

A Guide to Managing your Weight



Grúpa Ospidéal
Oirthear na hÉireann



A guide to managing your weight

Achieving a modest amount of weight loss and becoming more physically active can positively impact on your general health. We know it is not easy to lose weight and that it is even more of a challenge to maintain a healthy weight. However, the benefits of losing even modest amounts of weight will positively impact on overall health, no matter what your starting weight or level of activity.

That's where this guide will assist and why I am delighted to be associated with it in my capacity as HSE Clinical Lead for Obesity. It is a step by step guide to help individuals achieve and maintain a healthier weight. It covers all the areas that need to be addressed across healthy eating, physical activity, motivation and self-monitoring. To begin any journey you must take the first step.



Donal O'Shea

Professor Donal O'Shea,
HSE Clinical Lead for Obesity

Introduction

If you are reading this, you are probably thinking about managing your weight. Sometimes it is hard to know where to start - this booklet can help! Gaining control of your weight can help you feel good and improve your health.

This booklet is...

....about looking at your life and gradually making changes that will improve your health.

This booklet is not...

.... about miracle diets. Miracle or fad diets are difficult to keep to in the long-term. Weight gain can happen over months and years so don't expect it all to be lost overnight!

This booklet will...

....help you find two or three things you can do differently every day - and stick to them. Once you're comfortable with those changes, you'll have the confidence to make more changes.



Sleep and your weight

Getting enough sleep at night can be just as important for your weight as diet and exercise.

When you are tired, you are more likely to reach for high calorie foods and drinks such as energy drinks, coffees, chocolates, confectionery, etc. When you stay up late, this gives you more time to snack.

Shift workers should try to maintain a healthy eating pattern without long gaps between meals. Packing healthy meals and snacks may help to avoid 'quick fix' unhealthy choices.

Here are some tips to improve sleep:

Try to: 	Avoid: 
Go to bed and get up at the same time each day.	Daytime naps.
Spend time outdoors during daylight hours.	Caffeine for at least five hours before bedtime (e.g. coffee, tea, cola or cocoa) as it interferes with getting to sleep and staying asleep.
Wind down before bedtime, with an hour of quiet activity e.g. reading or a warm bath.	A heavy meal or exercise too close to bedtime.
Put the day to rest. If necessary write a list of what is on your mind.	Smoking and alcohol near bedtime - they can cause awakenings later in the night.

8 HOURS SLEEP MAKE THE OTHER 16 EASIER

Getting a good night's sleep as often as you can
is proven to have a positive impact on your mental health.



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Planning ahead

Many things in life tend to go more smoothly when you take time to plan ahead.

When making lifestyle changes, the more organised you are, the easier it is to succeed. Otherwise, you are more likely to slip back into old habits - just because it requires less effort.







When you have healthy meals and snacks planned and prepared ahead of time, you are more likely to stick with them. For example:

- ✔ Have plenty of fruit and healthy snacks in the house to choose from.
- ✔ Do not buy large quantities of unhealthy foods that may tempt you e.g. multipacks of crisps.
- ✔ Bring lunch to work.
- ✔ Prepare vegetables for dinner earlier in the day or the previous day if you don't have time in the evenings to do so.
- ✔ Make extra dinner and use for lunch the next day.
- ✔ Bring a list with you to the shop and stick to it.
- ✔ Avoid food shopping when you're hungry.



Drinks

Sugary drinks are high in calories which can result in weight gain. These include fizzy drinks, sports drinks, squashes, cordials and juice drinks.

Fizzy Drinks		
Drink/Description	Grams of sugar per 200ml serving	Equivalent cubes of sugar
Club Orange	26g	5 
Fanta Orange	24.8g	5 
7UP	22.4g	4 
Coca Cola	21.2g	4 
Pepsi	21.2g	4 
Lucozade	17.4g	4 
Sprite	13.2g	3 

Information courtesy of safefood.eu

Re-think your drink

Avoiding sugary drinks can help you to manage your weight. Drink water or sugar free flavoured water as an alternative. Aim to have 8 glasses of water per day. Keeping well-hydrated can also help to reduce appetite as you can sometimes think you are hungry when you are actually thirsty.



