

Further Information

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- speak to a member of staff
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- tel. 01851 708069 or 07814 071868 Monday-Friday between 9am-5.30pm.

Version: 4
Produced by: Department of Nutrition & Dietetics, Western Isles Hospital.

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NHS Western Isles

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Healthy eating following a Stroke



Help to reduce your risk of having another stroke; follow a healthy balanced diet, remember to exercise regularly and to limit your salt, fat and alcohol intake

Introduction

Someone who has had a stroke will be at higher risk of having another one.

Healthy eating can reduce risk factors associated with stroke such as:

- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Being overweight.

This booklet will look at how small changes to your diet can reduce the above risk factors and therefore reduce your risk of having a further stroke.

Salt

Eating a lot of salt and foods that are high in salt can increase your blood pressure. High blood pressure is the single biggest risk factor for stroke. Try to reduce foods that are high in salt, for example:

- Tinned and packet soups
- Bacon, sausages and smoked meats
- Tomato ketchup and sauces in a jar
- Crisps and salted nuts
- Cheddar cheese
- Processed and ready meals.

Gradually reducing the amount of salt you add to food and replacing salt with herbs and spices e.g. garlic, pepper, chilli, lemon and lime juice can be a good way to add flavour to food.

Fats

2 Regularly eating too many foods that are high in fat can increase

- Half a pint of beer or lager

Overall, the risks of drinking alcohol far outweigh any possible benefits and there is no drink that can be proven 'better' for you than another.

Diabetes

Having diabetes puts you at a greater risk for developing heart disease and another stroke, as it can cause damage to your blood vessels.

You can lower your risk by following a healthy diet and maintaining a healthy weight. This will help you to control your blood sugar, blood pressure and blood cholesterol.

Stop Smoking

Smoking can seriously increase the risk of having another stroke. Contact the Quite Your Way Hebrides team, tel. 01851 701623, who will be able to give you advice and support on how to stop smoking.

What if I have trouble swallowing?

If you have trouble swallowing, you may have been provided with advice on a modified texture diet.

If you have queries about this, your dietitian will be able to provide you with more information.

4. Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other alternatives

Choose beans, lentils, pulses, nuts, soya or tofu as alternatives to meat. These foods are good sources of protein and iron. One portion is four tablespoons of beans, cooked pulses or lentils, or cooked lean beef, pork, lamb, mince or turkey which is roughly the size of the palm of your hand. Aim for at least two portions of fish per week, one of which should be oily fish such as salmon, mackerel or herring.



5. Oils and spreads

Choose unsaturated oils and spreads and eat in small amounts.



6. Foods high in fat, salt and sugar

Eat these foods less often and in small amounts. These include chocolate, cakes, biscuits and sugary drinks.



Fluids

Drink at least 1.5 litres (6-8 glasses) of fluid throughout the day. Water, milk and fruit juices are the healthiest choices. It is best to avoid sugary drinks.



Alcohol

After suffering a stroke, you may need to cut down on the amount of alcohol you drink, as regularly drinking more alcohol than the recommended level can increase your risk of having another stroke.

It is recommended men and women should drink no more than 14 units of alcohol a week. This should be spread over three days or more and it is recommended to have at least 2 alcohol-free days per week. One unit of alcohol is:

- A small glass of wine
- 6 • A single pub measure of spirits e.g. gin, whiskey, vodka

your blood cholesterol. High blood cholesterol can cause heart disease and circulation problems which will increase your risk of suffering another stroke.

Saturated fats are generally the 'bad' type of fats while unsaturated fats are generally 'good' type of fats.

Foods high in saturated fat (bad fats);

- Lard and butter
- Cakes, pastries and biscuits
- Full fat dairy products
- Take-away meals
- Processed meals

Foods high in unsaturated fat (good fats);

- Seeds
- Nuts (choose unsalted versions)
- Sunflower, soya, corn and sesame oils
- Olive and rapeseed oils

Try to replace foods high in saturated fats with foods high in unsaturated fats. This can be achieved by making small changes to your diet:

- Use low-fat dairy products
- Try sunflower, rapeseed or olive oil based spreads instead of butter
- Avoid frying food
- Choose lean cuts of meat, eat chicken without the skin and eat two portions of fish each week
- Limit the amount of takeaways and processed food you eat
- Bread, nuts, fruit and vegetables, low fat yogurt, seeds are low in saturated fats

Regularly including oats, beans, pulses, fruit and vegetables in your diet can also help to reduce cholesterol.

Omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids are very important for good health as they can protect the heart and blood vessels from disease.

The best source of Omega-3 fatty acids is oily fish, e.g. salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines, kipper and trout. Try to eat at least 2 portions of fish per week, one of which should be oily.

Why is it important to stay a healthy weight?

Being overweight puts you at greater risk of having another stroke so maintaining a healthy weight reduces your risk.

We gain weight when we consume more calories from food and drink than we use up, so to lose weight we need to eat fewer calories and burn more energy by being physically active.

Losing even small amounts of weight can be very beneficial for your health.

Exercise

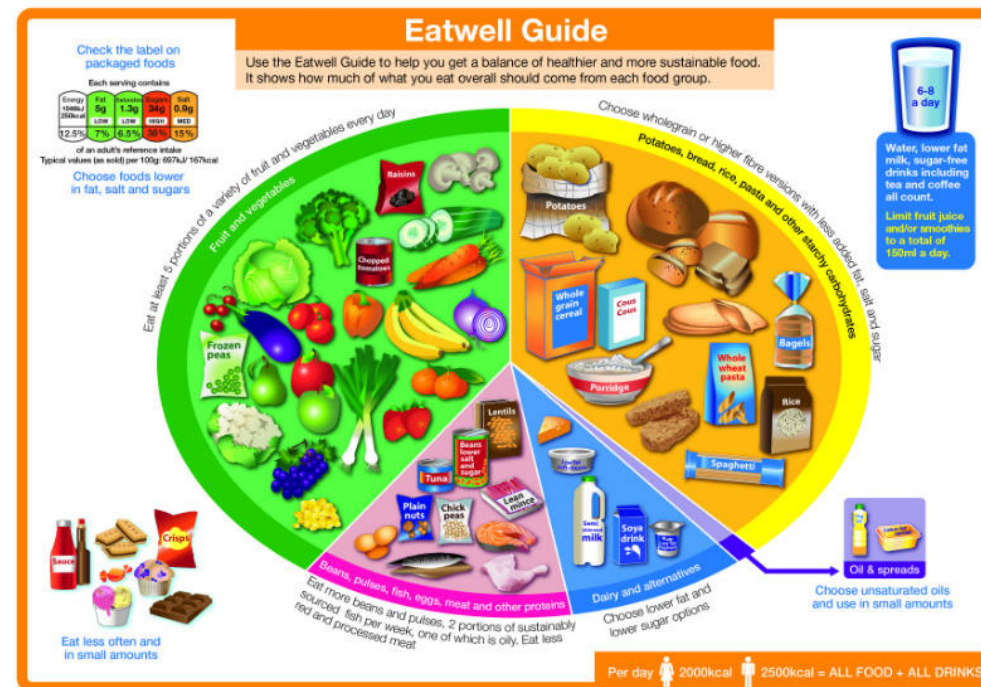
Regular exercise is good for your physical and mental health. Any increase in the amount of exercise you do will be beneficial in reducing your risk of having another stroke.

You should aim to be physically active for at least 30 minutes, at least 5 days a week. However, this can be divided into three 10-minute or two 15-minute sessions.

Eatwell Plate

The Eatwell Guide shows how much of what we eat overall should come from each food group to achieve a healthy balanced diet.

You do not need to achieve this balance with every meal, but try to get the balance right over the day or even a week



1. Potatoes, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates

These are known as starchy foods. Aim to include these foods with every meal, especially wholegrain and high fibre varieties. Starchy foods are a good source of calories and contain a range of nutrients e.g. fibre, calcium, iron and B vitamins.



2. Dairy and alternatives

Milk and dairy foods are an excellent source of calcium and protein. Aim to have 2-3 portions per day and choose low-fat varieties. A portion is a glass of milk or one small pot of yoghurt. Alternatives to dairy products include soya, oat and nut milks and desserts.



3. Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are a good source of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Aim for at least five portions a day. A portion is a medium sized apple, banana, pear, orange or three heaped tablespoons of vegetables. Fruit juice and smoothies should be limited to a combined total of 150ml per day.

