

# GOOD FOOD CHOICES

## for Managing your Blood Pressure

A **healthy blood pressure** is necessary to maintain a **healthy blood flow** in your body, but a number of things can increase your blood pressure, making it unhealthy and putting you at risk of a heart attack or stroke. Factors such as whether you smoke, are inactive or overweight - are vitally important.

Whether or not you are taking medication for your blood pressure, the challenge is to make small manageable changes, stay physically active

and **lose weight if you're overweight!** It's what you eat most of the time that counts, so try making as many of the changes below consistently.



**Bord Bia**  
Irish Food Board  
www.bordbia.ie

**NDP**  
National Development Plan 2007-2013

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**Irish Practices Nurses Association**

**IRISH HEART FOUNDATION**

## DITCH THE SALT CELLAR!

On average we consume in the region of 9 to 10g of salt per day. This is too high. The recommended intake is no more than **6g of salt for adults per day**<sup>1</sup>. Babies and children should have less salt than adults because they are smaller. Change your family's salt habits gradually.

### Home

- **Remove the salt cellar** from the table. Replace with ground pepper or chilli flakes.
- Experiment with herbs, spices, lemon juice and garlic rather than adding salt during cooking.
- You don't need to add salt to water for cooking rice, pasta or potatoes – no matter what it says on the pack!
- Use soya sauces, ketchups, mustard and pickles sparingly.

### Shopping

- **Read labels carefully.** Nutrition labels will often declare the sodium content of a food. Simply multiply this value by 2.5 to find out how much salt it contains. (Salt = Sodium x 2.5)
  - A **low salt**/sodium food **contains 0.3g salt** (equivalent to 0.12g sodium) or less per 100g of the food.
  - A **very low salt** food **contains 0.1g salt** (equivalent to 0.04g sodium) or less per 100g of the food.<sup>2</sup>
- High-salt foods such as crisps, salted nuts and popcorn, processed and smoked foods, packet soups and ready meals are best avoided.
- Choose low salt versions of stock cubes, tinned sweetcorn and baked beans.
- buy tuna or salmon canned in olive oil (drain well) or spring water rather than brine.

### Eating Out

- Ask to have **no salt added to your food** while it is being prepared.

## EAT A RAINBOW!

- Eating a wide variety of fruit and vegetables will not only ensure that you get enough vitamins and minerals for good health, it will also help to regulate your blood pressure. In particular, filling your plate with colour will help to boost your intake of **potassium** – a mineral that helps to control your blood pressure.
- The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) programme<sup>3</sup>, based on eating lots of potassium rich fruits and vegetables and 3 servings of low-fat **calcium rich** dairy foods (such as milk, cheese and yoghurt) can substantially lower blood pressure, when the total and saturated (bad) fats are low in the foods we enjoy daily.
- Aim for an intake of at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables a day e.g. 2 different fruits (an apple and a pear) and 3 vegetables (one salad, one green and another). If you think you don't achieve this, look for ways to improve. Swap your mid-morning scone or biscuits for a piece of fruit, for example, and fill at least a third of your plate space with 2 different vegetables at dinner time.

## DRINK ALCOHOL IN MODERATION

- **Too much alcohol** can damage the heart muscle, increase blood pressure and also lead to weight gain. However, moderate drinking (between 1 and 2 standard drinks of alcohol a day) can help protect the heart in men aged over 40 and women who have gone through the menopause.
- Discuss a suitable intake for you with your doctor, remembering that the maximum safe intake per week is below 21 standard drinks for a man and 14 standard drinks for a woman. One standard drink is a very small glass of wine, a half pint of beer or lager or a pub measure of spirits.

1. Food Safety Authority of Ireland, 2008  
2. Official Journal of the European Union, 2006. Nutrition and health claims made on foods.  
3. Appel et al. N Engl J Med. 1997 17;336(16):1117-24.



# 5 BREAKFAST IDEAS

## 1 MUESLI

No-added sugar oat based muesli with grated apple and low-fat milk.

## 2 EGGS

Peppered scrambled eggs and mushrooms, served on wholegrain toast.