Alcohol

Alcoholic drinks are also very high in calories. Choose lower calorie options when you are out:

- ✓ Light beer or cider over regular versions.
- ✓ Choose bottles instead of pints so you drink less.
- ✓ Have diet mixers with spirits, or make spritzers or shandies using diet lemonade.
- ✓ Drink water or diet drinks in between alcoholic drinks.

Pint of beer/ale/stout	210 cal	.....	1 packet of crisps
Quarter bottle of wine	138 cal	.....	1/2 bar of chocolate
Pub measure of spirit	60 cal	.....	1 custard cream
1 pint of cider	230 cal	.....	1 slice of fruit cake
1 bottle of alcopop (275ml)	190 cal	.....	1 ring doughnut

If you are drinking alcohol frequently it could be worth considering cutting down to lose weight.

askaboutalcohol.ie

Snacking

Think about your snacks:

- ? Why are you snacking - hunger or boredom? (Do you really need it?)
- ? What are you snacking on - healthy foods or treat foods?
- ? What size snacks are you having - can you have smaller snacks?
- ? Sometimes mood can affect what you snack on. If you find your mood is impacting on what you are eating go to www.yourmentalhealth.ie for help.

The table below has some snack suggestions.

Choose these more often	Choose these less often
1 portion of fruit	1 funsize or treatsize bar
1 low fat yoghurt	1 low fat/light crisps
2 crackers/oatcakes/rice cakes with low fat cheese triangle	3 squares of chocolate
1 handful of nuts and seeds	1 ice cream scoop or one ice-pop
1 small glass of smoothie	6 jelly sweets
4 breadsticks	2 chocolate sweets
Carrot sticks and 1 dessertspoon of hummus	4 marshmallows
1 small bag of popcorn	1 low calorie instant drinking chocolate
1 homemade vegetable soup	
1 small skinny latte or cappuccino	

BOOST YOUR MOOD WITH HEALTHY FOOD

Eating a healthy, balanced diet is proven to have a positive impact on your mental health.



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Portion Sizes

It is easy to overestimate the amount of food you need at meals. Below is a guide to portion sizes to help you have the right amount.

Protein

MEAT/FISH

1 portion =
your palm size



PEAS, BEANS & LENTILS

1 portion =
3/4 to 1 cup (cooked) or 6 dessertspoons



EGGS

1 portion =
2 eggs



Fats

Oil/Butter

1 portion =
1 level teaspoon



Images with thanks to safefood.eu

Carbohydrates

RICE/PASTA

1 portion =
1 disposable cup of cooked pasta/rice



PORRIDGE

1 portion =
1/3 of a cup of uncooked oats



CEREAL FLAKES

1 portion =
1 + 1/2 cups cereal



BREAD

1 portion =
2 slices of regular bread



POTATO

1 portion =
2 small or one medium



Dairy

CHEESE

1 portion =
1 matchbox sized piece



YOGHURT

1 portion =
1 small pot



MILK

1 portion =
a 200ml glass



Meal Plan

Breakfast options (choose 1)

Porridge made with low fat milk or water

2 Weetabix or Shredded Wheat with low fat milk

2 slices of brown/wholemeal bread and low fat spread with boiled/scrambled/poached eggs

Mid-morning snack (see snacks below)

Lunch options (choose 1)

Sandwich on 2 slices of brown/wholemeal bread with low fat spread or mayonnaise and meat/chicken/fish/cheese with lots of salad

1 large wholemeal pitta bread or tortilla wrap with low fat spread or mayonnaise with meat/chicken/fish/cheese/hummus and lots of salad

Homemade vegetable soup and 2 slices of brown/wholemeal bread

1 baked potato with grated low fat cheese and tuna

Mid-afternoon snack (see snacks below)

Dinner options (choose 1)

Spaghetti bolognese and salad

Roast chicken and vegetables with boiled baby potatoes

Oven baked salmon with basmati rice and vegetables or salad

Baked cod with oven baked sweet potatoes and peas

Stir fried chicken and vegetables with garlic, ginger and soya sauce with noodles or rice

Night-time snack (see snacks below)

Snack options

A portion of fruit	1 handful of nuts	3 cracker bread and boiled egg
2 wholegrain crackers and tinned fish in brine/tomato sauce	1 dessertspoon of hummus with raw vegetables e.g. carrot sticks	1 small slice of bread with slice of ham/chicken/turkey
1 regular size diet or low fat yoghurt	2 wholegrain crackers with low fat cheese and tomato	2 oatcakes with peanut butter
1 apple and 1 teaspoon of almond butter	1 bowl of homemade vegetable soup	

