

Keep Yourself **healthy**



a guide to having a healthy heart

This booklet will tell you the best ways to keep your heart healthy.

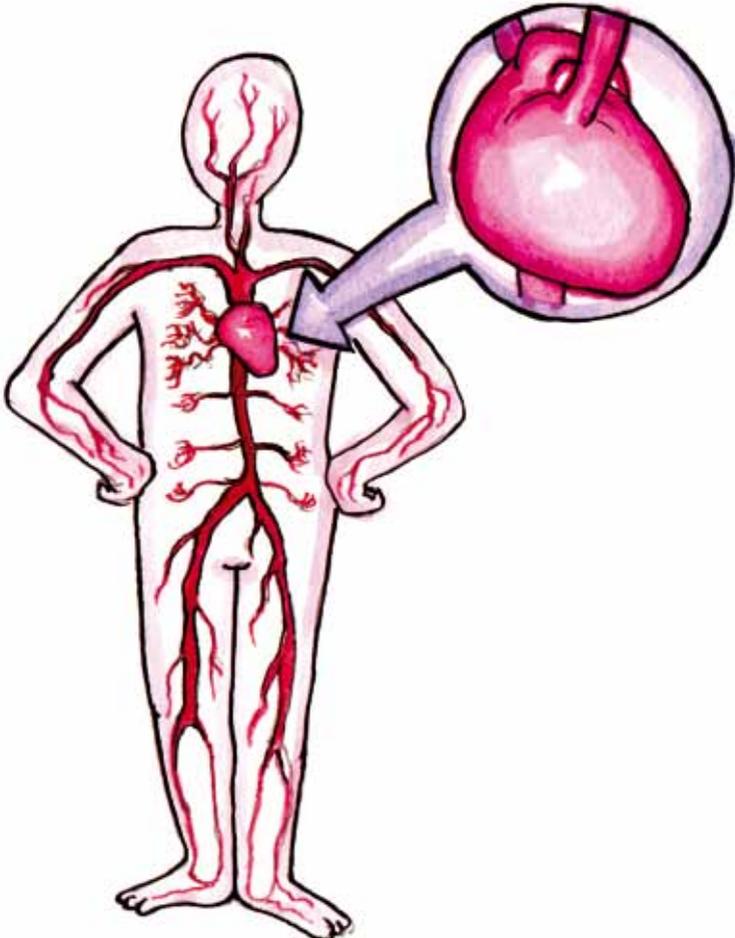
It is very important for all of us to look at the way we live! Eating too much of the wrong food, drinking too much alcohol, smoking, not getting enough exercise and being stressed out can all damage our hearts.



Keeping your heart healthy means you can keep doing the things you like, and enjoying life, for longer!

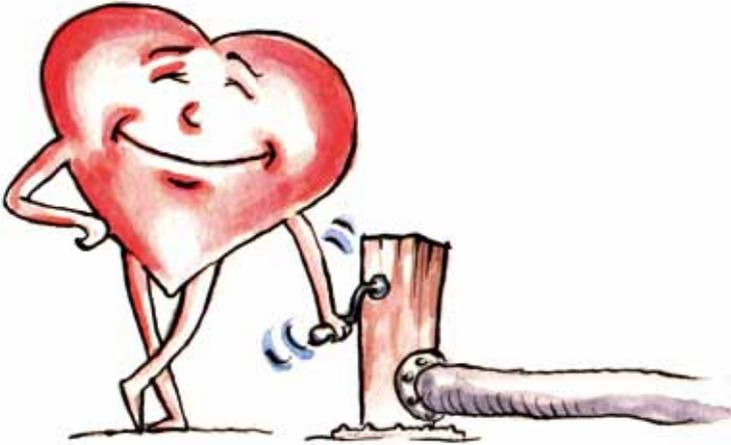
The heart of the matter!

Your heart is a muscle in your chest that pumps blood around your body. You need this to live!



If you eat too much of the wrong food, or smoke, or drink too much alcohol, or don't get enough exercise, your heart could stop working properly. You could have a heart attack and die!

Your heart pumps blood around your body through tubes called arteries. They should be nice and clear.



Eating the wrong food, smoking and not getting enough exercise blocks these tubes with fat. They get narrower and your heart has to work extra hard to make the blood flow through them.



Smoking

Smoking is bad for your heart and lungs. The nicotine in cigarettes raises your blood pressure. People who smoke are often short of breath and cough a lot.



It makes you smelly too!



Once you start smoking it's hard to stop, but there are people who can help if you want to.



Your doctor, community nurse or carer can all help you stop smoking, but you have to want to do it!



Alcohol

Drinking too much alcohol is bad for you in lots of ways, but it's very bad for your heart. If you drink too much alcohol you will damage your heart and you may get other health problems or injure yourself.



You may also get drunk, which can cause problems too!



Drinking some alcohol is OK. It's better to drink small amounts over a time than to drink a whole lot in one go. When you are out in the pub or at a party make each drink last a long time. Have a non-alcoholic drink in between the alcoholic ones.



You should have at least two days a week when you do not drink at all.

Food that's good for you

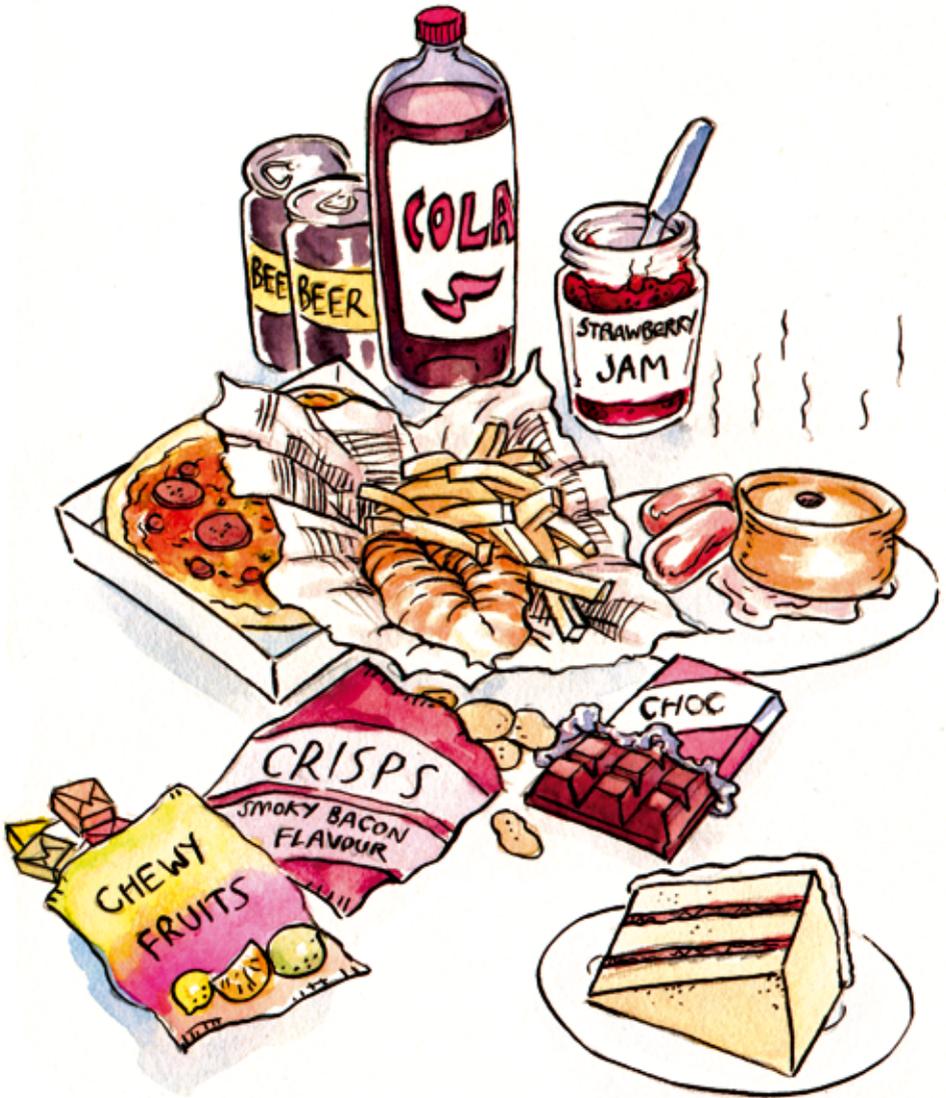
One of the best ways to keep your heart healthy is to eat the right sort of food. You should eat five portions of fruit or vegetables each day to stay really healthy. Here are some types of food that are good for you.



