

The Healthy Farmers Guide





Contents

Foreword	4	
Introduction	5	
Physical activity	6	
Nutrition	11	
Managing your weight	18	
Buy local	20	
Alcohol	21	
Smoking	23	
Safety first	24	
Medical matters	25	
Hearing & eyesight	29	
Stress	31	
Skin care	34	
Useful contacts	38	
Further information	45	



Foreword

by Ulster Farmers Union President John Thompson

On behalf of the Ulster Farmers Union I am delighted to endorse this excellent publication which is a very useful resource for farming families in the Northern Trust area and beyond.



It provides a lot of important information about a range of health and wellbeing issues relevant to the farming community.

I'd like to thank the Northern Trust and other partner organisations for coming together to make this publication possible for the use and benefit of the farming and wider rural community. I'd also like to thank the Northern Trust for their continued commitment to helping address the health needs of farming families.

April 2012

Introduction

Farming is an all weather, all season job and busy working schedules often mean that farmers don't have the time to think about their health. In addition, accessing health information can be difficult. It is hoped this booklet can help to address this need.

This publication has been produced by the Northern Health and Social Trust in partnership with the Northern Partnership for Physical Activity, Ulster Farmers Union and the Food Standards Agency. Dr Brian Hunter, a rural GP, part time farmer and Chair of the Northern Commissioning group has also made a significant contribution to the booklet.

We hope you find this resource useful – it contains a lot of helpful information for your good health and wellbeing. **Remember – you and your family are your farm's most valuable asset.**



Introduction





Physical Activity

Why is physical activity important?

Physical activity is often referred to as a 'wonder drug' because being physically active on a regular basis can help prevent and manage a number of conditions and diseases.

Research suggests that most of us don't get enough physical activity. Most jobs including farming have become less physically demanding as more routine tasks become mechanised. Even though farmers are busy and on their feet a lot, most don't do enough activity to benefit their health and may not realise they need to increase their levels of activity. Compared to their fathers and forefathers, they probably walk less, carry less and sit operating machinery more.

Health benefits of physical activity

Regular physical activity reduces the risk of a number of conditions e.g

- Coronary Heart Disease
- Stroke
- Type II Diabetes
- Some cancers
- Obesity
- Mental Health Problems

Other health benefits include

- Reduces stress
- Improves sleep
- Helps control blood pressure
- Helps control weight
- Increases energy
- Helps maintain strong bones and muscles.



Taking more physical activity

You should aim to be active for at least 150 minutes a week and build some activity into your daily routine. Ideally this should be at an intensity that gets your heart pumping a little harder, makes you feel warmer and slightly out of breath but still able to maintain a conversation. The secret of success is doing something you really enjoy that you can fit into your life and you can keep doing regularly.

Action points

- Try to incorporate physical activity into your everyday routine and gradually build up your activity to a total of 150 minutes a week for instance walking briskly instead of always using the quad or tractor. Remember you don't have to do it all in one go to get the benefits
- Always be aware of how your body feels and don't push it too far. Physical activity is not meant to be painful
- It's important to stretch your muscles before and after any strenuous exercise as any ill effects will be minimised
- Check on your progress. Regular activities should begin to take less time or take less out of you
- Try a number of activities before choosing those you like best





- It can be more fun to take physical activity with a partner or friends
- Don't feel you've lost all the benefits if you miss a day
- Speak to your practice nurse or GP if you have any health concerns.

Types of physical activity

Any form of activity is good for you but you will get specific benefits from particular choices. For example, for protection against osteoporosis (bone thinning) you need weight bearing exercise (that's when you're carrying your own weight while moving, like when you're walking, as opposed to cycling or swimming, where your weight is supported by the bike or the water).

Walking

For the majority of people, brisk walking is the easiest, cheapest and most accessible form of moderate physical activity to fit into everyday life and you don't need special equipment. It is recommended that adults should take at least 10,000 steps per day but most adults take around 3,000. A pedometer or step counter is a great way to motivate yourself to increase walking.