Tips for eating out

You can still enjoy a nice meal out when watching your weight. Here are a few ideas to help you stay on track:

- ✓ Don't arrive too hungry - have a small healthy snack a few hours beforehand.
- ✓ Ask for dishes to be altered to suit you. Ask for sauce on the side, vegetables to be cooked without butter, salad or potatoes instead of chips.
- ✓ Avoid filling up on bread, poppadoms, prawn crackers, etc.
- ✓ Watch out for the fats:
 - ✓ choose fish, chicken or vegetables instead of fatty meat dishes.
 - ✓ avoid creamy sauces and have tomato-based instead.
 - ✓ choose baked or boiled potatoes instead of chips.
 - ✓ choose boiled rice instead of fried.
- ✓ Do not overfill. You don't have to clear your plate, stop when you are beginning to feel full.
- ✓ Share desserts and choose fruit based more often.



Physical Activity

Any physical activity is better than none! Aim to gradually increase to at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity 5 days per week. Moderate intensity activity means the heart is beating faster than normal and breathing is harder than normal. Set realistic activity goals and keep a record of your activity each day.

What is your current level of activity?

Level	Where am I now?	What could I try?
Level 1	I cannot walk for 10 minutes without shortness of breath or feeling pain.	Start with the Getting Started section in this book to help you build up slowly. Do 6-12 repetitions of each Level 1 exercise as well as 5-10 minutes walking daily.
Level 2	I can walk for 10 minutes without shortness of breath or pain.	Try doing 6-12 repetitions of each Level 2 exercise in this booklet every day. Gradually progress to walking for 15-20 minutes daily.
Level 3	I can walk for 15 minutes without shortness of breath or pain.	All of the exercises in this booklet will help you. Do 15-30 repetitions of each exercise daily. Build up to walking for 30 minutes daily.
Active	I can walk a mile (1.6km) in 15 minutes without shortness of breath or pain.	All of the exercises in this booklet will help you. Do 15-30 repetitions of each exercise daily. Aim to walk for 30-60 minutes 5 days per week.



Getting started

Check with your GP if you have any concerns about starting physical activity due to a medical condition, or if you have symptoms such as chest pain, dizziness, or joint pain.

- ✓ Start slowly and build up your activity level gradually.
- ✓ You don't need to be sporty or join a gym. Try to be more active at home and work every day e.g. walking up stairs instead of using lifts, cycle/walk to work.
- ✓ Don't let bad weather stop you, try different indoor activities instead or get outdoor gear.
- ✓ Pick an activity you enjoy. Ask a friend to join you or go alone for "me-time".
- ✓ Play active games with your children - ball games, hide and seek, tag.
- ✓ Make a habit of it by setting aside regular time during your day for exercise. Set a reminder on your phone or leave exercise shoes by the door so you don't forget.
- ✓ Remember you can count all activities that last for at least 10 minutes. Don't worry if you can't do 10 minutes, start with whatever you feel comfortable with and build up.

Pedometers/Activity Trackers

Wearing a pedometer can help you track how your physical activity is going. Recording your average steps for a week can help you set small targets for yourself. Your goal might be to become more consistent or to slowly build your daily steps.

See the Step Ladder on pages 21-24 for recommended daily steps for improving your activity level within specific weight categories.

Level 1 Exercises

You can do these exercises while sitting in a chair. It's a great place to start if you haven't been active in a while. Take a minute break between repetitions of these exercises. As well as these exercises, building in aerobic exercise like walking, cycling or swimming can work well, e.g. start with a 5 minute walk and build up at your own pace.

Beginner:

6-12 repetitions of each exercise on this page = 1 set. Start with 1 set

Gradually increase repetitions and sets until you reach the advanced level

Advanced:

15-30 repetitions of each exercise on this page x 3 sets



Kicks

- Raise one leg so your knee is straight.
- Repeat on the other leg.



Boxing

- With your fists at shoulder level, punch across your body out to the side.
- Repeat with the other arm.
- Also punch up towards the ceiling with each arm.

