Nutrition for Substance Use



A step by step workbook for people using alcohol and other drugs



Welcome!

The revised edition of this workbook aims to help people who use alcohol or drugs to think about the importance of eating well and find ways to achieve a **more balanced** diet. If you use alcohol or drugs, please read on.

This workbook is for people who are **ready** to think about changing how they eat to help improve their health or wellbeing.

Some people may need more specialised dietary advice from a dietitian e.g. people with symptoms of liver disease; people who have lost weight over a few months (e.g. 3-6 months) without meaning to; those who have difficulty with eating; or those needing dietary advice for a medical condition such as diabetes.

If you fall into any of these categories, you should discuss with your GP who may refer you to a Dietitian.

This booklet is designed so you can use it by yourself or with someone's help. If you would like help using this workbook, why not ask a healthcare worker, support worker or a family member.

Let's get started $\rightarrow \rightarrow$





Terms used in this booklet

We know that words and phrases can mean one thing to one person, and another to someone else. Below are some of the main terms we use in this book, and what we mean by them.

Substance use

Substance use is the taking of drugs, alcohol, prescription or over-the-counter medications to change how we think, feel or perceive things. Not all substance use is risky, causes problems or leads to a dependence - but some does.

Diet

Diet is the combination of foods and drinks that we consume. Special diets are those used to treat a medical condition like diabetes or raised cholesterol.

Nutrition

Nutrition is about the food we eat, what we get from it (vitamins, minerals etc.) and how it affects the body. Good nutrition helps us keep healthy and can help prevent disease. We can become malnourished if we eat foods in the wrong amounts or if they are not properly used by the body.



The importance of nutrition

Regular and heavy substance use can lead to the body not getting enough food, or the right balance of food, to help keep our bodies and minds well. Substance use combined with poor eating habits can lead to a range of health problems, or make them worse.

Not everyone who eats poorly uses substances. Likewise not everyone who uses substances eats poorly. However, many people who use substances regularly have a poor diet, especially those who have problems with substance use or are dependent on them.

Why should you read this?

Some people do not want to stop or reduce their use of substances, others do. If you would like to stop or reduce your use, a useful place to start is to talk to your GP, support worker or healthcare worker who could recommend help if you need it. Whether you choose to stop, reduce or keep using, we want you to consider eating a more balanced diet. This approach is known as harm reduction, and could improve your health and reduce some risks at the same time.



Even small changes in eating habits can be very helpful, but the more the better!

Important - If you have been advised to limit certain foods by a healthcare professional because of a health concern, you should continue to follow that advice.

Part 1

Bottom line

Maybe your nutrition isn't a priority or your appetite is very poor. Using substances can affect both.

The bottom line is that **it's better to** eat anything rather than nothing.

Eating even a small amount more often throughout the day can help stimulate your appetite.

Here are some examples of how you can begin to build on what you eat to make it more nourishing and to include a better variety of foods. Maybe a time will come when you'll feel like trying them: Important - If you have not eaten much in a few days; if you have lost weight; if you are underweight and especially if you consume alcohol, it is important that when you start eating, you start with something small and build up slowly.

lf you eat	Try instead				
Packet of crisps	A sandwich				
	Toast with tomato or peanut butter & banana				
	Pasta or rice salad pot				
	Cereal/porridge & fruit				
Chocolate bar/biscuits	Digestive* or oat biscuits*				
	Oat/ wholegrain cereal bar*				
Sweets	Fresh or tinned fruit				
	Yoghurt/custard*/rice pudding pot*				
	Yoghurt and granola* pot				
	Small handful of mixed nuts and dried fruit				