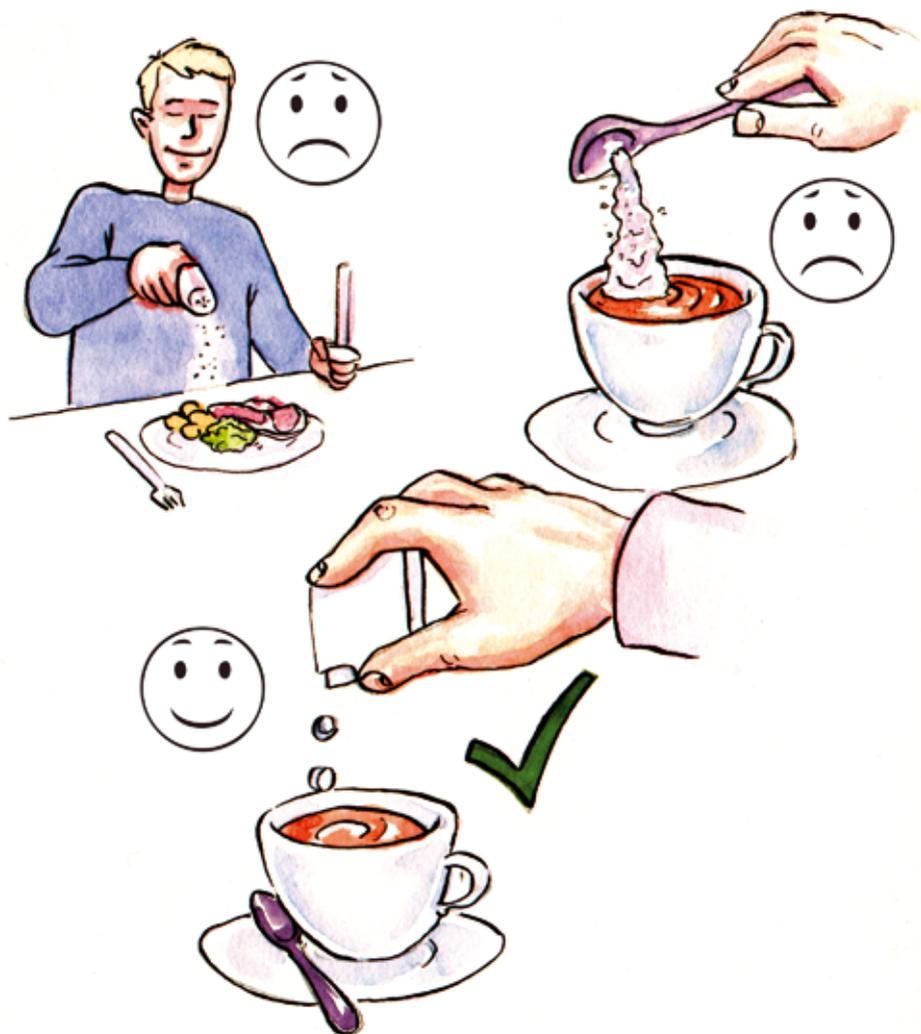
If you're not sure what kind of food is good for you, ask your dietician, community nurse or doctor.

Food that's bad for you

Greasy fatty food, like chips and pies, and sugary foods like sweets and chocolate are not very good for your heart.



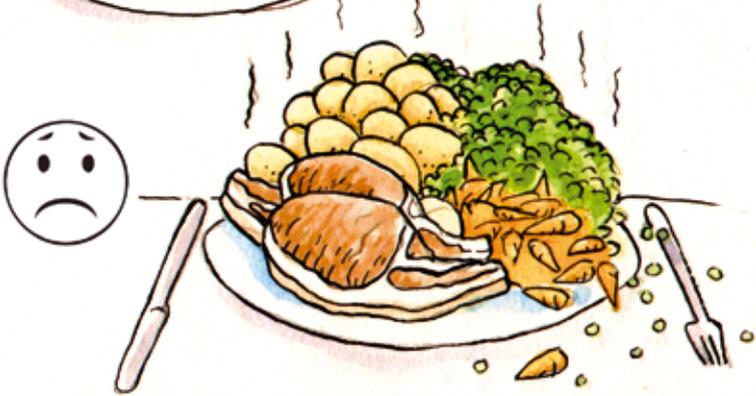
**Try not to add salt to your food.
It's probably tasty enough without it anyway!**



Try to cut out sugar altogether, but if you still need to sweeten your tea and coffee, you can try an artificial sweetener.

How much should you eat?

You should have proper sized portions when you eat. You can see below roughly how much that is.



Sometimes people eat too much because they feel down. You'll be a lot happier if you look and feel good!

How do you know if you have a weight problem?

