



Cardiac Rehabilitation Education Booklet

You can make a big difference
to your heart's health by making
some small changes.

chcpic.org.uk

Version one



By following this education plan you can self-manage your heart condition and reduce your chances of further problems.



It is important to take your prescribed medication daily to help protect your heart.

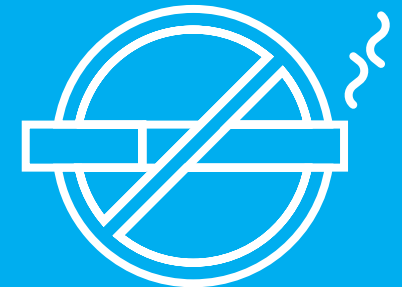
Cardiac risks

How to keep your heart healthy

Smoking	Stop smoking
High blood pressure	Keep blood pressure in normal range
Unhealthy diet	Eat a varied and healthy diet
High cholesterol	Lower your cholesterol
Being overweight	Maintain a healthy weight
Diabetes	Keep your sugar levels under control
Too much alcohol	Drink within recommended limits
Stress	Learn to relax and manage stress levels
Physical inactivity	Keep active

Smoking

- You can make a big difference to your heart health by giving up smoking.
- For free practical help and advice contact your local stop smoking service.
- You are four times more likely to quit with professional support and nicotine replacement therapy.
- Plan ahead to help you cope with stressful situations which remind you to smoke. Ask for support from friends and family. Keep in contact with your stop smoking advisor for regular appointments.
- Prepare and plan for your quit day: choose a day that suits you and stick to it. Take one day at a time, set yourself realistic goals.
- Weight gain is often a concern when stopping smoking. You are less likely to put on weight if you eat a balanced diet from the beginning. Try not to snack on fatty or high sugary food; instead try fruit or raw vegetables.
- Remember each day without a cigarette is good for your heart, your family and your pocket. It's also important to reward yourself for not smoking.
- **Think positive and stop today.**



Blood Pressure

- **If you take medication to control your blood pressure it is important you take your medication exactly as prescribed.**
- Low blood pressure can sometimes be a side effect of medicines taken for high blood pressure or medications taken to protect your heart. Do not stop taking any of your prescribed medication without speaking to your GP first.
- You should visit your GP practice regularly to have your blood pressure measured to make sure it is under control. You can also get your blood pressure checked at a pharmacy. Your practice will advise on how frequently you should be checked.
- The way you deal with stress can affect your blood pressure, so it is important to learn how to relax and plan to avoid stressful situations.
- Taking part in regular physical activity, eating a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight and waistline will help maintain a healthy blood pressure.
- Avoid adding salt to your meal or when cooking. Instead try spices and herbs. Use food labels to help you choose lower salt ingredients and meals. Aim for less than 6 grams of salt (1 teaspoonful a day).
- Stopping smoking can also help to lower your blood pressure. You can contact your local smoking cessation specialist for help and support.
- If you drink alcohol make sure you drink within the recommended limits.



Healthy Eating

- **It is important to try to eat three regular healthy balanced meals a day.**
- A heart-healthy diet includes plenty of fruit and vegetables - fresh, frozen, dried, chilled, canned, cooked, raw or 1 glass of 150ml 100% fruit juice all count.
- Cut down on foods high in fat, especially saturated fat, salt and sugar. Choose low fat or fat free products such as semi- skimmed milk or skimmed milk, spreads and oils made with monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats. Choose lean meat and remove any visible fat.
- Increase your fibre intake by eating wholegrain foods like oats, wholegrain bread, pasta, rice, beans and lentils.
- It is best to boil, bake, poach, grill or steam food, avoid frying.
- Try not to add salt to your cooking or meals. Use spices and herbs to flavour foods rather than salt. Aim for less than 6 grams (1 teaspoonful) a day. Foods that can be high in salt include crisps, salted nuts, food in brine, processed foods such as instant soup, noodles, burgers, ready meals, gravy, cereals, bread, biscuits and cakes.
- Ingredients in food vary enormously between brands. Check the food labels for healthier options.
- Contact the British Heart Foundation or look on their website for a free subscription to the Heart Matters Magazine, for healthy recipes and for other information.



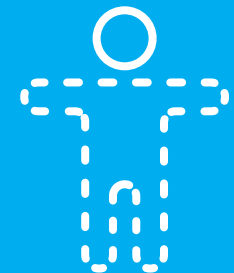
Lowering Cholesterol

- **Take your cholesterol-lowering medication as prescribed. You should have a regular cholesterol check at your GP Practice. Your GP will be able to advise you on how often you should get checked based on your levels.**
- Cut the total amount of fat in your diet by reducing foods which contain saturated and trans fats such as processed foods, cakes, pastries, biscuits, pies, crisps, full fat milk, lard, ghee, butter, cream and cheese.
- Replace these with unsaturated fat such as mono and polyunsaturated fats such as olive oil, soya oil, sunflower oil, vegetable oil, rapeseed oil and some margarines.
- Omega 3 oil is good for your heart; it is found in oily fish, flaxseeds, almonds, walnuts, green leafy vegetables, rapeseed oil and soya beans.
- Choose lean meat and remove any visible fat.
- Other foods which help to lower your cholesterol are fruit, vegetables, wholegrains such as wheat, barley, rice and oats. Choose wholemeal bread, pasta, brown rice and wholegrain cereals.
- Ingredients in food vary enormously between brands. Check the food labels for healthier options.
- Keeping physically active, being a healthy weight and drinking alcohol within the recommended limits can also help to control your cholesterol.



