

# Healthier Lifestyle Choices



The Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital is a health promoting hospital and actively supports the Making Every Contact Count national initiative known as MECC. This leaflet is a brief guide to making lifestyle changes to improve health, more detailed information can be found on the internet websites or via the contacts on the back of the leaflet.

If you, your family or carers require any further information or support for making lifestyle choices, please ask a health professional during your hospital visit/admission.

### ***Stopping Smoking***

Smoking is one of the major causes of heart and lung disease. Stopping smoking is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health.

- Health benefits start within 24 hours of quitting.
- When you smoke the blood passing through your arteries is much stickier.
- The level of good cholesterol in your blood is reduced when you smoke.
- When you smoke your blood contains more carbon monoxide (a poison) and much less oxygen, which means your heart, lungs and other organs are not getting a healthy blood supply.
- Breathing problems, coughing, shortness of breath and wheezing improve after 3 to 9 months. Lung efficiency can be 5-10%.

***Top tip:*** there are lots of aids to help you quit and you are most likely to succeed if you use a stop smoking advisor. Other aids to assist stopping smoking include patches, gum, lozenges, sprays and medication.

Change your routine when trying to stop smoking to avoid putting yourself in situations that would likely tempt you to smoke.

## **Healthy Eating**

It is important to get the right balance of different nutrients to get maximum health benefits (see below). Your diet should contain food from each of the following food groups:

- Starchy foods such as rice, potatoes, wholemeal pasta and bread, etc. (hand size portion).
- Fruit and vegetables (at least 5 a-day, fresh or frozen).
- Milk and dairy foods (use low fat options).
- Protein foods, these include meat, fish, eggs. Other non-dairy sources of protein include nuts, tofu, beans and pulses.
- A healthy diet will help to prevent certain chronic (long-term) diseases such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes. It may also help to reduce your risk of developing some cancers and help you to keep a healthy weight.
- A lot of food already contains salt, therefore avoid adding it at the table or when cooking. This may help you to keep to the recommended intake of 6 grams of salt (a teaspoon) or less per day.
- Eating oily fish at least twice per week provides the richest source of omega 3 which can help protect against heart disease, examples include herring, mackerel, pilchards, sardines, salmon and fresh tuna.
- The most common cause of high blood cholesterol levels in the UK is people eating too much fatty foods especially saturated fat such as fatty meats, pastries, cakes, full fat milk and cheese.

### **Top tips:**

- Make it yourself instead of a ready meal it works out cheaper and tastes better.
- Balance what you eat with physical activity.

## ***Healthy Weight***

Being overweight and obese has become increasingly common over the past 30 years. Body Mass Index (BMI) is often used to assess if you are at a healthy weight. Your BMI can be calculated by a health professional.

- Being obese (BMI over 30) can reduce life expectancy by an average of 9 years.
- A healthy weight can be maintained by eating the right amount of healthy food and regular physical activity.
- Approximately 2000 calories a day are recommended for women, and 2500 calories are recommended for men.

### ***Top tips:***

- If you're planning to lose weight, then aim to lose 1-2 lbs (0.5 – 1kg) per week. Physical activity should be part of your weight loss plan.
- Check you are not thirsty, rather than hungry – try a drink of water before you eat.
- Eat a healthy breakfast such as porridge or wholegrain cereals and you will be less likely snack before lunch.

## ***Physical Activity***

On average, an inactive person will spend more days in hospital than an active person.

- An active lifestyle reduces your risk of coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes (non-insulin dependent), chronic kidney disease and some cancers.
- It can also help manage conditions such as osteoporosis, back pain, osteoarthritis.
- Adults should aim to be active for 30 minutes on five (of more) days per week, which can be broken down to 3 lots of 10 minutes or 2 lots of 15 minutes of activity.
- If you are not able to manage 30 minutes, then do what you can as some exercise is better than none.

- Being more active reduces the risk of depression and is positive for your mental health and wellbeing.
- Being active can reduce blood pressure and improve cholesterol levels.

### ***Top tips:***

- Set small goals and then gradually build up your physical activity levels.
- Find an activity that you enjoy such as walking, cycling or even dancing to your favourite songs.
- Get up from your chair and take a walk every hour.

If you are overweight or have a chronic illness, then consult your General Practitioner (GP) or health professional before taking up a new activity programme.

### ***Mental health and wellbeing***

During stressful times we are more likely to take risks with our health such as re-starting smoking, drinking too much alcohol or over eating.

- If you think you are stressed and very anxious speak to your GP or health professional.
- There is much you can do to manage your stress and anxiety. Some people find that physical activity, yoga and other relaxation techniques can help.

### ***Top tips:***

- You may need to identify situations that make you feel stressed or anxious and try to avoid them if you can.

