

Healthily living for a healthy heart

It's never too late to start looking after your heart and there are lots of things you can do to reduce your risk of Cardiovascular Disease (CVD). For more tips, advice and guidance visit:

www.westyorkshireandharrogatehealthyhearts.co.uk



Smoking...it's time to quit!

People who smoke are TWICE as likely to have a heart attack as those who don't and quitting reduces the risk of developing cancer and lung disease - 90% of all cases of lung cancer are caused by smoking. On average most people who quit [save](#) around £250 a month, that's nearly £3,000 a year. Your local [Stop Smoking Service](#) will help you quit. It's free and easy to use. You can also download this free [NHS stop smoking app](#).



Alcohol...when a sociable tipples becomes a health risk

Drinking more than the [recommended units of alcohol](#) can have a harmful effect on your heart and on your health generally. It can cause [abnormal heart rhythms](#), [high blood pressure](#), [heart failure](#), as well as [stroke](#), [liver problems](#) and some [cancers](#). Find out more about managing the amount of alcohol you drink at [NHS Choices](#). If you think you may have a problem with the amount of alcohol you drink talk to your GP or practice nurse, or contact [alcohol addiction services](#) in your local area.



Exercise...30 minutes' exercise a day keeps your heart healthy

The best way of maintaining a healthy weight is to combine a healthy diet with regular exercise. That means around 30 minutes of physical exercise on five or more days a week - things like: fast walking, riding a bike, mowing the lawn and hiking. Regular exercise makes your heart and blood circulatory system more efficient, lowers your cholesterol level, and keeps your blood pressure at a healthy level. There's lots of useful help and advice about exercise online at the ["live well"](#) pages at NHS Choices.



Overweight? Are you a healthy weight?

Have a look at the NHS BMI [healthy weight calculator](#) to help you decide. If you'd like help and support with losing weight why not get started with the NHS [weight loss plan](#).



Eat well

There's lots of ways you can help to reduce your risk of developing heart disease, such as lowering blood pressure (BP) and cholesterol. We recommend a healthy, balanced, high fibre diet that includes plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables ([five portions a day](#)) and whole grains. Too much salt will increase your blood pressure, so it's best to limit the amount of salt you eat to no more than a teaspoon (6g) a day.

There are two types of fat - saturated and unsaturated. You should avoid foods containing [saturated fats](#) because these will increase the levels of bad cholesterol in your blood. But a balanced diet should still include [unsaturated fats](#), which increase levels of good cholesterol and help reduce blockages in your arteries. You should also try to avoid [too much sugar](#) in your diet as this can increase chances of developing diabetes, which dramatically increases chances of developing CVD.



Stress

Stress contributes to high BP, which is also a risk factor for heart attack and stroke. Spotting the early signs of stress will also help prevent it getting worse and potentially causing serious complications. If you're struggling with stress there's lots of useful information about how to manage it at [NHS Choices](#).



Blood pressure...know your numbers

Having healthy [blood pressure](#) is essential to maintaining a healthy heart. High BP rarely has noticeable symptoms. But if untreated it increases your risk of developing serious problems such as heart attacks and stroke. High BP is one of the most common conditions in the UK - more than one in four UK adults have the condition. Over 600,000 people living in West Yorkshire and Harrogate are affected by high blood pressure. What's your [blood pressure](#)? Do you [know your numbers](#)?



Smartphones...let your smartphone do the talking

These days there's an app for practically everything and that includes help with all aspects of living a healthier life. Have a look at the NHS Choices [health apps library](#) to find safe and tested apps.