lf you eat	Try instead
Sugary fizzy drinks	Water, milk or milky drink (milky coffee, milkshake*, hot chocolate*, malted milk drink).
	Smoothie*, pure fruit juice*
	If dehydrated - Isotonic drink (or make your own by adding a pinch of salt to well diluted squash or fruit juice)
Buns or cake	Crackers/oatcakes + cheese
	Scones, pancakes or crusty bread
	Custard and fruit crumble*
Cheese and ham toastie	Adding tomatoes or side salad
Chips and gravy	Chips and beans or fish, chips & peas with a glass of milk
Chicken soup and roll	Adding some frozen vegetables or try vegetable soup. Fill the roll (cheese/egg/ meat). Have a piece of fruit too
Fried egg soda	Adding beans, tomato or mushrooms
Bacon buttie	A BLT. Use wholemeal or wheaten bread
Burger in a bap	Adding salad & cheese and have with some or apple juice
Fried chicken or shredded kebabs	Adding salad

* These foods can be high in sugar, so try to eat them less often. Someone who needs to put on weight or who is malnourished may need to eat foods higher in fat and sugar more often.

If you'd like to know more about ways to improve your nutrition and find reasons to do so, read on...

Look at the statements below and

tick any relevant to you. When I

Part 2

Today's date:

Substance use and nutrition

Drinking a lot of alcohol or using other substances can have an effect on how you eat.

Look at the statements below. Tick any that are relevant to you:

I miss meals because time is spent getting money for,		don't eat well, it can have an effect on my ability to:		
finding, using or coming off substances		Stay healthy and feel and look my best		
l forget to eat when using or intoxicated		Repair damage to my body (cuts/bruises) and fight		
I don't have money to eat		infections		
regularly because it has been spent on substances		Achieve and keep good mental health- fat, carbohydrates and		
I cannot safely prepare meals due to intoxication		protein from food helps us regulate our mood!		
I don't know what foods I should be eating to be healthy		Have energy and strength to do normal activities and be physically active		
l don't know how to cook healthy meals		Keep a healthy weight		
I have a reduced appetite, things don't taste the same or I feel too sick to eat		Have normal bowel movements, avoiding constipation or diarrhoea		
I am not very interested in what I eat really. Food isn't a priority.				



On a scale of 1 to 10 how important is eating a balanced diet for you right now?

- 1 = not at all important
- 10 = very important

Substance use can affect eating habits. It can also affect the body directly. Both of these can lead to malnutrition.

Can you think of times when your substance use has affected your eating e.g. stopped you eating properly or interfered with you eating a meal at the usual time?

4			
2			
2		 	
2			
3		 	
3			
3	2		
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4			
4			
4	3		
4		 	
4		 	
		and the second second	
	4		

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Factors affecting food choices

Some things that can help improve your chances of eating well are:

- keeping money aside to buy food
- being willing and able to prepare and cook food for yourself
- having the right things to prepare and cook food such as a cooker, microwave, fridge and utensils

What would help you to improve

your food choices?

- cooking/sharing meals with another person
- having regular meal times
- being willing to try new foods and make small swaps
- getting good information about food choices



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Nutrition for Substance Use

Potential benefits of improved nutrition

Eating regular meals and a wide variety of foods helps keep our bodies healthy and helps us feel good.