*You can combine the boxing and kicking as you get better so you are doing them at the same time with alternate hands and legs.



Sit to stand

- Sit with your feet on the ground slightly behind your knees.
- Stand up, keeping your back straight. Then slowly lower down to the chair.
- If you are able to get up without using your hands, then cross them over your chest to make the exercise more challenging.



Marching

- Raise one knee up off the chair and swing the opposite arm at the same time.
- Repeat on the opposite side so you are marching.

As you get better at these exercises, you can make them harder by using weights. 500ml water bottles, tins of beans or milk cartons with a handle can be used as light arm weights.

Level 2 Exercises

If you can walk for more than 10 minutes without feeling short of breath, then these exercises are suitable for you. Include some walking every day. Start with 10 minutes a day and gradually build up to 15-20 minutes walking.

Beginner:

6-12 repetitions of each exercise on this page = 1 set. Start with 1 set

Gradually increase repetitions and sets until you reach the advanced level

Advanced:

15-30 repetitions of each exercise on this page x 3 sets



Marching

- Stand tall, holding onto a chair for support if necessary.
- March your legs up and down.
- Try to raise your knees as high as possible.



Mini-squats

- Stand tall, holding the back of a chair for support if necessary.
- Bend your knees and squat as low as is comfortable, then push back up.

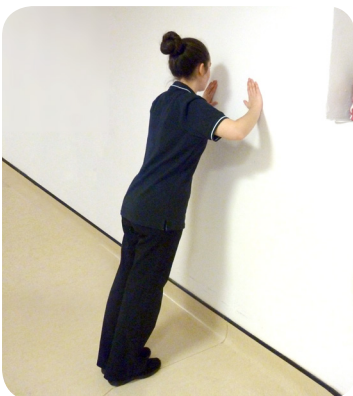


Hip kicks and kick backs

- Slowly raise your leg out to the side and back. Repeat on the other side...



...then slowly kick your leg backwards, keeping the knee straight. Repeat on the other side.



Wall push-ups

- Stand with your feet slightly apart and palms against a wall.
- Bend your arms slowly, leaning in towards the wall. Keep your legs straight.
- Then straighten your arms again.

Getting More Active

You can get more active by:

- ✓ Increasing the number of days you are active.
- ✓ Increasing the time you are active for each day.
- ✓ Including more vigorous activities.

If you are already active for 30 minutes a day or 150 minutes per week, then you should gradually progress to 60 minutes of physical activity per day for greater health benefits.

Remember:

- ✓ Moderate activity means the heart is beating faster than normal and breathing is harder than normal. If you are able to chat with your friend or use your phone while exercising, then you are not exercising hard enough.
- ✓ Vigorous activity means the heart is beating much faster than normal and breathing is much harder than normal.
- ✓ One minute of vigorous activity counts as two minutes of moderate activity.
- ✓ Enter a physical activity event such as a charity walk.
- ✓ Reward yourself for meeting goals with something you enjoy doing. For example, visit friends, take a trip to the park, attend a gig/event or go shopping.

BMI

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a measure of your weight for your height. Your BMI is calculated at GP visits and hospital appointments so ask your health professional. There is also an online calculator:

