



Keeping your heart happy

Cholesterol-lowering
through diet and lifestyle



CHOLESTEROL – WORTH CARING FOR

Around half of adults have elevated blood cholesterol.

When you have too much cholesterol in your blood, it builds up in your blood vessels which can result in coronary heart disease. This process happens over many years and often starts earlier in life than you may think. The good news is there are some simple steps you can take to help achieve healthy cholesterol levels, and it starts with diet and lifestyle.

Plant stanol ester has been shown to lower cholesterol. High cholesterol is a risk factor in the development of coronary heart disease. A daily intake of 1.5-2.4g plant stanols has been shown to lower cholesterol by 7-10% in 2-3 weeks. Individual results may vary.



WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in your blood that is mostly produced in the liver, but it's also obtained via foods such as red meat, cheese, butter and eggs. Cholesterol is essential for your body to function normally, but too much can be harmful.



WHY IS HIGH CHOLESTEROL BAD FOR ME?

When there is too much cholesterol in your blood, it may cause plaque buildup on the walls of your arteries. This condition, known as atherosclerosis, can lead to a variety of health problems as a result of coronary heart disease, such as heart attack or stroke. There are a number of risk factors linked to coronary heart disease (e.g. age, gender, genetic factors, smoking, poor diet and physical

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inactivity) but cholesterol is one of the main risk factors. Lowering your cholesterol levels now can help you avoid problems later on in life.

WHO GETS ELEVATED CHOLESTEROL?

Elevated cholesterol affects people of all ages and backgrounds, no matter whether you are young or old, thin or overweight, or whether you exercise or not. The only way to know if your cholesterol level is elevated is to have it tested. Elevated cholesterol usually has no symptoms so you will be able to follow your cholesterol levels only by having regular checkups.



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Measuring your blood cholesterol is a great first step towards becoming healthier. This simple test can be carried out by your healthcare professional and will give you a cholesterol level. And if you know your level, you can do something about it.

Your total cholesterol level includes different types of cholesterol. The balance between the levels of these cholesterol is important because they do different things. There are two main types:

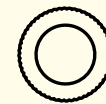


LDL (low-density lipoprotein) is a 'bad' type of cholesterol. If there is too much LDL cholesterol in the blood, it can slowly build in the arteries, making them narrower which increases the risk of coronary heart diseases.



HDL (high-density lipoprotein) is a 'good' type of cholesterol. It helps to remove excess cholesterol from the bloodstream and returns it to the liver where it is broken down and passed out of the body.

A quick tip to remember the difference is that your **LDL** should be **Lower** and your **HDL** should be **Higher**. You may also get some additional blood measurements if you get tested.



Non-HDL refers to all of the 'bad' types of cholesterol, including but not limited to LDL. The non-HDL measurement also includes VLDL (very-low-density lipoprotein) though usually only present in small amounts. Sometimes non-HDL measurement is used instead of just the LDL level.



Triglycerides are not the same as cholesterol but are a type of fat found in your blood and often measured at the same time.

As a guide, most people should aim for results that fall within the limits below:

Total cholesterol ≤ 5.0 mmol/l

LDL cholesterol ≤ 3.0 mmol/l

HDL cholesterol ≥ 1.0 mmol/l

Non-HDL cholesterol ≤ 4.0 mmol/l

Triglycerides ≤ 2.3 mmol/l



WHAT CAN I DO TO IMPROVE MY CHOLESTEROL?

Your healthcare professional will interpret your test results along with other risk factors, such as age, family history, smoking and advise you how to proceed. For most people, it starts with diet and lifestyle. It might be that some simple changes in your routine could help you achieve great results.

In this brochure we focus on food that promotes healthy cholesterol levels. Simple steps such as improving the quality of fats that you eat, taking in more fibre, or including Benecol® products with added plant stanols as part of a healthy diet could start lowering your cholesterol level. Even small daily changes can yield significant results over time.

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CHOLESTEROL LOWERING WITH BENECOL® PRODUCTS

Benecol® products with added plant stanol ester have been shown to lower cholesterol. Elevated cholesterol is a risk factor for coronary heart disease.

How can Benecol help to lower my cholesterol?

Benecol products contain plant stanol ester, which is shown to lower your blood cholesterol levels. Plant stanol ester works by partly blocking cholesterol absorption in the digestive tract.

The tasty products in the Benecol range contain plant stanol ester and are shown to lower your LDL cholesterol in **2-3 weeks***. What's more, the daily usage of Benecol as part of your meals also keeps your cholesterol at a lower level in the long term.