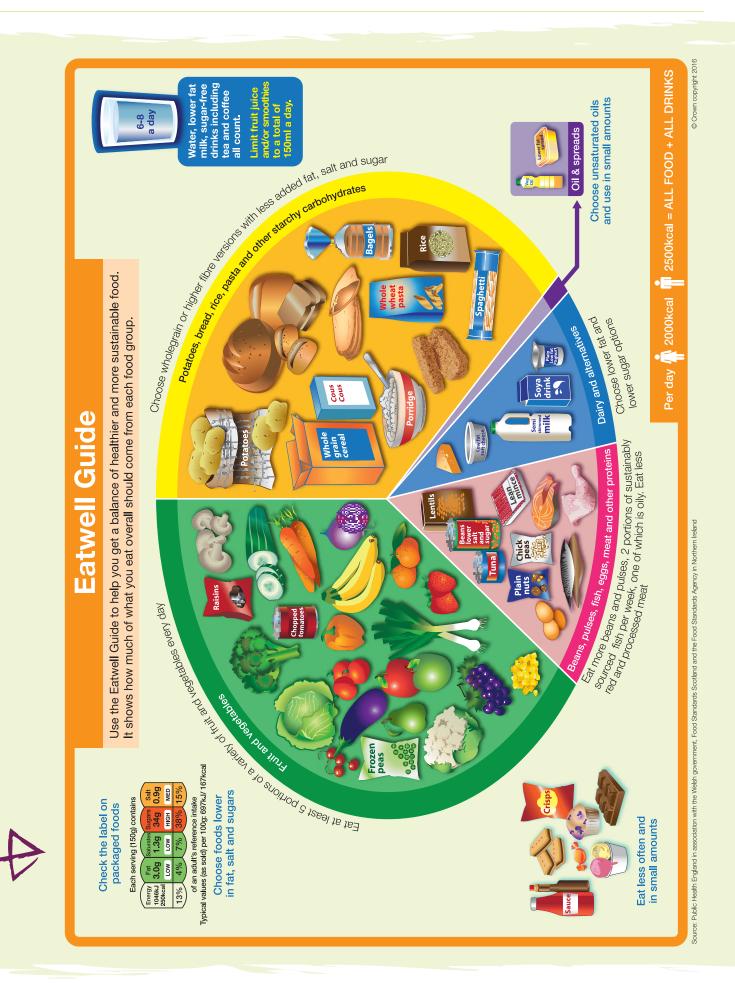
Eating and drinking the right things helps keep us well now but it also helps prevent illnesses like heart disease and certain cancers. A good diet can also prevent tooth decay, constipation and allow your body to heal from injuries and infections.

As well as keeping your body healthy, regularly eating a good variety of nourishing foods can help your mood and concentration and could help you cope better with different situations you face.

(A little note - If you are prescribed thiamine - it is much less unpleasant to take if done so with plenty of food and water!) The Eatwell Guide shows us that we need a wide variety of foods from each of the food groups and in the right proportions. Aim to eat more from the bigger groups and less from the smaller groups.

Do you think you have the balance right at the moment?

Look at the picture of the Eatwell Guide. Identify 2 or 3 foods from each group which you enjoy eating and can get access to.



Nutrition for Substance Use

What do I eat?

Let's take a closer look at what you are eating and drinking at the moment to see what can be improved. Writing down or recalling foods that you eat and drink over a couple of days can help you see patterns in your eating habits and help identify things you might like to change.

Complete the food diary below for 2 days.

- Try to remember everything you ate and drank, including snacks, tea, coffee etc
- Writing it down as you go along may help
- If you didn't eat you skipped a meal, forgot to eat or didn't feel like eating - write that down too
- Ask someone close to you to help if you have difficulty remembering

Your food diary

	Day 1	Day 2
Morning		
Afternoon		
Evening		
J J		

The following questions may now help you decide what areas you could improve: (have a look at these questions, and answer 'yes' or 'no'):

		yes	no
•	Did you eat regular meals and not skip meals?		
•	Did you eat food from all the food groups each day or every couple of days?		
•	Did you eat plenty of fruit and vegetables?		
•	Did you eat plenty of starchy foods like bread, pasta, rice or potatoes?		
•	Did you go easy on high fat foods and limit the amount of high sugar foods or drinks?		

If you answered mostly 'yes' well done! If most of your answers were 'no' you probably have room for making some improvements. **Small but gradual** changes in how you eat can help you.

Want to improve your eating? Read on.....

What should I aim for?

- Eat regular meals!
- Eat a wide variety of foods from the main food groups-
- Starchy foods, like potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and cereal
 Fruit & vegetables
 Dairy and alternatives
 Protein foods, like beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and
 - other proteins
 - Include oils and spreads in small amounts
- Eat small amounts of foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar
- Drink enough fluids throughout the day to keep hydrated



The five food groups

1. Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates

e.g. cereals, oats/porridge, noodles, sweet potato, couscous etc.