www.weigh2live.safefood.eu/planandtrack/tools/bmi.asp

The Step Ladder

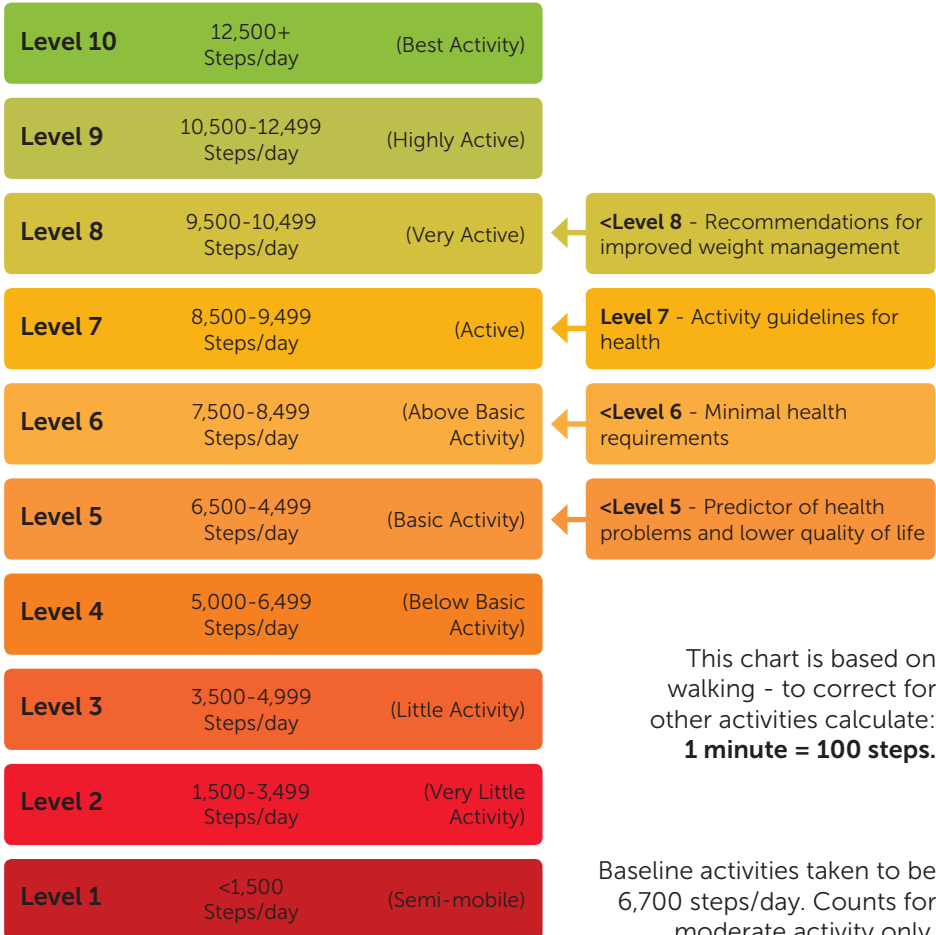
The Step Ladder is a way of tracking the recommended steps per day for your Body Mass Index (BMI). There are 3 different Step Ladders below for different BMI categories:

- BMI 25-30kg/m²
- BMI 30-40kg/m²
- BMI >40kg/m²

The Step Ladder

BMI 25-30kg/m²

1. Pick which Step Ladder to use based on your BMI.
2. Use your pedometer to see what level you are currently on.
3. Aim to gradually increase your steps so that you move up to the next level.



Information courtesy of Loughlinstown Hospital Weight Management Clinic

The Step Ladder

BMI 30-40kg/m²

1. Pick which Step Ladder to use based on your BMI.
2. Use your pedometer to see what level you are currently on.
3. Aim to gradually increase your steps so that you move up to the next level.