Benecol products are designed to be part of a balanced and varied diet and a healthy lifestyle. The cholesterol-lowering effect is at its best when most Benecol products are consumed as part of a meal.









The use of Benecol products adds to the effectiveness of lowering cholesterol even when using statin medication. Discuss the use of Benecol products with your doctor if you are on cholesterol-lowering medication.









Only Benecol products contain plant stanol ester.








OPTIMISING YOUR DIET FOR HEALTHY CHOLESTEROL LEVELS

Making good dietary choices is central to achieving good cholesterol levels and is recommended by experts worldwide. The key features of a cholesterol-lowering diet include reducing saturated fat intake, getting enough dietary fibre and incorporating plant stanol-containing products. Below you will find a table offering options/alternatives to help improve your diet in a practical, convenient way.

		HEALTHIEST CHOICES	EAT OCCASIONALLY	BEST TO LIMIT
FRUIT & VEGETABLES	 FRUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh, frozen or dried fruit and fruit canned in natural juice Fruit smoothies (no added sugar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canned fruit in syrup (drain the syrup) 100% fruit juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit flambéed in butter and sugar Fruit fritters Fruit coated in chocolate or candied fruit
	 VEG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homemade vegetable based soups Fresh and frozen vegetables steamed or lightly boiled (cooked with no oil) 100% vegetable juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canned vegetables containing added salt/sugar (rinse and drain) Fried vegetables Honey roasted vegetables like parsnips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battered, deep fried vegetables (e.g. onion rings) Buttered vegetables
	 SALADS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undressed salads or salads with low fat dressings Rainbow salads with a good variety of vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced fat coleslaw 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coleslaw Salads with heavy mayonnaise dressing
CARBOHYDRATES	 POTATOES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potatoes, sweet potatoes, yam and plantain – boiled, baked, mashed (no fat) or dry roasted Leave the skins on for extra fibre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thick cut, reduced fat oven chips Roast potatoes cooked in small amounts of vegetable oil such as sunflower, rapeseed or olive oil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roast potatoes cooked in dripping or large amounts of oil Potatoes mashed with butter/cream Deep fried thin cut chips
	 BREAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bread, bagels, rolls, pitta, tortillas, chapattis – choose wholemeal versions where possible and use lower fat spreads rather than butter, or no fat at all Wholegrain breakfast cereals, muesli (no added sugar), oats/porridge (with skimmed milk or semi-skimmed milk) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naan bread Non-wholemeal options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garlic bread, croissants, waffles Breads spread thickly with butter or made with ghee (e.g. parathas) Sugar coated breakfast cereals
	 PASTA/RICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boiled pasta, rice noodles – choose wholemeal versions where possible and eat plain or with vegetable-based sauces Wild rice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-wholemeal options Filled pasta like ravioli 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pasta or rice served in creamy/buttery sauces Fried rice Cheesy sauces Instant noodles containing lots of salt, fat or sugar
PROTEIN	 MEAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean cuts of meat (pork, ham, lamb, beef, venison, veal, rabbit) and remove any visible fat Extra lean minced meat Grilled or roasted meat without using fat, or casserole with vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean bacon Low fat sausages Limit red meat intake to no more than 70 g on average per day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fatty cuts of meat – belly pork, duck, goose; fat from edge of meat Processed meats like streaky bacon, frankfurters, sausages, sausage rolls, salami, parma ham Meat pies
	 POULTRY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chicken and turkey without skin – grilled or roasted without fat, casserole with vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chicken breast in breadcrumbs Pan-fried chicken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poultry with skin Kievs Deep fried chicken Processed chicken nuggets

