

CARDIOVASCULAR DIET CHECKLIST

To be completed in consultation with your health professional

TICK THE BOX if the answer is **YES** to any of the following questions (see overleaf for guidance notes)

Saturated fat

1. Do you eat **THREE or FEWER** servings of red meat a week. AND do you usually choose lean cuts of white or red meat? **A serving** is approx. 100g (size of your palm or a deck of cards).
2. Do you keep **processed meat** products to a minimum i.e. **NO MORE than ONCE** a week?
3. Do you choose **lower-fat** milk and yogurt options or **plant-based** alternatives that are not coconut-based?
4. Do you eat **THREE servings or LESS** of cheese a week? **1 serving** = 30g or two thumb widths.
5. Do you eat **LESS than ONE serving** a day of butter, ghee, other animal fats, cream, **coconut/palm** oil - in cooking or as a spread? **1 serving** = 1 tsp.
6. Do you use **unsaturated oils** and **spreads** in moderation? **NO MORE** than THREE tbsps a day.
7. Do you have **THREE or MORE** portions of vegetables, including salad vegetables, every day? Fresh, frozen, canned (in water or juice) or dried all count. **A portion** = 80g, a handful, 4 tbsps or 1 tbsp for dried fruit. **JUICES & SMOOTHIE** do NOT count.
8. Do you have **TWO** portions of fruit every day?
9. Do you eat **THREE or MORE** portions of **beans** (including baked beans) or **lentils** every week? **A serving** = 150g (half a large can) to 200g (small can) or 6 tbsps.
10. Do you eat at least **TWO PORTIONS** of fish a week, **ONE of which is OILY**?
11. Do you eat **WHOLE GRAIN** foods **MOST** days in place of refined (white) carbs? e.g., wholemeal bread/chapatti, wholegrain breakfast cereals, oats, brown rice, wholewheat pasta.
12. Do you **always choose water or unsweetened** (incl. diet/sugar-free) drinks instead of sweetened versions, energy/sports drinks or fruit juice and smoothies?
13. Do you eat **high fat, sugary** and **salty snacks** **LESS than THREE** times a week?
14. Do you have **fast food, take-aways** or **ready meals** **LESS than TWICE** a week?
15. Do you drink **14 or FEWER** units of alcohol per week? **1 unit** = a small 125ml glass of wine, half a pint of regular lager/beer, 1/3 pint of cider or stout, one measure of spirit.
16. Do you eat a **portion** (30g or a handful) of **unsalted/ unsweetened nuts** **MORE than FOUR** times a week?

TOTAL SCORE (count all the ticks)

Any questions with a tick = CONGRATULATIONS for already adopting positive heart healthy dietary patterns.

Score ≤6 OR
only 3 ticks for Q's 1-6

There are **a number of improvements that can be made to your diet** and a dietetic referral may be helpful. You decide on which changes you would like to tackle first.

Score 7-11 OR
only 3 ticks for Q's 1-6

The **diet is fair**, and further improvements can help to improve your cholesterol. Dietetic referral or more in-depth dietary advice could help.

Score 12 OR MORE &
≥4 ticks for Q's 1-6

The **diet is good to very good**. Further amends could help including the addition of 3 cholesterol-lowering foods: plant sterol & stanol fortified foods, oats & soya. See heartuk.org.uk/uclp

The information below can be used as a guide when considering how to answer the questions overleaf