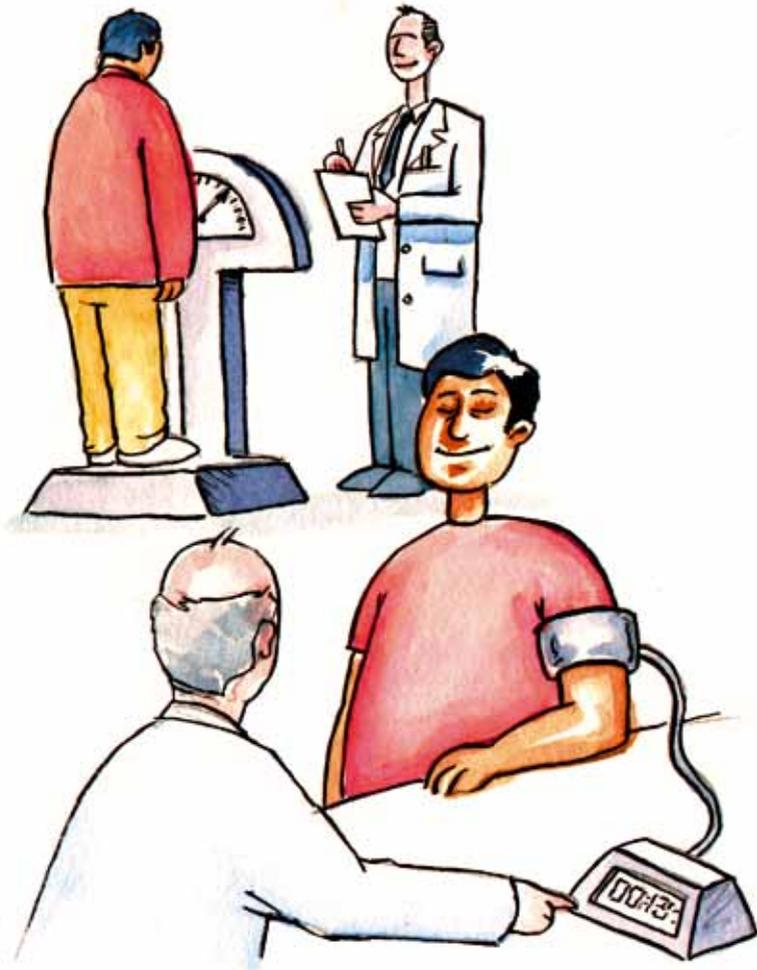
People are all different shapes and sizes, so it's hard sometimes to know if you are overweight.



Remember, being underweight is a problem as well!
You need to eat more of the right food, and get some exercise.



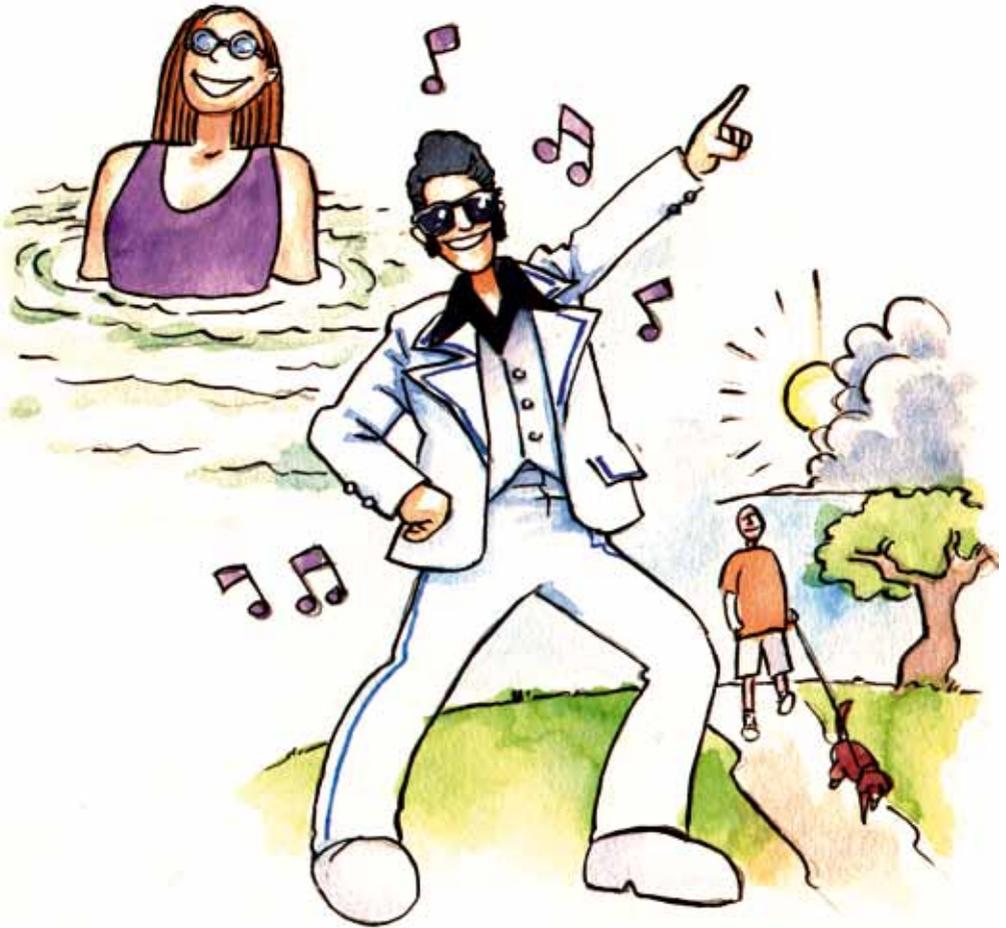
If you're not sure, you should ask your doctor for help. They will weigh you and take your blood pressure.