Healthy Weight & Waist Measurement

- **If you are planning to lose weight, it is best to avoid 'crash' diets.**
- Plan to lose weight gradually in order to reach your target weight.
- It is best to eat three regular balanced meals a day and drink water. Avoid sugary drinks.
- Try to control your portion size. You could try using a smaller plate to help with this. Plan your meals ahead and stick to them.
- If you need to snack between meals, try to snack on healthier foods such as raw vegetables or fruit.
- It is important to remember when drinking alcohol that it contains calories. Choose low calorie mixers or low alcohol drinks.
- Burn more calories by keeping physically active. Start by walking and gradually aim to exercise for 30 minutes a day, five times a week or for 10 minutes at a time, if you are able.
- Less time spent sitting and more time standing will 'burn' more calories. If you want support and advice on how to lose weight, speak to your health care professional about the free services available.



Controlling Diabetes

- **It is important to take your medications as prescribed by your GP to protect your heart.**
 - You may need to monitor and keep a record of your blood-sugar levels. Your practice nurse will advise you on this.
 - Ensure you have regular diabetes checks with your practice nurse at your GP surgery.
 - You should have regular checks on your feet and nails and regular eye tests.
 - You can control your blood sugar levels by doing regular physical activity, eating healthy meals regularly, and keeping to a healthy weight and waist measurement.
- It is important to keep physically active for a minimum of 30 minutes a day, five times a week. You can do this all in one go or in shorter bouts of at least 10 minutes at a time if you are able.
 - Stopping smoking can improve your general health and your diabetes.
 - If you drink alcohol, the new guidelines advise that both men and women should not drink more than 14 units of alcohol each week and have several alcohol free days a week.
 - If you drink alcohol it is best to drink with a meal.



Drinking Alcohol

- **If you are taking medication, ask your pharmacist or GP if it is safe to drink alcohol. It is important to keep within the sensible limits.**
- The guidelines recommend that both men and women should not drink more than 14 units of alcohol each week or should not regularly drink more than 2-3 units of alcohol a day.
- It is better to spread drinking alcohol across the week and to have several alcohol free days.
- Because alcoholic drinks come in different strengths and sizes, units are a good way of telling how strong your drink is. It is not as simple as one drink equals one unit. 1 unit is equal to 10ml of pure alcohol.
- 1 unit of alcohol = 1 small glass (100ml) of wine (10% ABV (alcohol by volume) or half a pint (about 300ml) normal strength lager, cider or beer (example, 3.5% ABV) or a pub measure (25ml) of spirits.
- It is better to eat before you drink. Drink slowly and alternate with water or soft drinks. Avoid more than three alcoholic drinks in 1-2 hours. Drinking less can make a big difference to your health.
- If you would like support to help you reduce your alcohol intake, speak to your health care professional for information about the free service available.



Coping with stress

- **It can be normal following a cardiac event to have mixed emotions, such as feeling anxious and mood changes. Talk to friends and family about how you are feeling. Don't keep things 'bottled' up.**
- The way you deal with stress can affect your blood pressure, so it is important to make time for rest and relaxation. Learn how to keep calm and breathe correctly. Your health care professional can give you further advice on this if it is needed.
- Try to identify and avoid stressful situations. Learn to say no if you feel overburdened.
- Plan ahead to prevent you from taking up any unhealthy habits to relieve your stress such as comfort eating, drinking more alcohol or smoking. It may feel like these things can help you at the time, but their effects are only short term.
- Try to keep physically active. Walking is free and is great for your heart's health. Try to look at and enjoy your surroundings rather than thinking about your worries.
- If you are having difficulty coping and you need some support, ask your healthcare professional for information about the free psychological wellbeing service.



Being active

- **Exercise is suitable for most people with a heart condition, but it is best to check with your GP or health care professional before you start any exercise.**
- It is never too late to start. Any increase in physical activity will benefit your health no matter what your level of fitness is or how old you are.
- Wear comfortable clothing and shoes which give you good support and remember to drink water during exercise.
- Plan to start your activity slowly for the first few minutes and build up gradually at your own pace. Aim to work hard enough to make you breathe a little more heavily than normal and become slightly warmer, but not so hard that you are unable to talk and exercise at the same time. At the end, spend a few minutes slowing down gradually.
- You can also get the benefit of being more active from everyday activities such as doing housework. Gardening, cycling, climbing stairs rather than using a lift or getting off the bus a stop earlier are also beneficial.
- Aim to exercise for 30 minutes a day five times a week. You can do this all in one go or in shorter bouts of at least 10 minutes at a time.
- Seek advice from the cardiac rehabilitation team if you are unsure of how to get started.



