of each kind of food you eat at 1 time is called a **portion**.



You can use your hand to work out how big a portion should be:

- Your cupped hands together is a portion of salad.



- Your palm is a portion of fruit and vegetables.



- Your palm is a portion of things like bread, pasta or rice.



- Your hand is a portion of fish or meat.



- Your fingertip is a portion of butter.



- 2 fingers together is a portion of cheese.

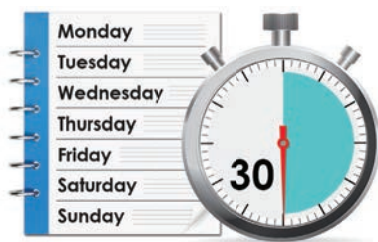


You should make sure you eat the right size portions.

Move more



Moving about and doing exercise is really good for you. Moving about is also called **being active**.



You should try to be active for 20 to 30 minutes every day.



There are lots of ways you can be more active.



You do not have to join a gym or run a big race.



You can do things like:

● Gardening.



- Housework.



- Get off the bus 1 stop early and walk the rest of the way.



- Walk short journeys instead of driving or getting the bus.



- Go for a walk every day.



- Use the stairs instead of the lift, if you can.



- Do exercises while you are sitting down.

Drink less alcohol



Drinks like wine and beer have alcohol in them.



The amount of alcohol in a drink is called a **unit**.



1 pint of beer has about 2 and a bit units of alcohol in it.



A **standard glass** of wine has about 2 and a bit units of alcohol in it.

A **standard glass** of wine is the size you get in a pub or in a restaurant.



You should try not to drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week.



14 units is the same as:

● 6 pints of beer

or



● 6 standard glasses of wine.

Stop smoking

Stopping smoking is really good for your health.



If you smoke, you should try to stop smoking as soon as possible.



You can ask your local doctor or pharmacy for help, if you need it.

Find ways to help with stress



Most people feel stressed sometimes.



Being very stressed can cause your blood pressure to go up.



It can also cause you to do things that are bad for your health. Things like drinking alcohol or smoking a lot.



You might find it harder to relax and take a break.



It is important to do things to help you feel less stressed.



Some things you can try are:

● Listen to music.



● Spend time with family, friends or pets.



● Try to slow down your breathing and take long breaths. This can help you to relax.



If you feel stressed, worried or sad a lot of the time, speak to your doctor.



More information

If you have any worries or questions, you can get support.



You can speak to your local doctor or nurse.



Or you can call our Heart Helpline and speak to 1 of our nurses.



You can contact the helpline.

Phone:
0808 802 1234



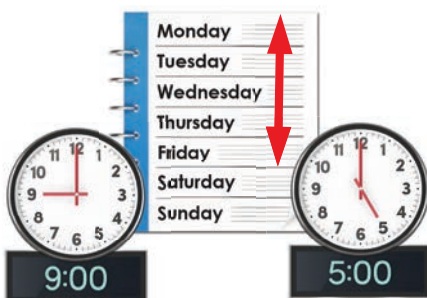
It is free to call this number.



Email:
hearthelpline@bhf.org.uk



Look at our website:
bhf.org.uk/heart-helpline



**The Heart Helpline is open
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.**



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