### ***Alcohol***

- Alcohol causes or contributes to over 40 different diseases including cirrhosis, heart problems, cancers of the mouth, high blood pressure and liver damage.
- Regularly drinking more than the recommended amount can contribute to low energy, memory loss, relationship problems, depression, insomnia and impotence.

- Alcohol can also contain many calories and can contribute to being overweight.

### ***Drinking guidelines:***

It is recommended to have at least 2 alcohol free days per week. Both men and women should not regularly drink more than 2 units of alcohol per day.

These guidelines apply whether you drink every day, twice per week or just occasionally.

### ***What's in my drink?***

- A pint of beer (3.5% ABV) - 2 units, 182 calories.
- Measure of spirit with mixer (40% ABV) - 1 unit, 55 calories.
- Small glass of wine (12% ABV) - 1.5 Units, 93 calories.
- Large glass of wine (12% ABV) - 2.1 Units, 130 calories.
- Bottle of wine (12%ABV) - 9 Units, 556 calories.

### ***Top tips:***

- Around 90% of the population drink alcohol, it can be relaxing and sociable providing you stay within the guidelines. Remember home measures contain more units than pub measures.
- Try not use alcohol to relieve stress or anxiety.

### ***General Tips:***

Remember it is never too late to adopt healthier lifestyle choices, even if you try and fail it's never too late to try again. If you think about change in a positive way you are more likely to succeed. You may find it useful to set yourself some realistic goals and keep a diary to keep track of your progress. There may be additional benefits to making healthy lifestyle choices, for example:

- Stopping smoking 10 cigarettes per day could save you approximately £86 per month and £1000 per year.

- Adopting the five ways to wellbeing can add 7.5 years to your life, examples include:  
**Connect** – keep in touch with friends, family and your local community  
**Be active** – take a walk in the park  
**Take notice** – take a look at what is around  
**Keep learning** – take up a new course or hobby  
**Give** – volunteer to do something in your community

## ***Useful Contacts***

### ***Stopping Smoking***

SMOKE FREE LIVERPOOL Tel 08000 614212 or 0151 374-2535  
or test Quit to 66777

Local NHS free smoking helpline - 0800 169 0169 or text GIVE  
UP plus your post code to 88088

### ***Healthy eating / weight management***

Food standards agency - <http://www.food.gov.uk>

Eatwell plate - <http://www.food.gov.uk>

Change4life – [www.change4life.com](http://www.change4life.com)

### ***Mental health and well being***

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### ***Physical Activity***

Change4life: [www.change4life.com](http://www.change4life.com)

<http://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/prevention/staying-active.aspx>

### ***Alcohol & Drug use:***

Drinkline: 0800 917 8282

DrinkAware: [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

Talk to Frank: <http://www.talktofrank.com>

## References:

Healthy eating: <http://www.patient.co.uk/health/Healthy-Eating.htm>

Choosing Health In Liverpool, Liverpool Primary Care Trust and Liverpool Community Health Working in Partnership.

## For further information visit:

[www.lhch.nhs.uk](http://www.lhch.nhs.uk)

If you require a copy of this leaflet in any other format or language please contact us quoting the leaflet code and the language or format you require.

إذا لديك الرغبة في الحصول على نسخة من هذه المعلومات بأي لغة أخرى أو بشكل آخر ( على سبيل المثال بخطوط كبيرة ) ، الرجاء الاتصال علينا على الرقم 0151 600 1257 موضحاً الشكل أو اللغة التي ترغب فيها.
如果您想索取一份以其他語文或形式（如大字體）編印成的資料傳單，請致電 0151 600 1257 向我們查詢，並說明您所需要的形式和語文。
ئەگەر ئەم زاتىيارىنەت بەھەر زامانىكى تىر ياخود شىۋازىكى تىر دەۋىت (بۇ نموونە بە چاپى گەۋرە) ئەۋا تىكايە بە زامارە تەلەفۇنى 0151 600 1257 پەيۋەندىمان پىۋە بىكە و ئامارە بىدە بىر زامانەى ياخود شىۋەيەى كە دەتەۋىت
W celu uzyskania niniejszej informacji w innym języku lub formacie (np. dużym drukiem), prosimy o kontakt z nami pod numerem 0151 600 1257 podając wymagany format lub język.
Haddii aad u baahan tahay koobiga wargelintan oo luqad ama qaab kale (sida far waaweyn) fadlan nagala soo xiriir 0151 600 1257 adiga oo noo sheegaya luqadda ama qaabka aad wax ku rabtid.

CTPALS083

Date of Publication:

Date for Review:

Version 2

March 2012

May 2021

Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Thomas Drive, Liverpool, Merseyside L14 3PE Telephone: 0151-600 1616

© Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust