Cleveland Clinic London | thrive 4life

MEN'S HEALTH MATTERS CAMPAIGN

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Protecting Your Heart in High-Pressure Lives



Dr Sanjeev Bhattacharyya MD FRCP

Consultant Cardiologist

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About the Session

As part of the Thrive4Life *Men's Health Matters* campaign, this webinar explored why heart health is such an important part of long-term wellbeing, particularly in busy, high-pressure working lives. Cardiovascular risk can build quietly over time, and symptoms are often ignored, explained away or only acted on once they become more serious.

Dr Sanjeev Bhattacharyya guided attendees through the key risk factors that can affect heart health, including blood pressure, cholesterol, smoking, weight, physical activity, diet, alcohol, stress and sleep. He also explained how understanding personal risk, making sustainable lifestyle changes and having regular health checks can help reduce the likelihood of future cardiovascular problems.



About the Speaker

Dr Sanjeev Bhattacharyya is a Consultant Cardiologist at the Cleveland Clinic London, a leading specialist heart centre known for excellence in cardiovascular care. He is also a Consultant Cardiologist at University College London Hospital and Barts Heart Centre, where he serves as Clinical Lead for Echocardiography.

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Cleveland Clinic London

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Key Objectives

This session focused on two key areas:



Understanding cardiovascular risk factors

Heart disease is influenced by a combination of factors, including age, sex, family history, blood pressure, cholesterol, smoking, weight, physical activity, diet, alcohol, stress and sleep.



Understanding how to reduce risk

Many cardiovascular risk factors can be modified. Small, consistent changes to lifestyle, combined with regular health checks and early medical advice where needed, can make a meaningful difference to long-term heart health.

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Why Symptoms Should Not Be Ignored

The webinar opened with a case study of a 44-year-old man who was active, played squash 3x a week and had no previous medical history. While walking to work, he developed chest pain, felt sweaty, had to stop and called an ambulance.

Further investigations showed that he had experienced a heart attack and required urgent treatment, including a stent.

The key message was clear: being physically active or appearing healthy does not always mean cardiovascular risk is low. Family history, blood pressure, cholesterol, weight and other factors can still contribute to risk.

Chest pain or tightness should always be taken seriously, especially if it comes on suddenly, does not go away, or is accompanied by symptoms such as sweating, feeling sick, light-headedness or shortness of breath.

NHS guidance advises calling 999 in these circumstances, as this could be a sign of a heart attack.





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Understanding Cardiovascular Risk

Cardiovascular risk is not usually caused by one single factor. It is often the result of several risks building over time.

Key risk factors include:



Age and sex:

Risk generally increases with age, and men can often develop cardiovascular disease earlier than women.



Family history:

A family history of heart attack, stroke or cardiovascular disease can increase personal risk.



Blood pressure:

High blood pressure places additional strain on the heart and blood vessels.



Cholesterol and lipid levels:

Raised LDL cholesterol can contribute to plaque build-up in the arteries.



Smoking:

Smoking damages blood vessels and significantly increases cardiovascular risk.



Weight and body composition:

Excess weight, particularly visceral fat around the abdomen, can increase risk.



Lifestyle factors:

Physical inactivity, poor diet, alcohol, stress and poor sleep can all affect long-term heart health.

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Know and Review Your Risk

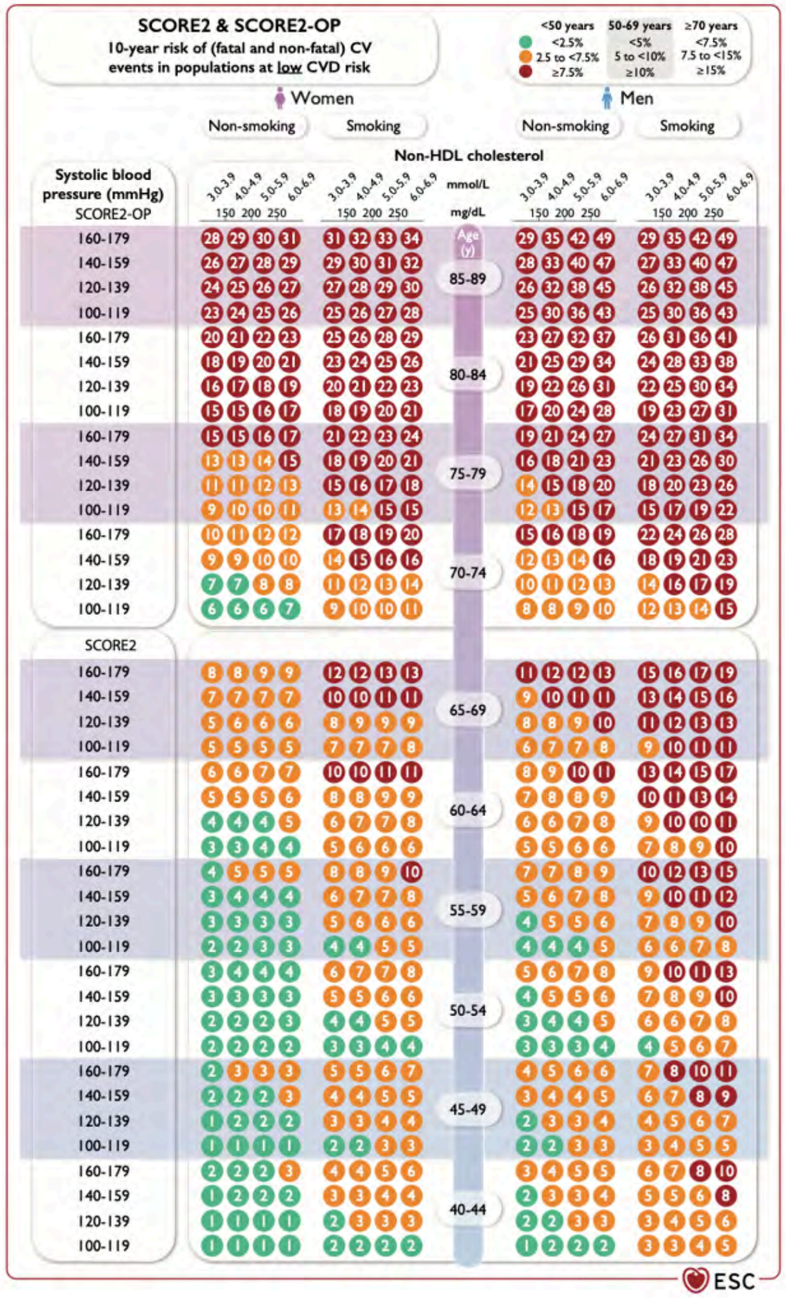
A cardiovascular risk score helps estimate a person's risk of developing cardiovascular disease over the next 10 years.

This may take into account factors such as:

- Age
- Gender
- Blood pressure
- Lipid levels
- Smoking
- Additional: BMI

Regular assessment can help identify risk earlier and support more informed decisions about lifestyle, monitoring or treatment.