		HEALTHIEST CHOICES	EAT OCCASIONALLY	BEST TO LIMIT
PROTEIN	 FISH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White fish (e.g. cod, plaice, sole) and oily fish (e.g. salmon, mackerel, herring, fresh tuna) – grilled, baked, steamed, poached or fried in a tiny amount of oil Canned fish in water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canned fish in oil (drain oil) Fish fingers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep fried fish in batter/breadcrumbs Fish in buttery or rich sauces (e.g. Hollandaise, lobster sauce)
	 EGGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eggs – boiled, scrambled or poached without fat; scrambled eggs with skimmed/semi-skimmed milk Baked eggs with vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fried eggs and omelettes cooked in minimal vegetable oil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiche Scotch eggs Egg mayonnaise
	 BEANS, PEAS, LENTILS AND OTHER ALTERNATIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lentils, beans, peas, chickpeas, kidney beans (rinse if canned in salt/sugar) Reduced sugar/salt varieties of baked beans Soya mince, soya beans, tofu Quorn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced fat hummus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep fried falafel
	 NUTS AND SEEDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuts and seeds – especially almonds, walnuts, linseed (flaxseed), pumpkin, sesame, sunflower seeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nut butters (choose varieties lower in sugar and salt) Reduced fat coconut milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coconut, coconut cream, coconut milk Roasted nuts in oil and salt, chocolate coated nuts Nut and seed butters with hydrogenated fat
DRINKS	 DRINKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tap, mineral, soda water Small portions of fruit juice (no added sugar) Tea/coffee with low fat milk Low fat milk Sugar-free drinks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sugar free squash Diet fizzy drinks Sugar free hot chocolate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit squash Fizzy drinks with added sugar Drinks made with whole milk and cream Milkshakes Hot chocolate
FLAVOURINGS	 FLAVOURINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pepper, herbs, spices, lemon juice, garlic, etc. Pickles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced salt soya sauce Reduced salt flavouring (e.g. reduced salt stock, ketchup) Chutney made without oil Small amount of chili sauce or low sugar/salt tomato ketchup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salt (regular, sea and rock salt) Soy sauce Oily pickles Seasonings/flavour enhancers with added salt/sodium e.g. monosodium glutamate
DAIRY & ALTERNATIVES	 MILK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skimmed, 1% fat or semi-skimmed milk Soya/nut/rice/coconut based drinks (with added calcium and vitamins) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full fat milk Flavoured milk with added sugar Malted milk
	 CHEESE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower fat cheese e.g. cottage, quark, ricotta, fromage frais and 'extra light' soft cheese spreads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium fat cheese e.g. half fat cheddar, 'reduced fat' cheese, paneer, 'light' soft cheese spreads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High fat cheese e.g. cheddar, mascarpone, Red Leicester, Stilton, Gruyere, Parmesan Soft cheeses such as Brie, Camembert and cream cheese Fried paneer

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		HEALTHIEST CHOICES	EAT OCCASIONALLY	BEST TO LIMIT
DAIRY & ALTERNATIVES	 YOGURTS AND CREAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-fat and low-sugar yogurts Yogurts and yogurt drinks with plant stanols*/sterols (for people with high cholesterol) Dairy alternatives e.g. soya/nut/rice/coconut yogurts Low fat Greek yogurt Unsweetened kefir 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower fat cream products Half fat crème fraîche 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creamy yogurts; Greek yogurt Clotted, double, whipping, soured, single cream Crème fraîche
	 FATS, SPREADS AND OILS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower, unsaturated fat spreads Spreads with plant stanols*/sterols (for people with high cholesterol) Unsaturated vegetable oils e.g. olive, sunflower, rapeseed, (most vegetable oil is made from rapeseed oil), soya, corn – use as little as possible (measure, don't pour) or use a spray oil 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Butter, lard, suet, dripping, ghee, hard margarines, spreads with hydrogenated fat (check the label) Palm oil, coconut oil Oils which have been reheated several times
FATTY AND SUGARY FOODS	 SALAD DRESSINGS AND GRAVIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low fat salad dressings Gravies and sauces thickened with flour Tomato/vegetable-based sauces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower fat salad creams and mayonnaise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salad creams, mayonnaise Sauces made with butter or cream Gravies made with fat from cooking meat/poultry
	 BISCUITS, CAKES, CONFECTIONARY, PASTRIES AND DESSERTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit salads, sorbet Sugar-free jelly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plain biscuits (e.g. rich tea, malted milk biscuits), tea cakes, crumpets, malt bread; fruit buns Fruit-based puddings Frozen yogurt Meringue (without cream) Jam; fruit preserves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cakes, biscuits, pastries, pies, doughnuts, cheesecake Chocolate, fudge, toffees Dairy ice cream or ice cream made with cream
	 SAVOURY SNACKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wholemeal breadsticks Plain popcorn Tomato-based sauces and dips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced fat crisps Reduced fat hummus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crisps Cheese snacks Bombay mix

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TOP TIPS FOR REDUCING CHOLESTEROL

You can stay on top of your cholesterol and keep a balance while still enjoying life. Making switches is a simple way to do this without having to make big changes to your diet or lifestyle.