Medications

- **The aim of the heart medications you have been prescribed are to reduce the symptoms of heart related conditions, help the heart to work better than before and to prevent further heart related events.**
- Ask your health care professional what medications you are taking and what they are for.
- It is advisable to make a list of your medications and how often you take them. Take your medications as prescribed and try to get into a routine of taking them.
- Report any medication side effects to your GP. It is important not to stop taking any of your medications without first discussing this with your GP.
- Ask your health care professional for information about a pre-payment prescription certificate if required. This may save you money.
- Ask your pharmacist's advice when taking any over the counter medications such as supplements or cold/flu remedies as they could interact with your cardiac medications.
- Try to ensure you have enough medication especially if you are planning a holiday. It can take a few days for your GP to prepare your prescription. When travelling it is recommended that you put your medication in your hand luggage.



Symptom Record

Date and Time	Symptoms	What were you doing? (for example, walking, lying down)

Date and Time	What made it stop/reduced the symptoms? (for example, 1 GTN SPRAY or I sat up in bed)

Medication Chart

Name of medicine and date prescribed	Group of medicines it belongs to (for example, walking, lying down)	Dose

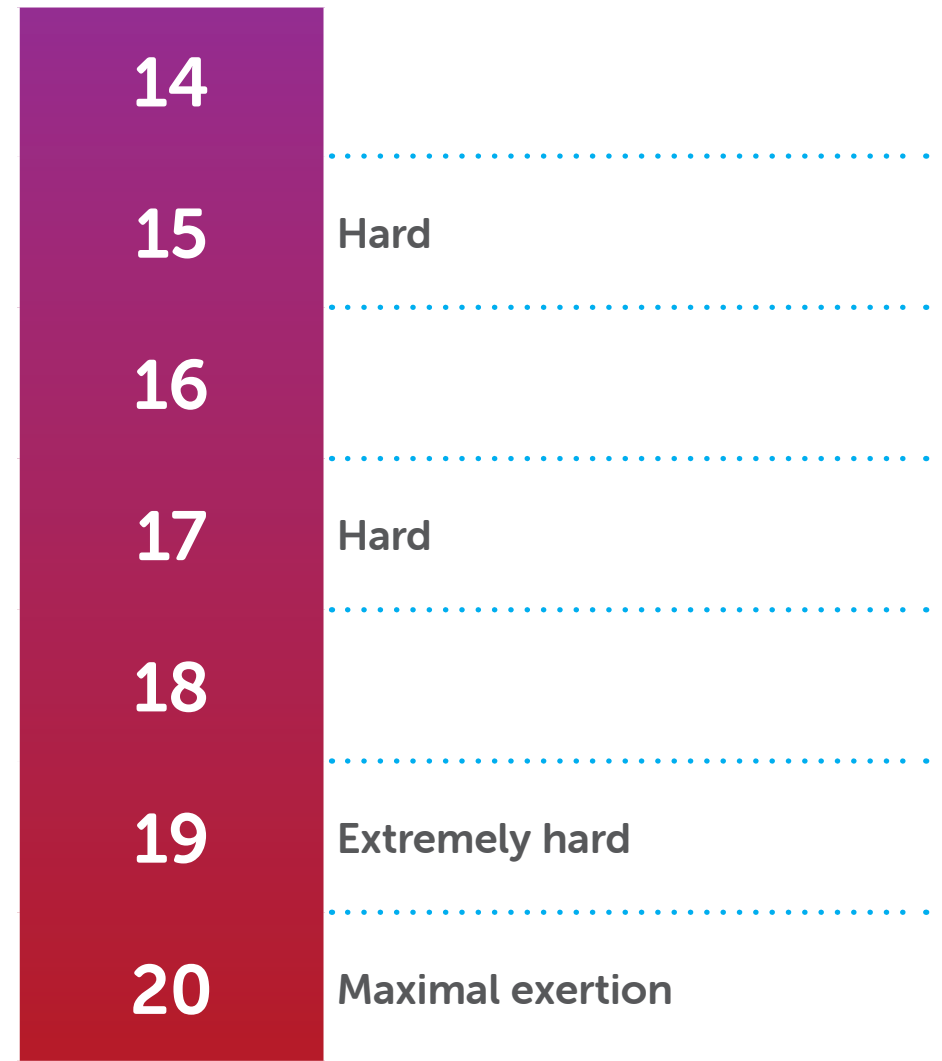
When do you take it? M=Morning L=Lunchtime T=Teatime B=Bedtime BF=Before Food AF=After Food	Note any changes (for example: Why a medication may have been stopped or changed)	Prescription due on

Walking Record Chart

	Date	Time walked continuously	RPE scale (page 31)
Example	1/11	5 mins 30 secs	Level 7
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thur			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thur			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

	Date	Time walked continuously	RPE scale (page 31)
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thur			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thur			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

Rate of Perceived Exertion Scale



Contact us

Via the Care
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Customer Care Advisor
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