FOODS HIGH IN SATURATED FAT

- 1. Red meat** includes beef, lamb and goat. **Lean meat** includes 5% minced meat, red and pork meat with all visible fat removed or chicken and poultry with the skin removed.
- 2. Processed meat** includes sausage rolls, meat pies, salami, pate, sausages, streaky bacon, tinned meats.
Lower-fat dairy includes semi, skimmed, 1% milk and low fat or fat free yogurts or fromage frais.
- 3. Plant-based drinks:** all fortified with calcium, iodine and vitamin B12 and preferably unsweetened. The exception is **coconut** drinks and alternatives to yogurt which are exceptionally high in saturated fat.
- 4. Hard and semi soft cheeses - both full and (30% and 50%) REDUCED fat varieties. Full or lower fat/light cream cheeses** including creme fraiche (**1 serving** = 1 heaped tbsp). **NOT** included are cheeses labelled as "LOW FAT" (check the label - must be 3g fat per 100g or less), such as quark, cottage cheese and one or two brands of low-fat cheddar type cheeses.
- 5. Animal fats:** butter, ghee, goose or duck fat, lard or dripping and other animal fats. **Cream:** double, single, whipping, soured, as well as 'vegan' creams. **Coconut and palm oil, vegan butter (shea fat).**
- 6. Unsaturated oils and spreads** including sunflower, rapeseed, "vegetable oil", olive, corn, groundnut/peanut.
- 7. & 8. Vegetables & fruit that count:** fresh, frozen, canned (in water or juice) or dried. **What does NOT count:** Fruit/vegetable juices and smoothies - all varieties incl. fresh, UHT, 'natural'
- 9. Beans and lentils** - canned, dried and fresh e.g., baked beans, broad beans, edamame beans, lentils, chickpeas, haricot beans, cannellini.
- 10. Fish** - all types of fresh, frozen, canned, plain or with breadcrumbs. **Oil-rich fish** includes mackerel, sardines, pilchards, salmon, kippers. **A serving** = 140g (a fillet or steak) or for some tinned oil-rich fish around 90g. **Do NOT count** fish in batter or fish pies.
- 11. Whole grains** include wholemeal or multi-seeded bread, rolls, wraps, tortillas, chapatti; whole grain breakfast cereals (e.g., wheat or oat biscuits, bran flakes, muesli, malt wheats), oats/porridge, brown rice, wholewheat pasta. **Does NOT include** granolas. **Refined carbs** includes white or 'brown' labelled breads, rolls and wraps. Breakfast cereals such as cornflakes, Frosties, sugar puffs, coco pops. White rice and pasta and pastries.
- 12. Unsweetened drinks** includes tap, bottled and 'sugar-free' flavoured **waters**; **teas/coffees** made with low fat milk or plant-based drink and no added sugar or syrups. **Diet/sugar free soft drinks. Does NOT include** fruit juices or smoothies.
- 13. Snacks high in fat, salt and/or sugars. Savoury** includes: crisps, Bombay mix, salted/honey/ sugar coated nuts, cheese crackers, savoury pastries. **Sweet** includes chocolate, ice-cream, chocolate or filled biscuits, sweet pastries, doughnuts, buns, cakes, sweets (including Indian sweets).
- 14. Fast food, take-aways or ready meals** that are high in fat, salt and/or sugars e.g., fried chicken, chips, battered fish, burgers, creamy or coconut-based curries, creamy or cheese-based pasta dishes, large thick crust pizzas.
- 15. One unit of alcohol** = a small 125ml glass of wine, half a pint of regular lager/beer, 1/3 pint of cider or stout, one measure of spirit.
- 16. Nuts.** Any combination of nuts that are unsalted, unsweetened, not coated in yogurt or chocolate. Includes walnuts, cashews, almonds, pistachios, peanuts, pecans etc.

Emphasise they should make **one OR two changes at any one time** & only introduce further improvements once they feel ready to do so. Ask which unticked questions they would like to tackle first. **PRIORITISE** questions numbered 1-6 that are unticked.

REPLACE SATURATED FATS with UNSATURATED FATS www.heartuk.org.uk/low-cholesterol-foods/saturated-fat