Try new things in your everyday diet. Can you introduce more cholesterol-lowering foods? Eating Benecol foods with plant stanols as part of a healthy diet can lower LDL cholesterol more than healthy eating alone.

Get to know which foods are high in saturated fat – and choose them less often. Saturated fat is found in high-fat dairy foods (such as cream, whole milk, hard cheese, butter), in fatty cuts of meat and in cakes and pastries. Eating these foods a little less often, and making switches – like swapping out butter for a Benecol spread – are changes you can make that will add up.

Quick guide: **the average man** aged 19–64 years should eat no more than 30 g of saturated fat a day

the average woman aged 19–64 years should eat no more than 20 g of saturated fat a day

Get wise to hidden saturated fats. Saturated fats may also be ‘hidden’ in some convenience foods, so by checking nutrition labels on food packaging you can choose products that are lower in saturated fat. Small changes like this can all help you limit your saturated fat intake.



Switch to unsaturated ('good') fat. Unsaturated fat is better for your heart health and is found in a wide range of tasty and versatile foods. These include nuts, seeds and vegetable oils (e.g. olive, rapeseed, sunflower) and spreads made from these. This means you can keep your heart happy with a variety of ingredients to choose from.

Choose healthier cooking methods. Grilling, steaming, boiling and baking use less fat than frying, so you can cook up a storm with some of your favourite foods while cutting back on saturated fats. You can also cook and bake with some Benecol spreads rather than butter.



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Eat more fruit and vegetables. Aim to eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day. This will provide you with fibre and a range of vitamins and minerals, while also keeping your plate varied and colourful. Some fruit and veg also contain soluble fibre which can help lower cholesterol.

Go for fibre. Eating plenty of fibre is good for your heart, and some high-fibre foods can help lower cholesterol. Opt for 30 g of fibre a day, starting with wholemeal/wholegrain/whole wheat varieties of bread, rice and pasta whenever possible. Foods that contain soluble fibre are especially good for cholesterol – these include oats, beans, peas, lentils and chickpeas.

Stay physically active. Exercise is known for being one of the most important factors in maintaining a good quality of life, helping to maintain our overall health and wellbeing. Regular exercise helps boost 'good' cholesterol while reducing LDL (bad cholesterol) and can also lower blood pressure.



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BENECOL® PRODUCTS CONTAIN PLANT STANOLS – PROVEN TO LOWER CHOLESTEROL

A daily intake of 1.5-3.0g plant stanols lowers cholesterol **in 2-3 weeks***

To get the right amount of plant stanols,
you can choose one of the following options:

One Benecol®
yogurt drink



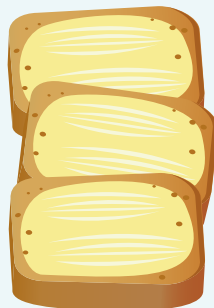
or

One Benecol®
yogurt



or

Benecol®
spreads
(30g or 6 tsp)



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Benecol®
PROVEN TO LOWER
CHOLESTEROL



DAIRY ALTERNATIVE OVERNIGHT BLUEBERRY & YOGURT OATS

(2 g plant stanols per serving)



DAIRY ALTERNATIVE OVERNIGHT BLUEBERRY & YOGURT OATS

(2 g plant stanols per serving)

INGREDIENTS - Serves 1

- ☐ 40 g (heaped 1/2 cup) jumbo oats
- ☐ 1 Benecol® blueberry yogurt drink
- ☐ 70 ml skimmed or low-fat milk
- ☐ 1/2 chopped banana
- ☐ Handful of fresh or frozen berries
- ☐ Cinnamon - optional

METHOD

Pour your oats into a bowl along with the Benecol blueberry yogurt drink and milk. Cover with a plate or place in a food container and leave overnight. The next day, top with your choice of fruit, for example, banana slices and blueberries.

Enjoy!



PREPARATION TIME
5 MIN



COOKING TIME
0 MIN

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AVOCADO TOAST WITH SCRAMBLED EGGS

(2 g plant stanols per serving)



AVOCADO TOAST WITH SCRAMBLED EGGS

(2 g plant stanols per serving)

INGREDIENTS - Serves 1

- ☐ 1-2 slices of wholemeal bread
- ☐ 2 eggs
- ☐ 30 g Benecol® buttery taste spread
- ☐ Spray olive oil
- ☐ Handful of spinach
- ☐ 1 chopped salad tomato
- ☐ 2 chopped mushrooms
- ☐ 1/2 medium avocado
- ☐ A pinch of pepper

METHOD

Pop your bread in the toaster and crack your eggs into a pan. Whisk your eggs over a medium heat, adding 5 g of Benecol buttery spread to the pan as the eggs start to thicken. Whilst your eggs are cooking, heat some olive oil in a pan and once hot, throw in your tomatoes and mushrooms; season with a good grind of pepper. Add your spinach towards the end of cooking to wilt. When your toast is done spread 25 g of Benecol buttery spread and scoop out your avocado flesh before 'smashing' it onto the toast using a fork. To serve, pop your avocado toast on a plate, with your buttery scrambled eggs on top and serve the vegetables on the side. Season with extra pepper.