You can complete a ESC risk score here:
https://heartscore.escardio.org/Calculate/quickcalculator.aspx?model=low



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Move More for Heart Health

WHO Guidelines: Adults aged 18–64 years

Move More

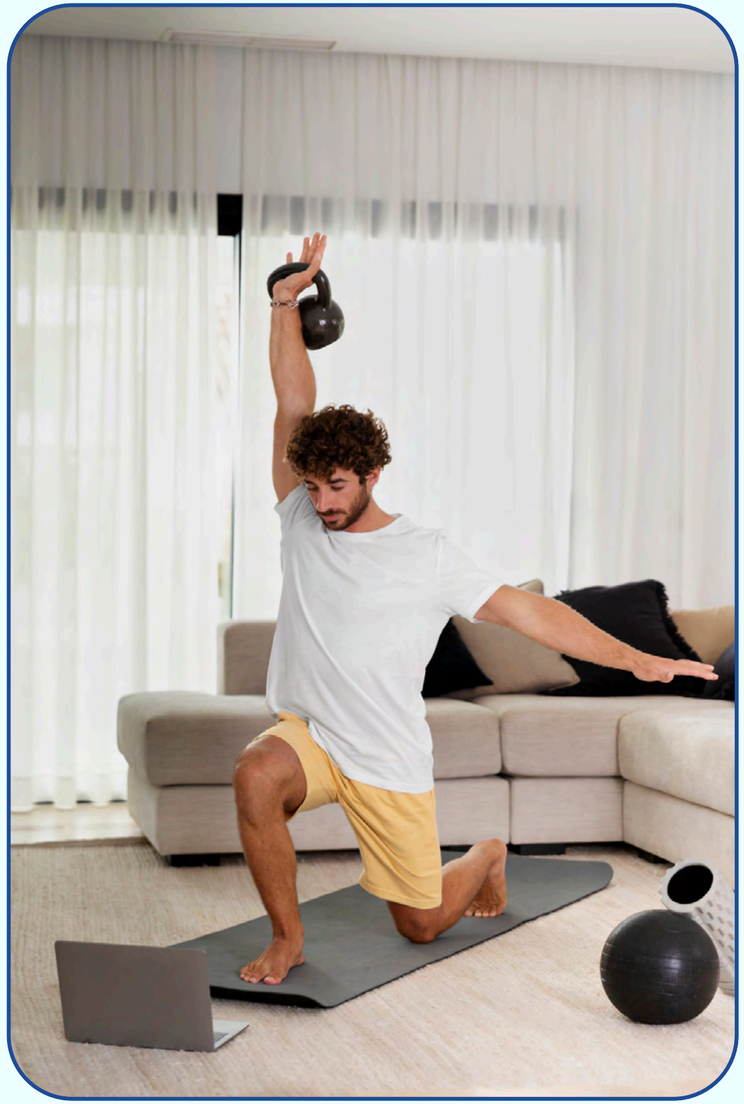
Aim for 150 minutes of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity each week, or a combination of both

Gain More Benefits

Increase moderate-intensity activity to 300 minutes per week for additional health benefits

Build Strength

Perform muscle-strengthening activities involving all major muscle groups on at least 2 days per week



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Sports

Sport and structured exercise can be a valuable part of looking after heart health, but activity does not have to be intense or competitive to make a difference. The aim is to build regular movement into the week in a way that feels enjoyable and sustainable.

Whether through team sports, gym sessions, swimming, cycling, running or brisk walking, regular activity can support cardiovascular fitness, blood pressure, weight management, mood and overall wellbeing.

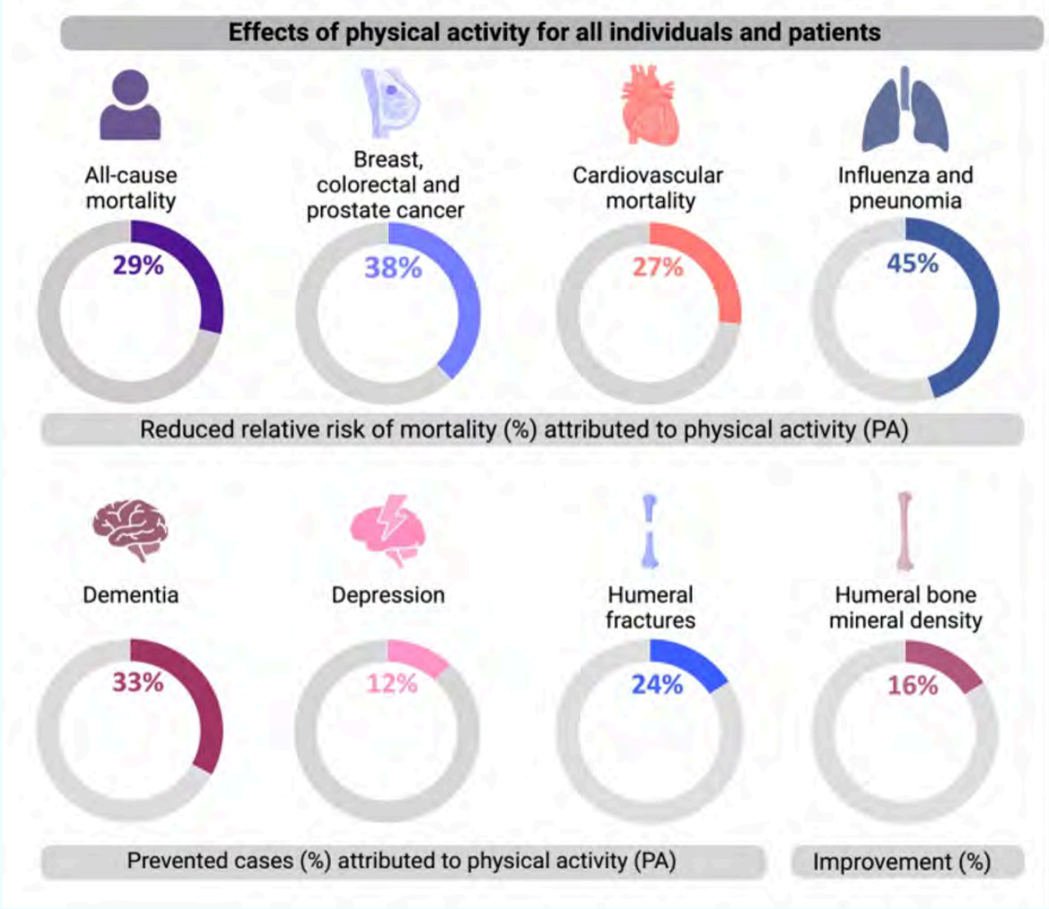
Components and levels of intensity in different sports disciplines

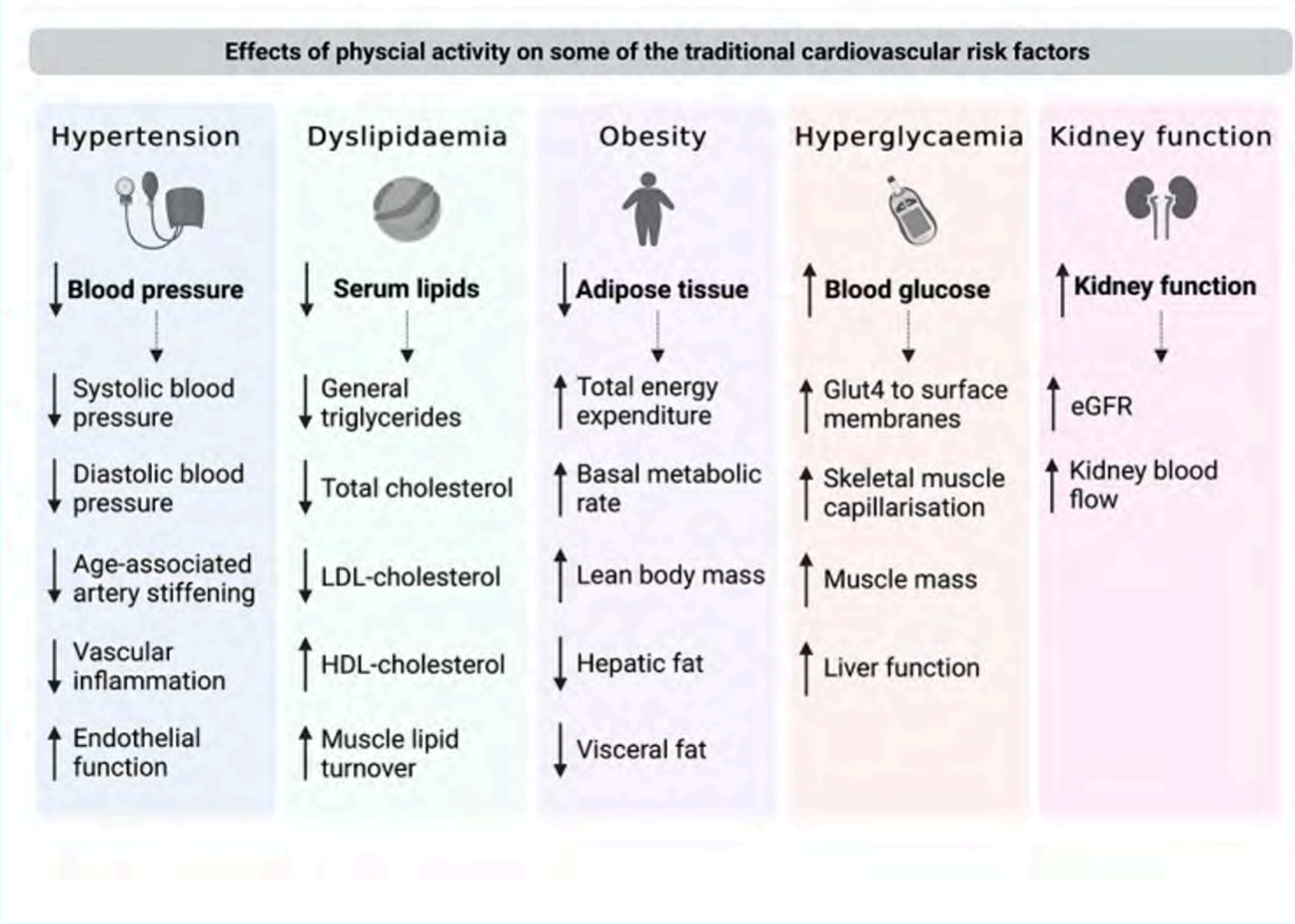
	Low	Medium	High
 Skill	Bowling Curling Gold (buggy) Golf (18 holes walking) Table tennis (single) Table tennis (double) Shooting	Equestrian Yachting	
 Power	Alpine skiing (recreational) Discus (recreational) Shot putting	Alpine skiing Discus Judo/ karate Short distance running Shot putting	Boxing Weight lifting Wresting
 Mixed	Basketball (adapted*) Handball (adapted*) Soccer (adapted*)	Tennis (double) Volleyball	Basketball (competitive) Fencing Handball (competitive) Ice- Hockey Hockey Soccer (competitive) Tennis (single) Rugby Waterpolo
 Endurance	Basketball (adapted*) Handball (adapted*) Soccer (adapted*)	Mid/long distance running Speed walking Style dancing	Biathlon Canoeing Long distance cycling (road) Mid/long distance swimming Long distance skating Pentathlon Rowing Triathlon X-country skiing

*Adapted to the individual's exercise tolerance

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Beneficial Effects of Moderate Exercise





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Choose Heart-Healthy Foods





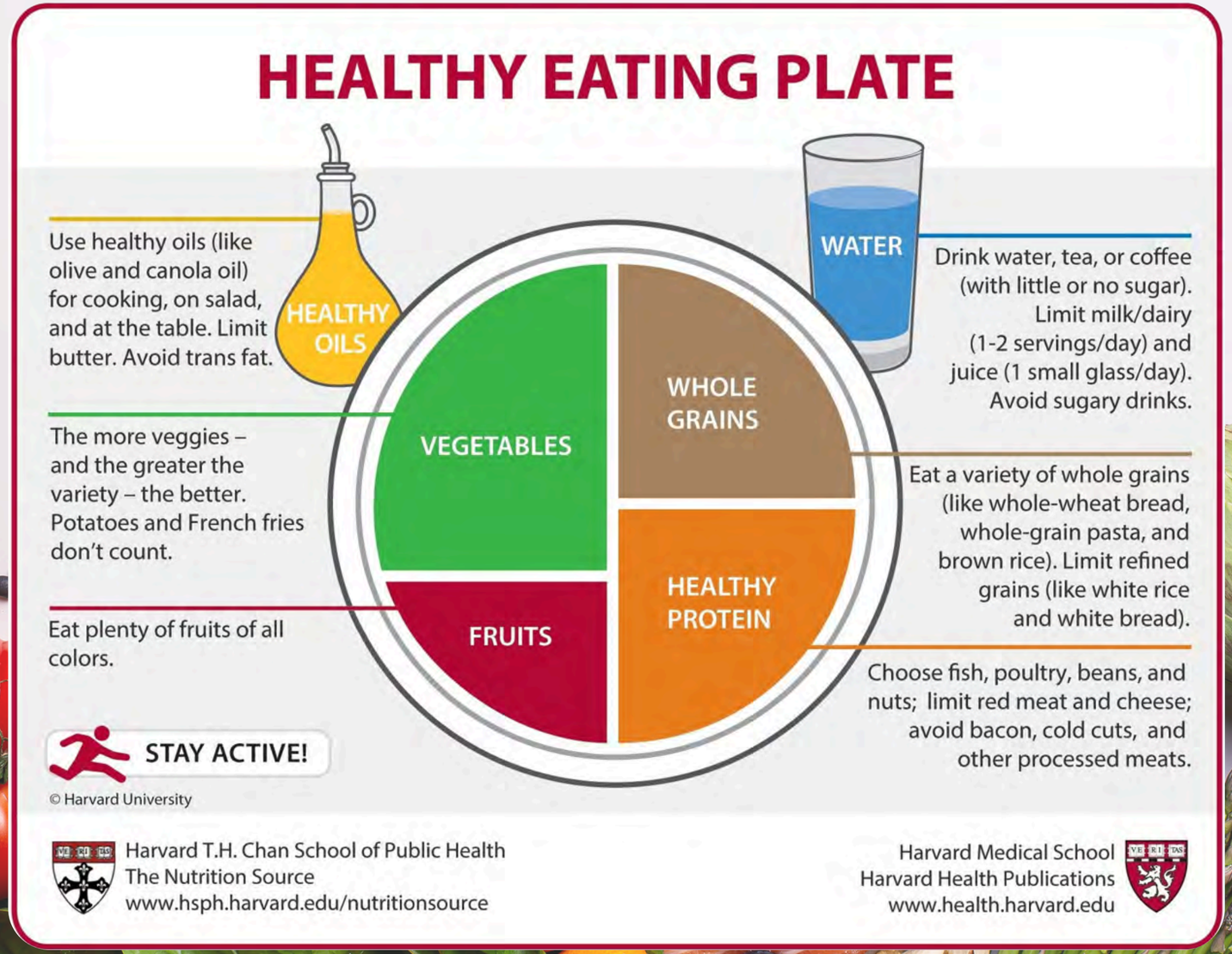






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Diet for a Healthy Heart

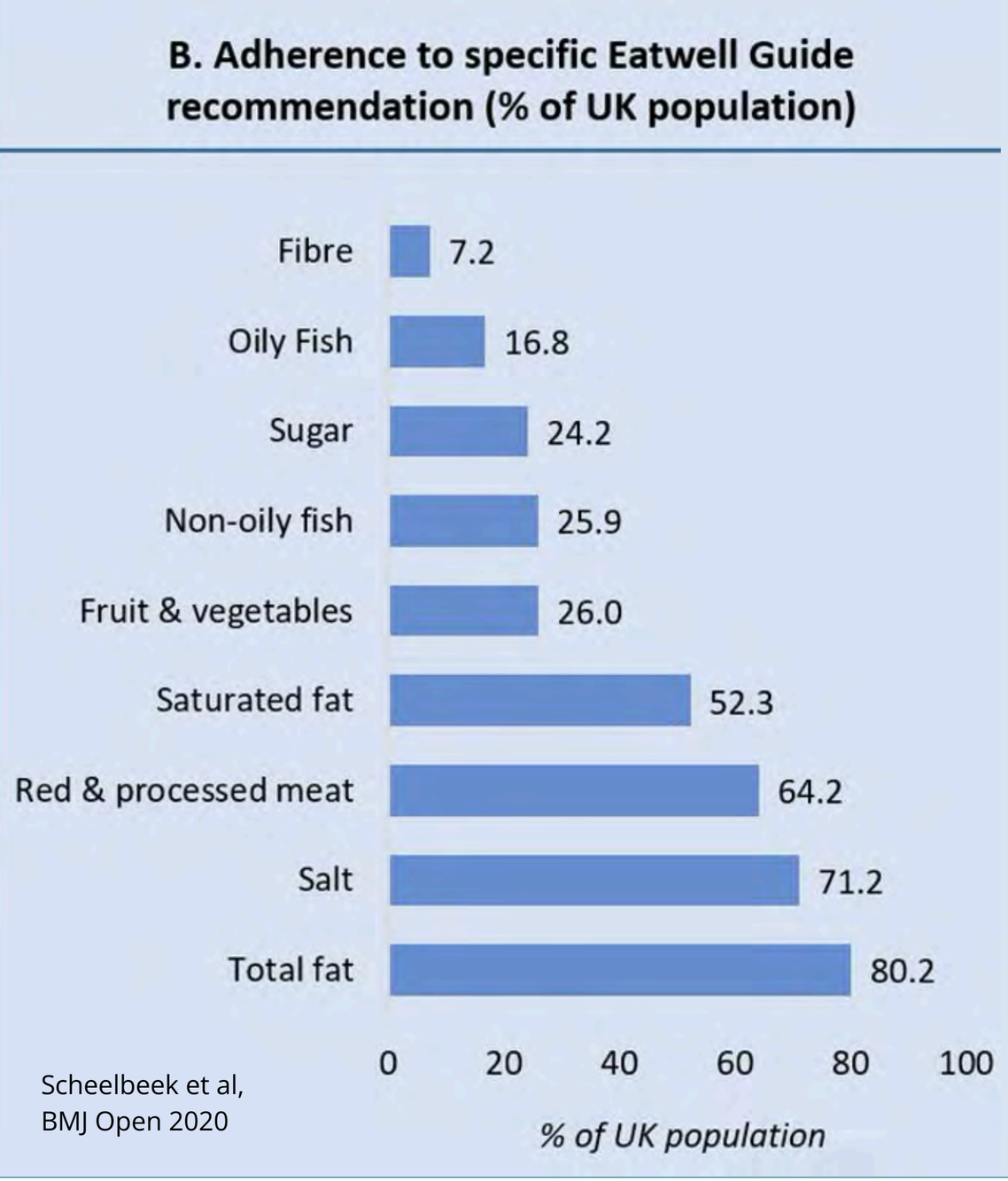


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How Does the UK Population Do?

Research looking at adherence to the UK Eatwell Guide found that only a small proportion of the population met recommendations for fibre, oily fish, fruit and vegetables, and sugar intake.

This matters because these areas are closely linked to heart health. Fibre-rich foods, fruit and vegetables, oily fish and lower sugar intake can all support healthier cholesterol levels, blood pressure, weight management and long-term cardiovascular health.



Scheelbeek et al, BMJ Open 2020

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Alcohol and Heart Health

Studies have found that drinking more than around 100g of alcohol per week is associated with increased risk of several cardiovascular conditions, so being aware of intake and reducing regular consumption can help support long-term heart health.





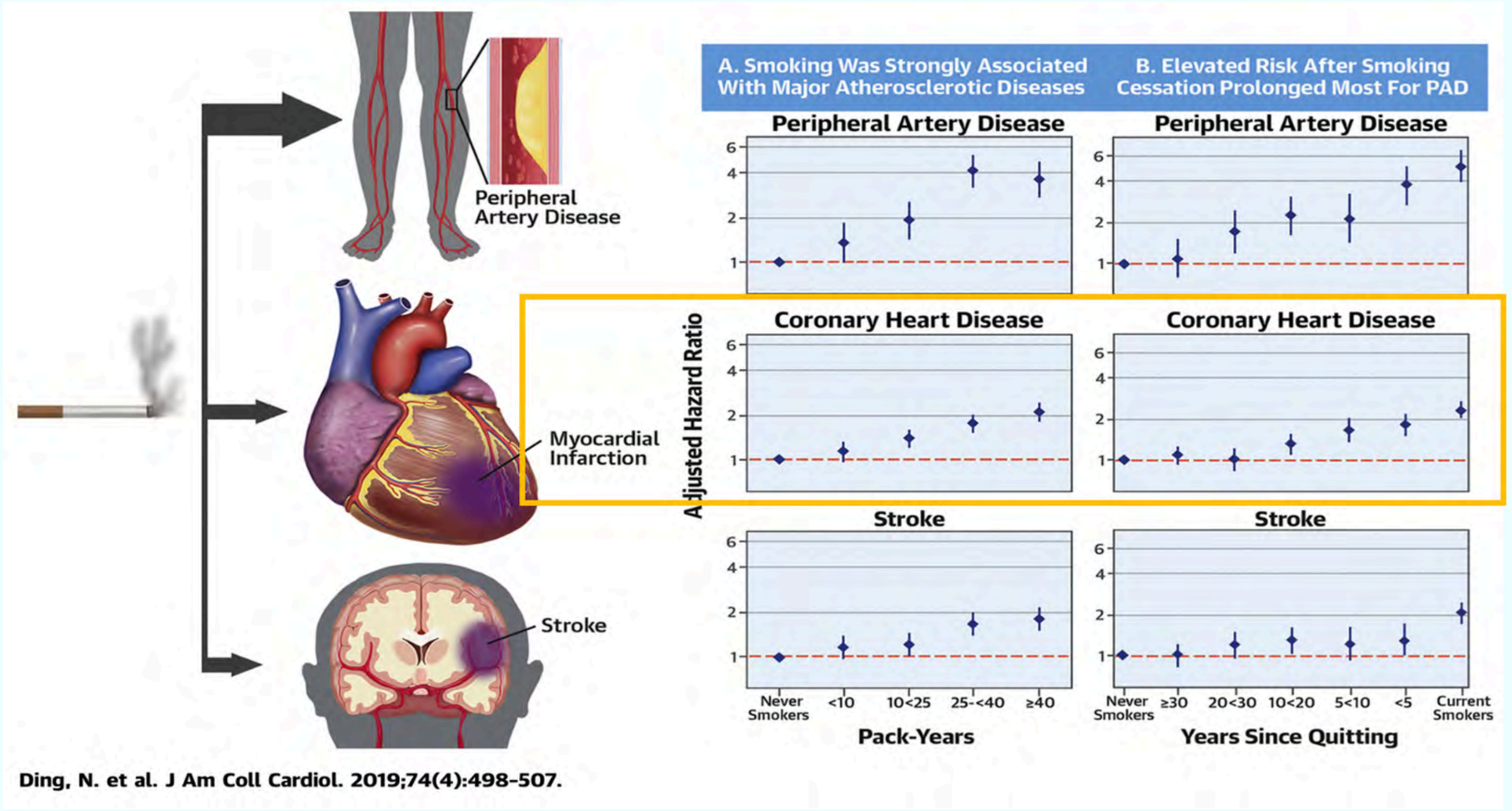
! NHS guidance recommends drinking no more than 14 units per week for both men and women, spread across three or more days, with alcohol-free days where possible.

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Smoking and Heart Health

Smoking is one of the most significant modifiable risk factors for cardiovascular disease. It can damage the blood vessels, reduce oxygen delivery around the body and increase the risk of plaque build-up and blood clots.

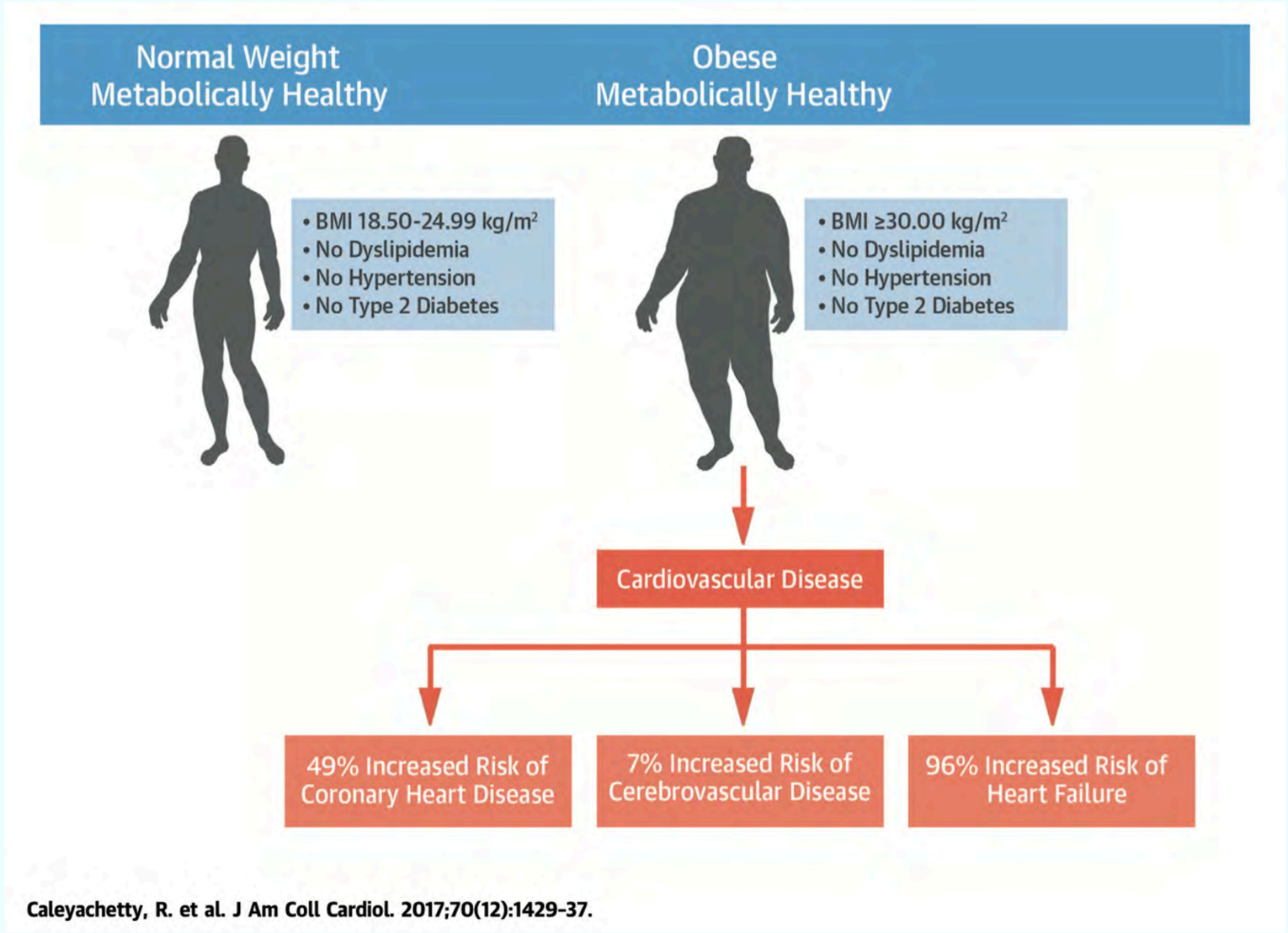
Stopping smoking can bring important benefits for heart health over time. Support is available, and speaking to a GP, pharmacist or stop-smoking service can be a helpful first step.



Ding, N. et al. J Am Coll Cardiol. 2019;74(4):498-507.

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Obesity



Caleyachetty, R. et al. J Am Coll Cardiol. 2017;70(12):1429-37.

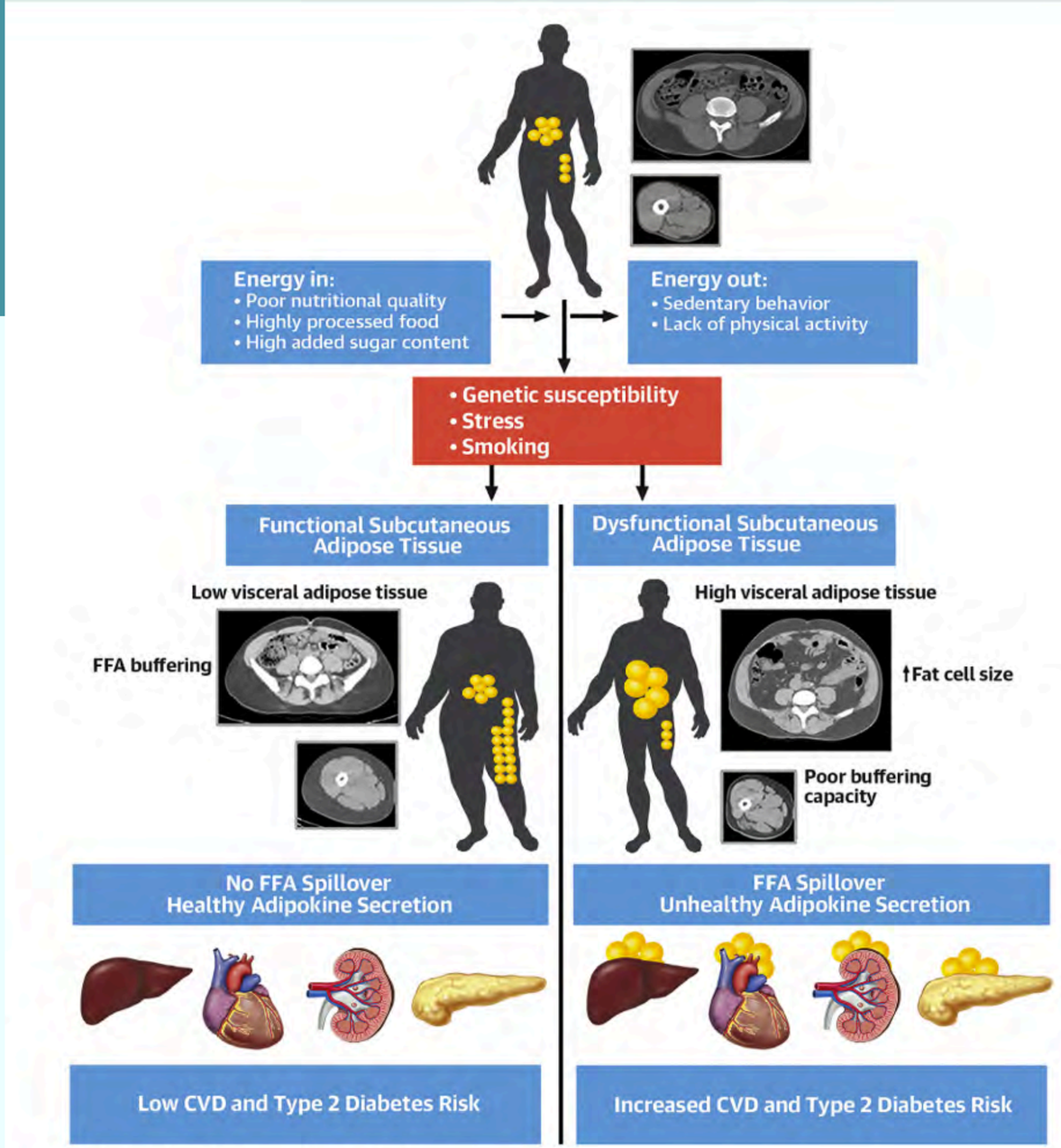
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Visceral Obesity

Visceral fat, which is stored around the organs in the abdomen, is particularly linked with increased risk of high blood pressure, abnormal cholesterol, insulin resistance and cardiovascular disease.

Sustainable weight loss does not usually come from extreme short-term changes. It is more likely to come from consistent habits around food, movement, sleep, stress management and alcohol.

For some people, newer medical weight-loss options may also be appropriate, but these should always be discussed with a qualified healthcare professional.



Després, J.-P. et al. J Am Coll Cardiol. 2021;78(5):513-31.

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Hypertension

Measurement of blood pressure

- **Home**



- **Office**

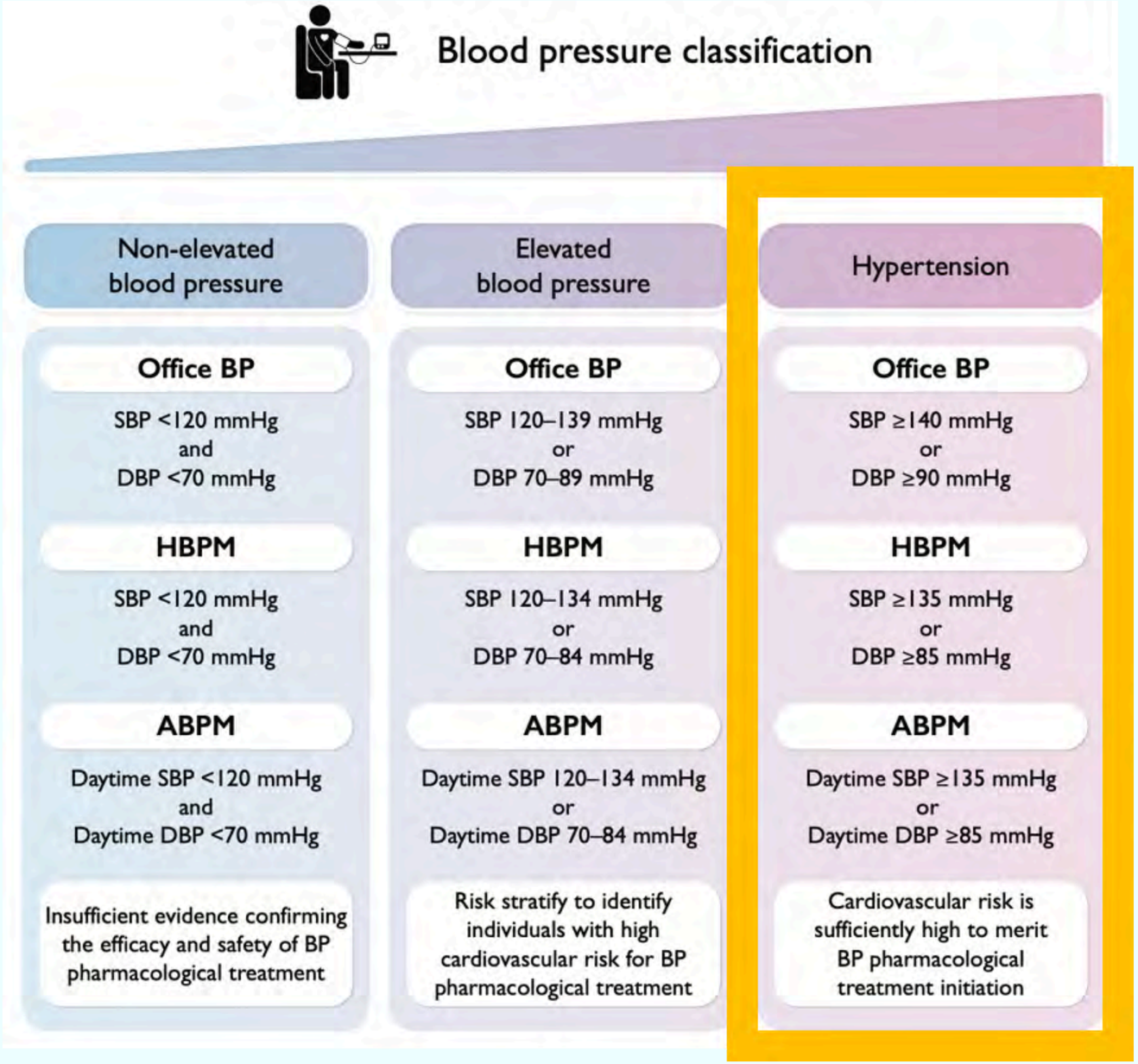


- **Ambulatory**



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When is Blood Pressure High?



McEvoy et al, EHJ 2024

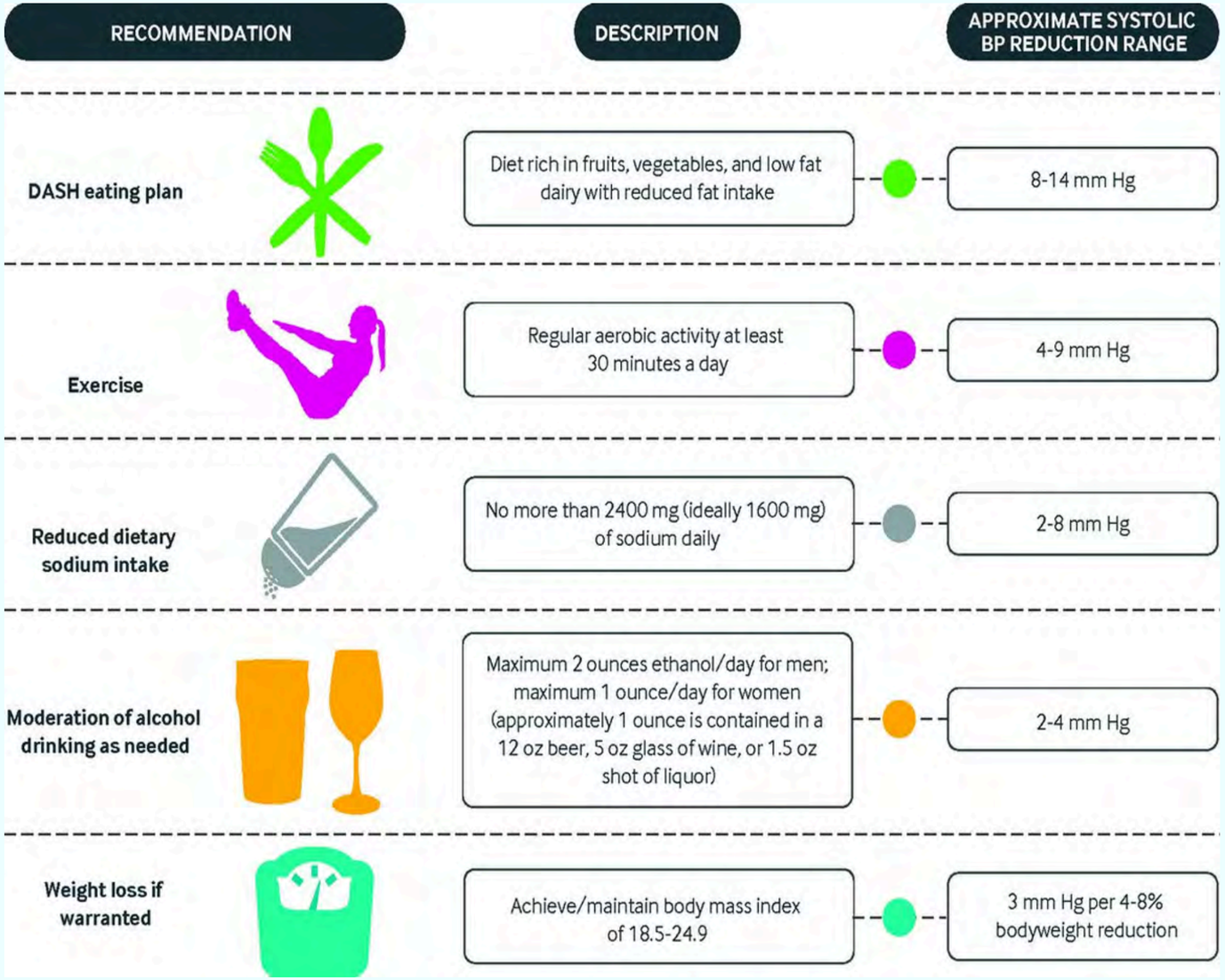
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Lifestyle Measures