- Eat plenty of these energy foods- try to include them at each meal
- Choose wholegrains e.g. wholegrain cereals, wholemeal or wheaten bread, porridge, brown rice or pasta.

2. Fruit and vegetables e.g. fresh, frozen, tinned, dried and fruit juices/smoothies

• Good for fibre, vitamins and minerals. Try to eat at least 5 portions a day - try to have a variety of different types.

1 portion = 1 medium sized pear/apple/orange/banana 2 small kiwis/plums 1 portion = 1 tablespoon 1 tablespoon 1 tablespoon 1 tablespoon 3 tablespoons of peas

• Fruit juice or smoothie - a small (150ml) glass of fruit juice or smoothie counts as a maximum of one portion a day. Having extra amounts won't count towards your 5-a-day.

3. Dairy and alternatives e.g. milk, yoghurt, cheese, milky puddings and soya drinks

- Important for bone health. They contain calcium, protein, vitamins and minerals.
- Eat moderate amounts of these foods.
- Reduced fat options are generally encouraged but if you are not eating well or would like to put on weight, go for whole milk and full fat yoghurt's & cheese

4. Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins e.g. tofu, Quorn[™]

- Protein foods are important for growth and repair- include some each day
- Some of these can also be good sources of iron e.g. beans, peas, lentils and red meat
- If you eat a lot of red/ processed meat it is recommended you cut down
- Pulses (beans, peas and lentils) are good alternatives to meat as they are low in fat, high in fibre and are generally cheaper e.g. bean stew/ chilli or lentil soup
- Aim to eat at least 2 portions of fish each week; one should be oily (sardines, salmon, mackerel etc.)

5. Oils and spreads

Although some fat in the diet is essential, generally we are eating too much saturated fat and need to reduce this.

- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads made from them e.g. vegetable oil, rapeseed oil, olive oil and sunflower oil
- Use oils and spreads in small amounts
- Try to eat fried food less often bake, grill or boil instead



Foods high in fat and sugar

- This includes things like chocolate, cakes, sweets, biscuits, fizzy drinks, pastries, crisps, processed meat, fried food, butter & sauces
- Most people who are in good health should eat these less often and in small amounts
- Having foods like this too often can increase the risk of heart disease, obesity and tooth decayfocus on choosing more nutritious foods from the main sections of the Eatwell Guide
- Grazing on sugary foods & drinks throughout the day is particularly harmful to the teeth- if choosing them, have them with meals
- If you crave these foods after using certain substances, try to limit the amount you eat. Food cravings can happen when false messages are sent to your brain when under the influence e.g. gettings the 'munchies' after using cannabis
- Make choices about the food you will eat before starting using substances so better options are nearest to you when you start to feel hungry

Look back at the list of snack options on pages 5 and 6 for healthier ideas.

Salt

Most people eat too much salt. Salt is directly linked to high blood pressure which increases the risk of stroke.

- Most of the salt we eat is already in everyday foods like bread, cereal, pasta sauce and soup.
- Try to gradually cut down on the amount of salt you add to foods. Add more flavour with pepper, herbs and spices.
- Reduce the number of salty processed foods, takeaways and ready meals you eat. Use traffic light labels on the front of packets to help you make lower salt choices.
- Raised blood pressure is more common in people who drink alcohol above the recommended guidelines. Try to drink no more than 14 units per week, spread evenly over the week and some days without alcohol.

Stimulant drugs also increase blood pressure at the time of use.

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14 UNITS =

PINTS OF BEER

Aim for 6-8 glasses of fluid a day.

Water and drinks

It's important to drink enough fluids throughout the day to keep you hydrated.

- Aim for 6-8 glasses of fluid a day. Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.
- If you are dehydrated you can feel unwell and it can be hard to concentrate. Some drugs, especially alcohol can cause dehydration, so if you have been drinking make sure you replace any fluids lost by drinking more non-alcoholic drinks.
- If using stimulants and exercising or dancing you can also become dehydrated; it is important to take liquids to replace those lost through sweating. Don't drink too much liquid as this can be dangerous. Sipping about a pint of water per hour is best.

- Usually water is the best drink but if you are dehydrated isotonic drinks ('sports' drinks) may be useful. Adding a pinch of salt to well diluted squash or fruit juice is a useful homemade alternative.
- Staying well hydrated improves access to veins if that is needed.

Ready for a change? Then read on...

Time for change?

So far you have looked at what you eat and what prevents you from eating better. If you are now thinking of making a change in your eating behaviour it is useful to understand how people change.

Change happens in stages.

It is not easy but you can do it if you decide to and believe that you can.

Stages of change

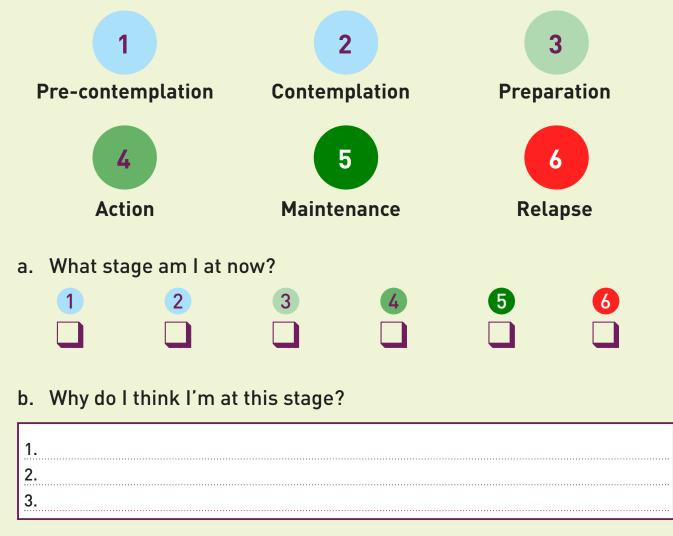
- 1. 'I'm ok with how I eat at present'
- 2. 'I'm thinking about changing but haven't done it yet'
- 'I've made a decision,
 I've made a plan and
 I'm committed to change'
- 4. 'I've started the change(s).I'm working hard at it'
- 5. 'I've reached my goal and I'm sticking to it'
- 6. 'I've slipped back to where I was'

What stage are you at?



What stage of change am I at?

My self-assessment of where I am with change:



c. What's my next step?

.....

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What can I do to move forward?

1. Precontemplation ('I'm ok with how I eat at present')

- Increase my awareness of the benefits of eating a more balanced diet by reading pages 4-11 again.
- Talk to a healthcare professional like my GP or someone I trust about my food choices. Show this workbook to them.

2. Contemplation ('I'm thinking about changing but haven't done it yet')

- Think about reasons my health is important to me e.g. what do I want to be able to do with my life, my time?
- Talk to someone about my fears of not changing my diet.
- Build my belief that I **can** do it if I want to.

3. Preparation ('I've made a decision, I've made a plan and I'm committed to change')

- Think how I can make the change(s) happen.
- Make a plan.
- Tell someone my plan.
- Get support.

4. Action ('I've started the change(s). I'm working hard at it')

5. Maintenance ('I've reached my goal and I'm sticking to it')

- Take small steps.
- See the benefits in front of me.
- Develop my eating routines.
- Start finding pleasure in eating and related activities.
- Learn how to prevent relapse.

6. Relapse ('I've slipped')

- Recognise this is not failure but an opportunity to learn.
- Get myself back on track with my eating.
- Think about **why** it happened and learn from it.
- It is **not** all wasted time and effort.
- Build my confidence again.
- Get more support.