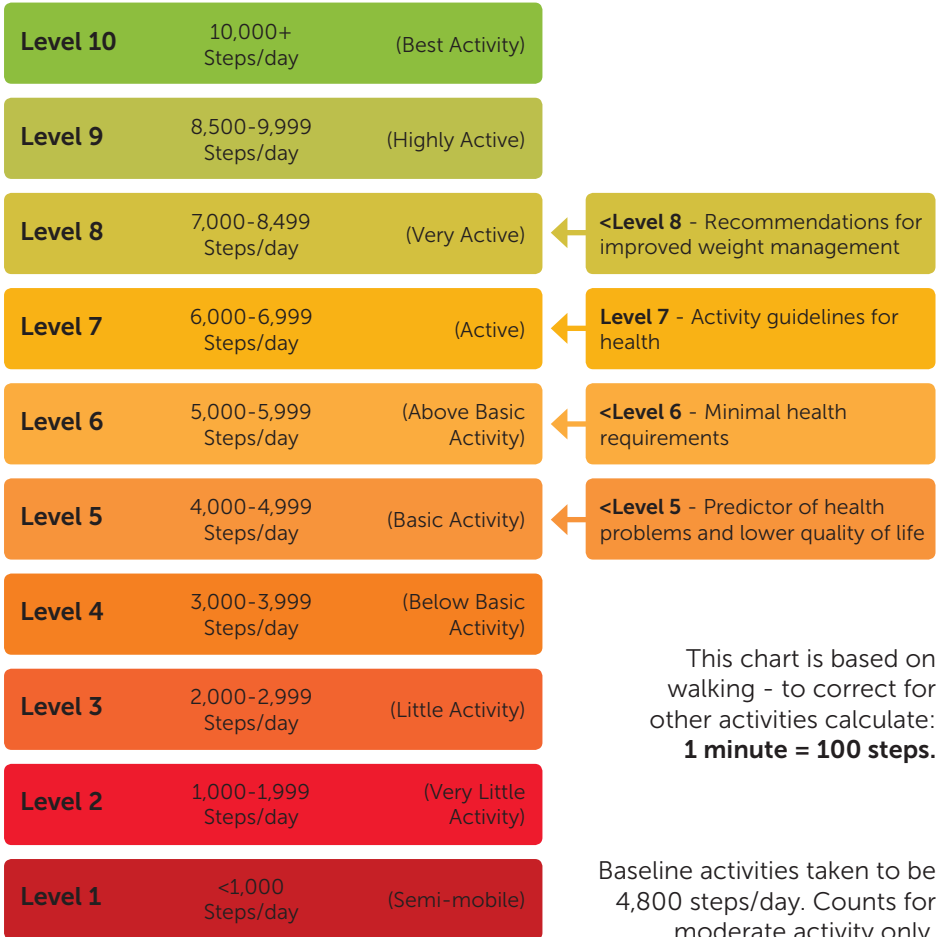


Information courtesy of Loughlinstown Hospital Weight Management Clinic

The Step Ladder

BMI >40kg/m²

1. Pick which Step Ladder to use based on your BMI.
2. Use your pedometer to see what level you are currently on.
3. Aim to gradually increase your steps so that you move up to the next level.



Information courtesy of Loughlinstown Hospital Weight Management Clinic

THE MORE YOU MOVE THE BETTER YOUR MOOD

Getting regular exercise is proven to have a positive impact on your mental health.



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Making Changes

Changing what you do is never easy. To succeed, you will need time to think about and plan what it will involve.

1 Keep track

A diary will really help you keep track of how you eat and the activities that you do. It can help you identify how much you are eating, your activity level and where changes can be made.

Be honest with yourself; look for simple changes which will make a difference.

Time	Food & Drink	Activity	Comments & thoughts
8am	2 Weetabix with low fat milk and a banana		
11am	2 chocolate digestives		Didn't have fruit at home for snack, ended up having biscuits instead. Need to buy some fruit to stay on track
1pm	Wholegrain wrap with chicken, lettuce, tomato and low fat mayo	Walk 20mins	Went for walk with colleague at work, didn't want to go but felt good afterwards.

2 Set goals

Remember that every little change makes a big difference. The starting point for you might be to make changes to your snacks, for example, fruit instead of biscuits.

Your diary will help you keep track of what you've achieved. Having it written down could also help you to stay motivated.

3 Be positive

Remind yourself that you are doing your very best to make changes.

Off days may happen. Don't let them steer you off course. Try to move on from them and keep going.

Remember - little changes make a big difference.

For more information

The following are useful resources for finding out about sporting activities and groups in your locality:

www.getirelandactive.ie (activities and guidelines for increasing physical activity)

www.sportireland.ie/Participation/Local_Sports_Partnerships/LSP_Contact_Finder/

www.safefood.eu (useful recipes and information from Safefood)

www.iscp.ie

www.indi.ie

www.slimmingworld.ie

www.weightwatchers.ie

www.unislim.ie

www.croi.ie

www.yourmentalhealth.ie

www.healthyireland.ie

www.askaboutalcohol.ie

Facebook pages:

Sport Ireland

Get Ireland Active

Phone Apps to download:

Weight-mate

MyFitnessPal

MoveYourMET

Acknowledgement:

This inspirational booklet was developed as a joint initiative by the Physiotherapy and Nutrition & Dietetic Departments of the Regional Hospital Mullingar.

'*A Guide to Managing your Weight*' provides support and tips in achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle and was developed for our patients, staff and families.

On behalf of the Management & Staff of the Regional Hospital Mullingar and Ireland East Hospital Group, I am delighted to support this publication and acknowledge the tremendous efforts of Noeleen Bourke, Senior Physiotherapist and Anne Marie Keogh, Senior Dietitian and their teams.

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We hope this booklet will be used and shared by everyone as we all strive to be a healthier nation in achieving our Healthy Ireland goals.

Shona Schneemann
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