Lifestyle changes can play an important role in supporting healthy blood pressure and reducing cardiovascular risk. This might include eating a balanced diet, being more physically active, reducing salt intake, moderating alcohol, managing weight and finding ways to reduce stress.

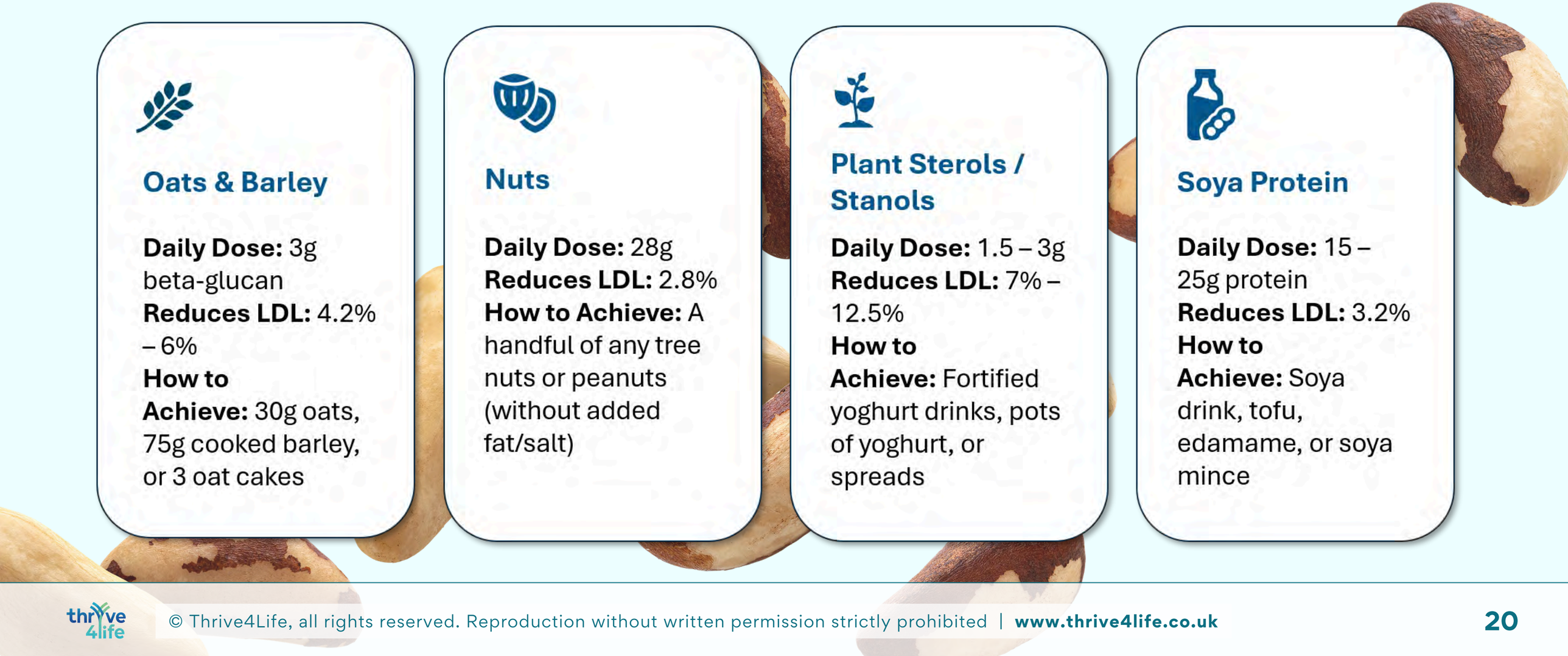
These changes are most effective when they feel realistic and sustainable. Even small improvements, made consistently over time, can help support better heart health.

Viera et al, BMJ 2016



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Four Cholesterol Lowering Foods



Oats & Barley

Daily Dose: 3g beta-glucan
Reduces LDL: 4.2% – 6%
How to Achieve: 30g oats, 75g cooked barley, or 3 oat cakes

Nuts

Daily Dose: 28g
Reduces LDL: 2.8%
How to Achieve: A handful of any tree nuts or peanuts (without added fat/salt)

Plant Sterols / Stanols

Daily Dose: 1.5 – 3g
Reduces LDL: 7% – 12.5%
How to Achieve: Fortified yoghurt drinks, pots of yoghurt, or spreads

Soya Protein

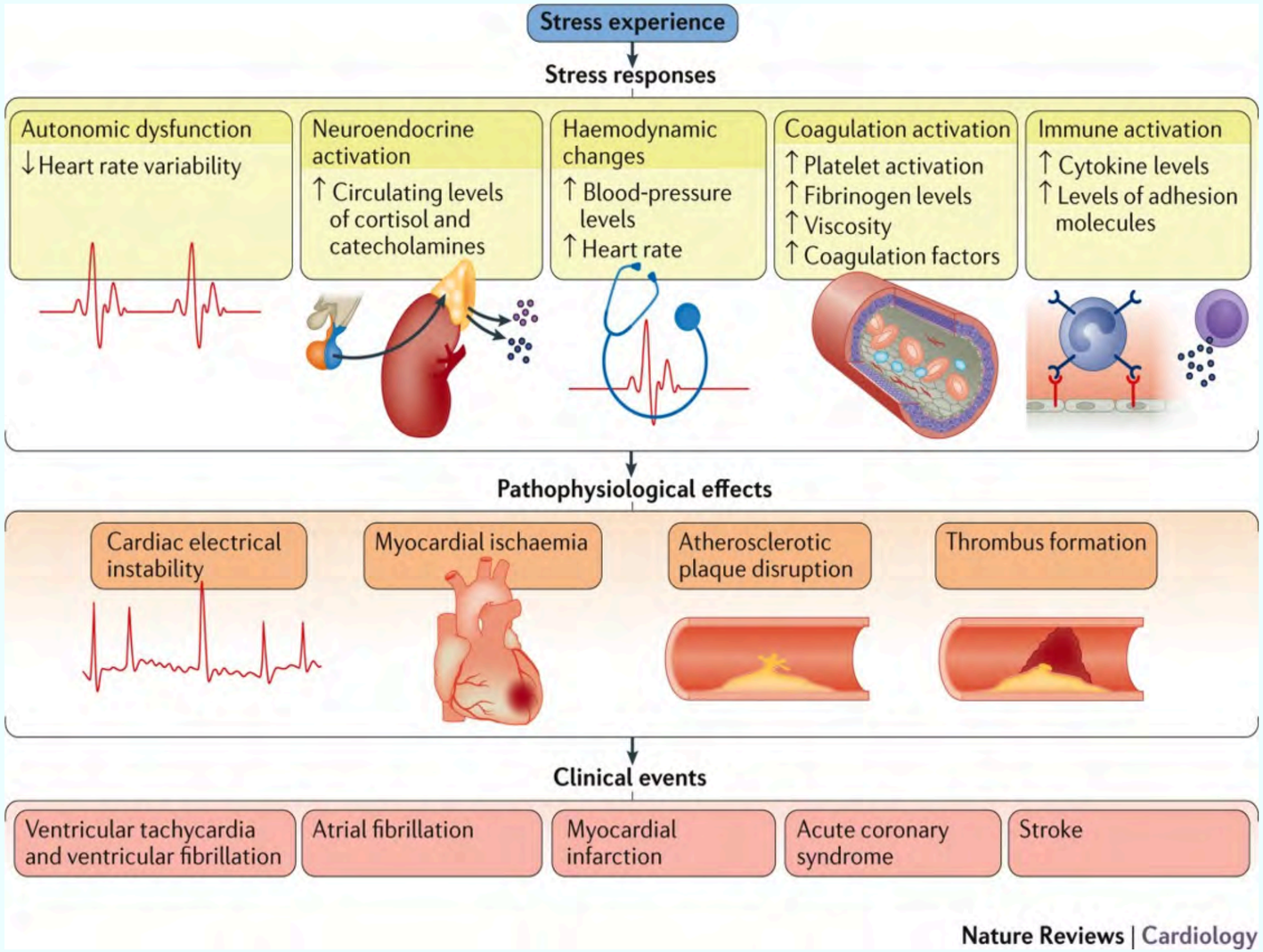
Daily Dose: 15 – 25g protein
Reduces LDL: 3.2%
How to Achieve: Soya drink, tofu, edamame, or soya mince