Making a decision

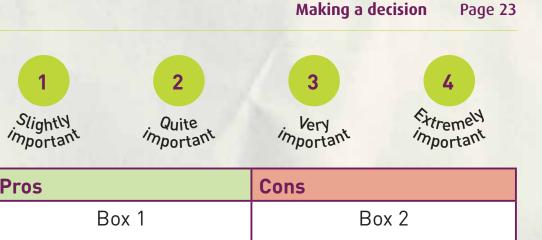
This section helps you decide what change(s) you want to make. It's easier to make a decision if you know the pros and cons about it, so that you can make the right decision for you.

Fill in the exercise below to help you see the thinking behind your decisions written down:

Today's date:

a) Why I am thinking of changing the way I eat:

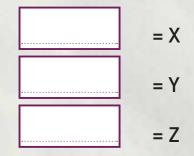
- b) Next, make a list of pros and cons for changing how you eat and for not changing. List these in the table on the next page.
- c) When you're happy with your list, give a score to each item you have put in, using this scoring key.
 - 1 = slightly important
 - 2 = quite important
 - 3 = very important
 - 4 = extremely important



	FIUS	COIIS
Change	Box 1	Box 2
	Total score box 1	Total score box 1
No change	Box 3	Box 4
	Total score box 1	Total score box 1

- Add up your scores for the 'pros' (of change and no change) and for the 'Cons' (again, for change and no change). Write them in the total score for each box.
 - 1. Add the total scores in boxes 1 and 4:
 - 2. Now add the total scores in boxes 2 and 3:
 - 3. Subtract Y from X i.e. (Y X):

If Z is more than 0 (zero) you are nearly ready to decide to make some changes. **Congratulations!**



Ready for change?

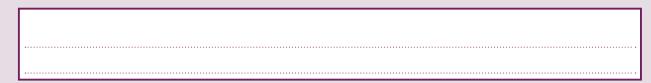
For change to happen you need to feel that it is **important** and be **confident** in yourself that you can do it. One without the other does not work so well.

Readiness Ruler

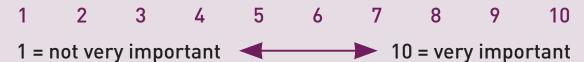
a. Using the scale below, circle a number (1-10) for how **important** is it for you to change your eating behaviour?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 = 1	not ver	y impo	ortant	-		1) = ver	y impo	rtant

Why did you not pick the number before this one? E.g. if you ticked 8, why not 7?



b. Using the scale below, circle a number (1-10) for how **confident** you are that you can change your eating behaviour?



Why did you not pick the number before this one? E.g. if you ticked 7, why not 6?

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Setting goals for myself

Now that you know that you are thinking of changing your eating, it is helpful to use SMART targets to help you make it happen. Here are two examples of SMART and non-SMART targets to guide you.

- **S** = Specific
- **M** = Measurable
- **A** = Achievable
- **R** = Realistic
- **T** = Time-bound

SMART	Non-SMART
I want to cut down my takeaways from 4 times a week to twice a week for the next month	I want to eat healthily
I want to eat a bar of chocolate no more than 3 times this week	I want to eat less chocolate

Using SMART targets are more likely to work. The key is to be realistic and take small steps. Remember, be specific and choose steps that you can achieve.

From your food diary on page 12 choose an aspect of your eating or a meal you could improve and would like to change. Fill in the exercise on the next page - set one or more SMART targets for yourself. This will make it easier for you to see what you are aiming for and to reach your goal. Start off small and build on small changes first.

What will I do?	What will be the benefits of my change?	What is my timescale?
·····		
·····		

Preparing for change: How will I achieve it?

This section aims to help you to get prepared for the change(s) you are going to make. To be successful you may need to take some action, even before you start the change; this can be getting things you need, getting support from others, learning some new skills or budgeting for particular things.