PREPARATION TIME
10 MIN



COOKING TIME
10 MIN

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AUBERGINE PARCELS

(1.75 g plant stanols per serving)



AUBERGINE PARCELS

(1.75 g plant stanols per serving)

For the aubergine:

INGREDIENTS - Serves 2

- ☐ 25 g Benecol® olive spread
- ☐ 1 large aubergine sliced thinly along its length

For the filling:

- ☐ 25 g Benecol buttery taste spread
- ☐ 1 small onion, chopped
- ☐ 75 g fresh breadcrumbs
- ☐ 25 g pine nuts
- ☐ 6 sage leaves, chopped
- ☐ Finely grated zest and juice half a lemon
- ☐ 3 medium vine tomatoes sliced thinly
- ☐ 15 g Parmesan cheese, finely grated for topping

METHOD

Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 6/200°C/fan oven 180°C. Brush the melted Benecol olive spread over the aubergine slices on both sides. Heat a griddle pan or frying pan until hot and add the slices (you may have to do this in batches), cooking for 1-2 minutes turning once until golden and softened. Remove from the pan and set aside whilst you make the filling. Melt the Benecol buttery taste spread in a small pan and add the onion. Cook for 5 minutes until softened. Remove from the heat and stir in the remaining ingredients (except the tomatoes and parmesan) with a little salt and pepper. Spread the filling over the aubergine slices, fold up and place snugly in an ovenproof dish. Top with tomato slices and sprinkle over the cheese. Bake for 15 minutes until golden and the filling is hot.

Serve with salad or vegetables.



PREPARATION TIME
15 MIN



COOKING TIME
30 MIN

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LEMON CRUSTED SALMON

(1.4 g plant stanols per serving)



LEMON CRUSTED SALMON

(1.4 g plant stanols per serving)

INGREDIENTS - Serves 3

- ☐ 500 g new potatoes, halved if large
- ☐ 30 g Benecol® olive spread

For the crust:

- ☐ 30 g fresh breadcrumbs
- ☐ 30 g rolled oats
- ☐ 10 g anchovies drained and chopped
- ☐ 15 g capers drained and chopped
- ☐ 1 lemon finely grated zest
- ☐ 2 tbsp snipped chives
- ☐ 25 g pine nuts
- ☐ 30 g Benecol olive spread
- ☐ 3 x 130 g salmon fillet pieces

*Steamed asparagus
or peas to serve*

Lemon wedges to serve

METHOD

Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 6/ 200°C/fan oven 180°C. Place the potatoes in a roasting tin and dot with the Benecol olive spread. Roast for 30 minutes, shaking the pan occasionally. Mix together the breadcrumbs, oats, anchovies, capers, lemon zest, chives and pine nuts. Add the Benecol olive spread and mix to a rough paste. Place the salmon pieces on a non-stick baking tray and top with the breadcrumb mixture. Bake in the oven for 15–20 minutes. Serve the salmon with the potatoes, some asparagus or peas and lemon wedges for squeezing over.



PREPARATION TIME
15 MIN



COOKING TIME
50 MIN

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FOOD DIARY



Keeping a food diary will help you be aware of your own eating patterns and spot opportunities for positive changes to your diet. Use the diary below to write down everything you eat and drink over 3–4 days (try to include 2 week days and 1 weekend). You can use this with your healthcare professional or individually to reflect and commit to some healthy improvements.

Date	Time	What I ate/drank (e.g. brown bread with peanut butter and banana)	How much (e.g. 2 slices, 1 tsp, whole fruit)

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Date	Time	What I ate/drunk (e.g. brown bread with peanut butter and banana)	How much (e.g. 2 slices, 1 tsp, whole fruit)

Reflection, comments, goals/commitments:



To download this booklet on your device,
open your camera on this QR code.

For more information and advice, visit Benecol® online.

Ireland: www.Benecol.ie



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