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Stress & Sleep Deprivation

Stress and poor sleep can both place additional strain on the body over time. In high-pressure working lives, it can be easy to normalise long hours, disrupted sleep and constant pressure, but these factors can affect blood pressure, energy levels, mood, decision-making and overall cardiovascular health.

Protecting heart health is not only about diet and exercise. Building in recovery, managing stress where possible and prioritising good-quality sleep are also important parts of long-term wellbeing.



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Why Sleep Matters for Heart Health

Good quality sleep is essential for heart and brain health. **Adults should aim for 7–9 hours per night.**

Benefits of Sleep



- Better brain function
- Improved mood & energy levels
- Stronger immune system
- Cellular repair and tissue healing
- Reduced risk of chronic disease

Risks of Poor Sleep



- Depression and anxiety
- Memory loss and dementia
- High BP, blood sugar & cholesterol
- Obesity
- Heart disease

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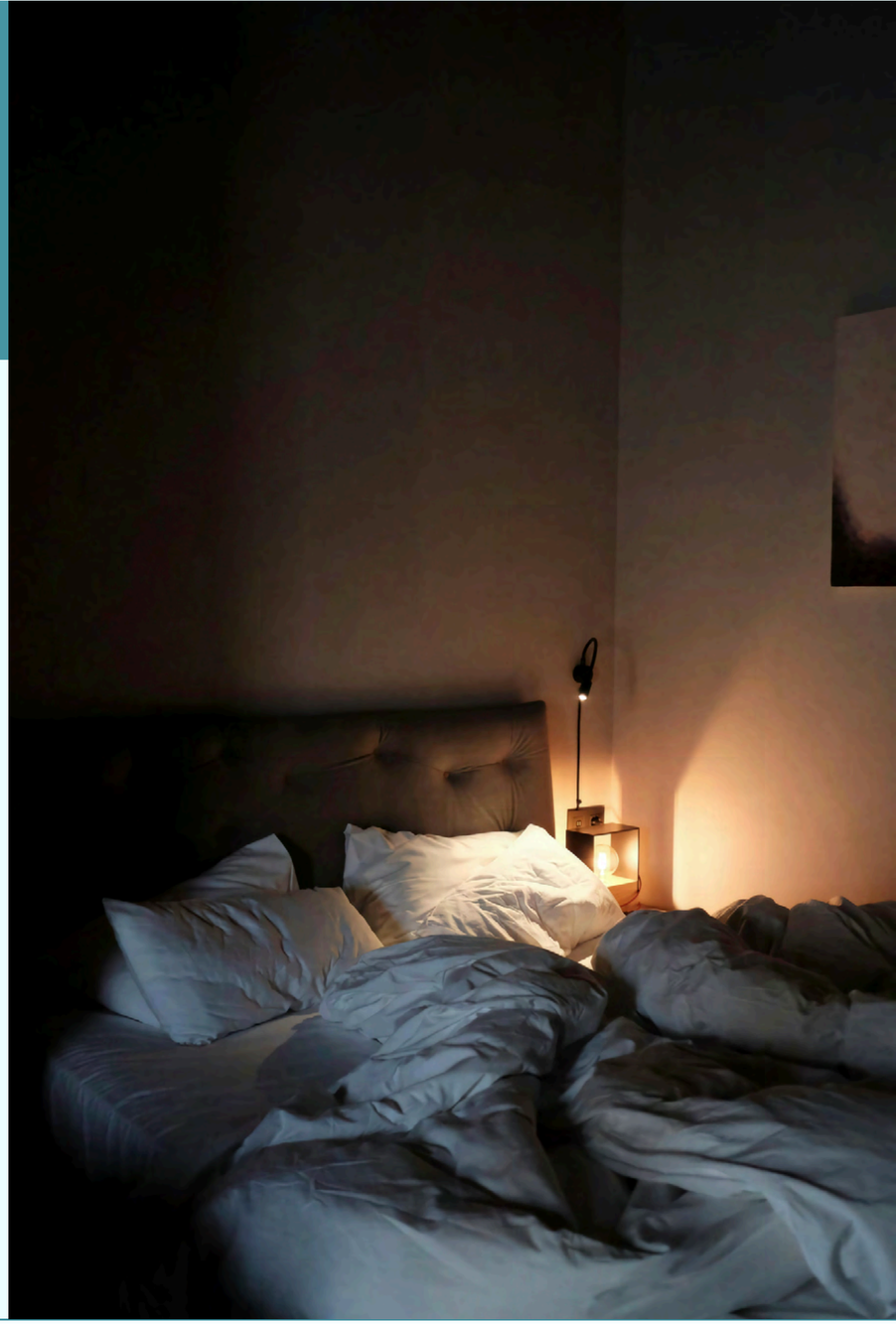
Sleep Tips – Check Your Room

Dim it: Lower light levels and filter blue light to protect your sleep cycle

Set it: Keep a consistent sleep and wake time, even at weekends

Create it: Establish a relaxing, screen-free pre-bed routine

Block it: Use "do not disturb" mode to eliminate distractions



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Summary

Lifestyle modification is key

Interval assessment of cardiac risk & measurement of blood pressure and lipids

For a simple framework to support long-term heart health, you may also find the **American Heart Association's Life's Essential 8** helpful. It brings together eight key areas: eating better, being more active, quitting tobacco, getting healthy sleep, managing weight, controlling cholesterol, managing blood sugar and managing blood pressure.

Further information here: www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/lifes-essential-8



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MEN'S HEALTH MATTERS CAMPAIGN

TUNE IN TO OUR UPCOMING STREAMED EVENTS

JULY 8 | 1:00 PM

Prostate & Testicular Cancer

With **Prof Senthil Nathan**

Consultant Urological Surgeon & Chair of Urology

JULY 14 | 1:00 PM

Understanding Mental Health

With **Ross Abbott**

Workplace Mental Health Specialist

ALL RECORDED CONTENT REMAINS AVAILABLE FOR TWO MONTHS BEYOND LIVE DATES

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Inspiring Minds, Driving Wellbeing

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