Here are some things that might be useful to consider:

- Having appropriate foods in stock, ready for the change
- Having the right equipment to prepare and cook these foods
- Budgeting to ensure you have enough money for the foods you want to eat
- Making a shopping list of the foods you are going to eat
- If you have access to cooking facilities and a freezer, batch cooking on good days can mean something good and healthy to eat on more difficult days
- Get an alarm clock so you can be up in time to eat breakfast

• Get support from someone else. Together you could plan a shopping list, go shopping or prepare food and cook together

- Get accurate information about food labelling to help you choose healthier options
- Look out for free nutrition information and cooking programmes e.g.
 Cook it! - see 'Links and resources' on page 31

Any others?

1.	
2.	
3.	

Benefits of improved nutrition

You are ready to use this section now if you have made the change(s) you decided on. Fill in the table below after 1 week, 2 weeks and 4 weeks:

	Date	Benefits of the changes I've made
1 week		1.
		2.
		3.
		4.
2 weeks		1. 2. 3.
		4.
4 weeks		1.
		2. 3.
		4.



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Build-a-meal

Let's think of a meal you eat that you'd like to improve. Write down the meal in box A. Think of some changes you could make to make it more balanced. Write these down in Box B.

Box A A meal I like	Box A Changes to the meal

And finally...

Now that you have started to make positive changes, continue to build on these by making others in the same way!

Why not plan a healthy reward for yourself if you can, such as taking a walk somewhere new, making some time for a hobby or buying something you have wanted. This can make you feel that your effort has been worthwhile.

My reward is

A brief but important word on relapse:

Remember that relapse is normal when changing any behaviour, including your eating. Most people go back to their previous pattern of behaviour from time to time before the change in these habits becomes more permanent.

In fact some people seem to need to learn from their relapse experience before change is long lasting. If this happens to you do not be hard on yourself (it definitely doesn't help), but do pick up where you left off as soon as possible. Re-reading the change section of this workbook may help if this happens.

Links and resources

Healthy eating information

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/healthybalanced-diet

Malnutrition information

www.nidirect.gov.uk/conditions/ malnutrition

Obesity information

www.nidirect.gov.uk/conditions/obesity

Oral Health Foundation:

A wide range of leaflets on oral health. www.dentalhealth.org/tell-me-about

For information on drugs and alcohol support services across NI

www.drugsandalcoholni.info

Cook it! programme:

A practical cooking and nutrition programme suitable for adults, usually delivered as 6 weekly sessions. For more information on Cook it! and other nutrition programmes contact the team in your area (details below).

For more information about Community nutrition education programmes & healthy lifestyle resources

BHSCT

Community dietetic health & wellbeing team, Beechhall health and wellbeing centre, 21 Andersonstown Rd, Belfast, BT119AF

Tel: 028 9504 3068 Email: CDHWteam@belfasttrust. hscni.net

NHSCT

Cook it! Team, Braid Valley Hospital, Cushendall Road, Ballymena, BT43 6HL

Tel: 028 2563 5276 Email: cookit@northerntrust.hscni.net

SEHSCT

Community Dietitians, Dietitian's Office, Laganside House, Lagan Valley Hospital, 39 Hillsborough Rd, Lisburn, BT28 1JP

Tel: 028 9041 1792 Email: training.dietitians@setrust. hscni.net

SHSCT

Cook it! Team, St Luke's Site, 71 Loughgall Road, Armagh, BT61 7NQ Tel: 028 3756 4544 Email: cookit@southerntrust.hscni.net

WHSCT

Community Food and Nutrition Team, Western Health and Social Care Trust, Maple Villa B, Gransha Park, Derry/Londonderry, BT47 6WJ

Tel: 028 7186 5127

Referral to Community Dietetic service

In the community, referrals are accepted from a GP or onward referral from the hospital Dietitian.

Acknowledgements

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