## 3 BANANA

Chopped banana, topped with low fat yoghurt and a dessertspoon of unsalted nuts or seeds.

## 4 PORRIDGE

Unsalted porridge, sweetened with a dessertspoon of plump sultanas, raisins or fresh berries.

## 5 GRANOLA

Granola oat and honey base, low fat yoghurt, topped with berries, mango and any fruit of your choice.



# 5 LUNCH IDEAS

## 1 POTATO

Baked potato with low fat crème fraiche, tuna (canned in spring water), sweetcorn and crisp green salad.

## 2 CHICKEN

Thinly sliced chicken fillet served with mixed salad leaves, fresh coriander and basil with a dressing made from olive oil, chilli sauce and lemon juice.

## 3 SOUP

Fresh lentil or bean-based vegetable soup with a wholegrain roll.

## 4 PITTA

Toasted wholemeal pitta stuffed with reduced fat hummus, cherry tomatoes and cucumber.

## 5 MINCE BEEF

A large red pepper stuffed with lean minced beef and red onion, cooked in a tomato based sauce.



# 2 HEALTHY DINNER IDEAS

## PORK STIR-FRY



**COMPLEXITY** easy  
**TIME** 10min  
**SERVES** 4  
**METHOD** stir-fry

## Add a rainbow of coloured vegetables to your plate to boost your antioxidant vitamin intake.

**450g lean pork, cut into thin strips**  
**2 tablesp. soy sauce**  
**1 tablesp. olive oil**  
**2 cloves garlic, chopped**  
**225g vegetables (peppers, mangetout and carrots) chopped**

**NOTE:**  
You can add cashew nuts, but for a lower-calorie option, it's best to exclude them.

Mix the pork with the soy sauce. Heat a wok or large pan. Add the oil. Then add the garlic and pork and stir-fry for 5-6 minutes. Add the vegetables and stir-fry for another 2-3 minutes.

Serve with the noodles, brown rice or wrapped in a wholemeal pitta bread.

### Nutritional analysis per serving:

ENERGY	PROTEIN	FAT	IRON	CARBOHYDRATE	SALT CONTENT
246KCAL	37.1G	9.6G	1.99MG	2.9G	1.1G

### Guideline Daily Amounts

	CALORIES	SUGARS	FAT	SATURATES	SALT
Women	2000	90g	70g	20g	6g
Men	2500	120g	95g	30g	6g

All GDAs are based on recommendations for an average adult of healthy weight and average activity level. It is important to remember that these are just a **guide**, not targets.

## NICOISE SALAD



**COMPLEXITY** easy  
**TIME** 10min  
**SERVES** 4  
**METHOD** bowl

## Packed with fibre rich vegetables and new potatoes, this could be a nutritious filling choice for a bright summer evening meal.

**500g small potatoes, boiled and chopped**  
**225g green beans, lightly boiled**  
**200g can tuna (preserved in spring water), flaked**  
**12 cherry tomatoes cut in half**  
**1 cos lettuce or mixed leaves**  
**4 eggs, boiled for 7 mins, peeled and cooled**  
**a handful of black olives**

**DRESSING**  
**3 tablesp. olive oil**  
**1 tablesp. balsamic vinegar**  
**½ teasp. honey**  
**½ teasp wholegrain mustard**  
**½ clove of garlic, finely chopped**  
**ground black pepper**

Mix the oil, vinegar, honey, mustard, garlic and black pepper together to make the dressing. To assemble the salad, place the potatoes, green beans, tuna, tomatoes and leaves in a large bowl, mix with half the dressing, divide between four plates. Cut the eggs in four and add to each plate. Divide the black olives between each plate. Drizzle the remaining dressing over each plate.

Very good with crusty wholegrain bread. The Nicoise Salad could also be served from one large salad bowl.

**NOTE:**  
Nicoise salad traditionally contains anchovies, but for a lower-salt option, it's best to exclude them.

### Nutritional analysis per serving:

ENERGY	PROTEIN	FAT	IRON	CARBOHYDRATE	SALT CONTENT
263KCAL	21.7G	8.9G	3.0MG	25.7G	0.3G