This is a good way to tell if you need to lose weight and tell if your heart is OK.

Get some exercise!

One of the best ways to keep healthy and keep your weight down is to get regular exercise.



You don't have to do anything too difficult. A lot of things you do for fun are great exercise, like dancing, swimming or going for walks.

You can even do exercises while sitting watching the telly. Try lifting your feet off the ground and holding them there for the count of ten.

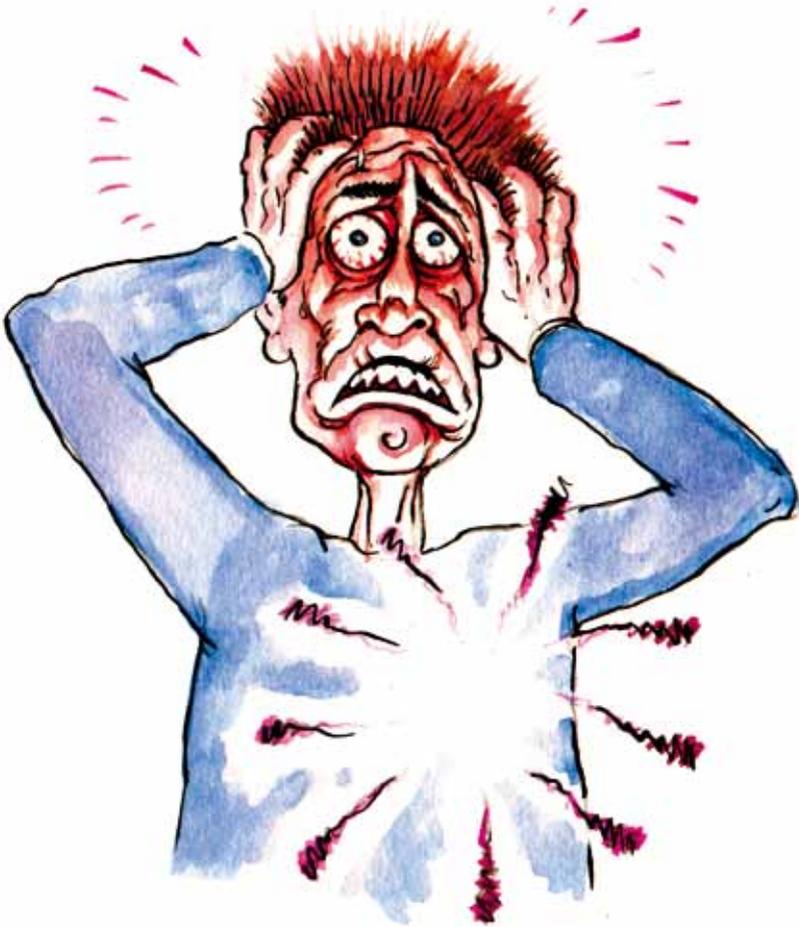


Housework is great exercise. Try a bit of hoovering and cleaning.



Are you stressed out?

One of the main causes of heart attacks is stress – worrying about things all the time and not taking it easy.



People can get stressed over lots of things – changes in their lives, moving to a new home, not getting on with people, filling in forms, going to meetings... Aaargh!

Relax!

You can stop feeling stressed by taking time out to do things you enjoy. Listen to music, take a relaxing bath, have a nap.



Pets are great for relieving stress too!



Some people you can talk to

Some community nurses can offer you a free check-up in your own home. Your doctor should be able to help you get in touch with them. Your doctor can give you a check-up too.



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