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| <p>1. Red meat ≤3 times a week. A serving is approx. 100g.</p> | <p>Red meat & products tend to be high in saturated fats. You don't have to avoid but watch your portions and have less frequently. Experiment with healthier proteins by fully or part replacing meat in recipes with beans, lentils, nuts and veg or use skinless chicken, white or oil-rich fish, soya, Quorn. Choose leaner cuts and always remove skin from poultry or all visible fats from meat before cooking. Go meat-free a couple of days a week.</p> |
| <p>2. Processed meat and products.</p> | <p>Processed meats are very high in saturated fats and salt. Try to avoid. Watch out for processed "plant-based" or "vegan" processed meat alternatives & dishes - check front of pack and AVOID RED & AMBER for saturated fat and salt.</p> |
| <p>3. Lower-fat milk & yogurt options or plant-based alternatives.</p> | <p>Choose lower fat varieties of dairy or try fortified (calcium, iodine and vitamin B12) plant-based drinks and alternatives to yogurt. Avoid coconut drinks and yogurt alternatives which are very high in saturated fat.</p> |
| <p>4. ≤3 weekly servings of cheese - incl. "vegan" cheeses</p> | <p>Cheese, even lower fat varieties, are rich in saturated fat. Ideally choose lower fat cheeses but still Reduce portions and have less frequently. A single serving of standard and reduced fat cheeses should be no more than 30g or two thumb-widths. Grating cheese makes it go a long way! Very low fat hard cheeses or quark and cottage cheese provide very little saturated fat and can be eaten more freely. There are cheeses (both Cheddar & creamy style) that are low in fat and be consumed more freely - they must be labelled as 'LOW FAT' (not lower/reduced fat) and check the label that the fat content is no more than 3g per 100g.</p> |
| <p>5. Animal fats, coconut and palm oil or "vegan butter"</p> <p>6. Instead use unsaturated oils and spreads in moderation</p> | <p>No more than 1 serving (1 tbsp or 3 tsp) daily of animal or coconut/palm fat. Replacing saturated fats in the diet with unsaturated fats is a powerful way to lower cholesterol levels. All fats, including oils and spreads, provide a lot of calories so use sparingly – no more than 3 tbsp in any one day. Try cooking methods that do not require added fats e.g., grilling, poaching and roasting bags.</p> |
| <p>7. ≥3 portions veg daily</p> <p>8. 2 portions fruit daily</p> | <p>VEGETABLES & FRUIT A serving = a handful, 4 tbsp, small bowl or 1 tbsp dried
Include with every meal e.g., a handful OR a tbsp dried fruit with breakfast cereals or porridge, salad vegetables with lunch, a piece of fruit as a snack and 2 servings of vegetables with a main meal. Keep it colourful – RED, ORANGE, YELLOWS & GREENS. Fresh, frozen, canned (juice or water) & dried all count. AVOID fruit and vegetable juices and smoothies.</p> |
| <p>9. ≥3 portions of pulses every week.</p> | <p>LEAN & PLANT PROTEINS
All types count including canned varieties e.g., baked beans, lentils, chickpeas, garden peas, broad beans, black-eyed beans, kidney beans etc. Use to part or fully replace meat in your recipes. Try going meat free twice a week.</p> |
| <p>10. One portion of oil-rich fish every week.</p> | <p>Oil-rich fish is rich in healthy unsaturated omega-3 fats which have been associated with better heart health outcomes. www.heartuk.org.uk/low-cholesterol-foods/omega-3-fats.</p> |
| <p>11. Whole grains</p> | <p>HEALTHY CARBS www.heartuk.org.uk/low-cholesterol-foods/wholegrains
Too many refined carbs e.g., white bread, white rice and pasta have been associated with higher lipids and a greater risk of cardiovascular risk. Switching over to whole grain varieties will help with heart health outcomes and add more fibre to your diet.</p> |
| <p>12. Always choose unsweetened instead of sweetened drinks</p> | <p>HIGH FAT, SALT &/OR SUGARY FOODS - HFSS
Sugary drinks including pure fruit juices and smoothies provide a lot of sugar with very little other nutrients. Unsweetened drinks includes tap, bottled and 'sugar-free' flavoured waters; teas/coffees made with low fat milk or plant-based drink and no added sugar or syrups. Diet/sugar free soft drinks.</p> |
| <p>13. HFSS snacks <3 times a week</p> | <p>Snacks are major source of saturated fats, sugars and salt. Healthier snacks include popcorn, fruit, lower fat yogurt with nuts and seeds, oatcakes.</p> |
| <p>14. Take-aways, fast food OR ready meals. LESS than TWICE a week</p> | <p>Take-aways and fast foods are often rich in saturated fats and salt. Best to reduce frequency and choose 'healthier' options e.g., plain Margherita pizzas, tomato-based or dry curries, tomato-based pasta dishes (without cream or cheese), grilled kebabs, sushi. Sandwiches: choose without added cheese and mayo. Front of pack: choose GREEN for saturated fat & salt.</p> |
| <p>15. ≤14 units of alcohol per week.</p> | <p>OTHER
Alcohol is high in calories and in excess causes many health issues. Do not exceed the recommended 14-weekly units, try and have some alcohol-free days and don't binge drink.</p> |
| <p>16. Daily handful of nuts</p> | <p>Nuts. Any combination of nuts that are unsalted, unsweetened, not coated in yogurt or chocolate. Includes walnuts, cashews, almonds, pistachios, peanuts, pecans etc.</p> |

For those scoring 12 OR MORE, direct them to heartuk.org.uk/uclp for advice on introducing three cholesterol-lowering foods: stanol or sterol fortified products, oats/barley and soya
For more tips, advice & recipes www.heartuk.org.uk/healthy-living