You could walk with family or friends in the evening or consider joining a local walking group. For ideas of where to walk in Northern Ireland visit www.walkni.com



Swimming

Swimming is a great way to relax and give your body a full workout at the same time. Regular swimming builds endurance, muscle strength and keeps your heart healthy. It is also fantastic for toning the upper arms, shoulders and legs.



As swimming causes very little joint strain it is an ideal activity for adults with arthritis.

Sport

Golf, tennis, jogging, rugby, football, gaelic games – the list of sporting activities available in Northern Ireland is nearly endless, and most are great for taking more physical activity. Sport can also be a great way to meet new people. Visit www.sportni.net for more information on sport in Northern Ireland.





Cycling



Cycling for 15 minutes at a moderate speed burns the same number of calories as medium intensity aerobic exercise or playing badminton for the same time. Just a total of 30 minutes most days of the week could make a real difference to your health.

Dancing

Dancing is a great way for people of all ages to get and stay in shape. Besides being fun, dancing has many positive health benefits including building strength, flexibility and coordination.



Bowls

Bowls including ten-pin bowling is a low impact therapeutic activity good for muscles and joints. It can be enjoyed by those of any ability or age and has a great social aspect to it, whether practising, playing in a competitive league or just playing with friends.



Nutrition

A healthy balanced diet



Nutrition

Your diet and lifestyle can make a big difference to your long term health. It's never too late to start making changes. Take a look at what you eat every day and try to get the balance right. Try to choose a variety of foods from each of the five food groups as no single food provides all the nutrition we need. The eatwell plate overleaf shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.

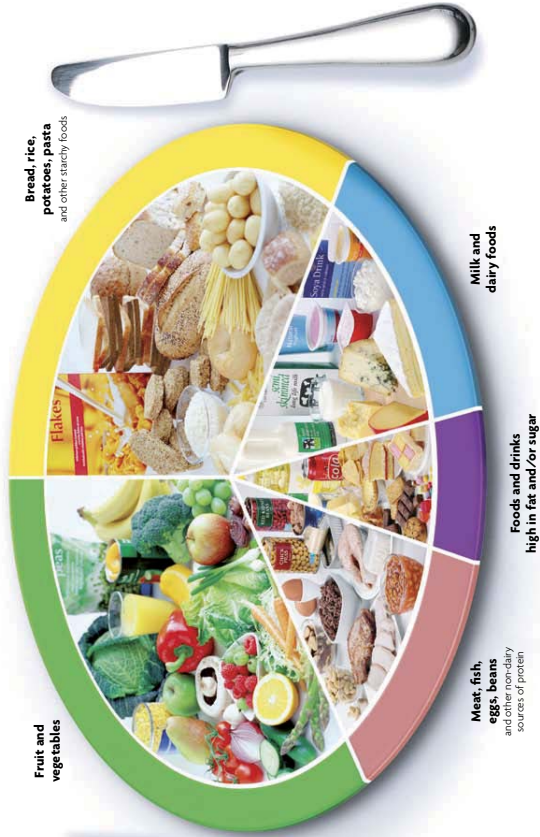
- **Bread, rice potatoes, pasta & other starchy foods** - base your meals on starchy foods. They are a good source of energy and contain fibre, calcium, iron and B vitamins
- **Fruit and vegetables** - aim for at least five portions per day and try to include some include some fruit/vegetables at each meal. Use fruit as a snack between meals
- **Meat, fish, eggs, poultry, lentils, beans, peas, tofu, quorn** - try to have at 2 meals daily. Choose lean cuts of meat or remove excess fat and remove the skin from chicken. Avoid frying where possible. Try to include two portions of fish each week, one of which should be an oily fish, for example: mackerel, trout, sardines, kippers or fresh tuna
- **Milk and dairy foods** - try to include some each day. They are good sources of protein and vitamins and they're also an important source of calcium which helps to keep our bones strong. Try to choose reduced fat versions where you can - for example semi-skimmed milk, low fat yoghurt, cottage cheese and half fat Cheddar cheese or Edam
- **Food and drinks high in fat and/or sugar** - try to eat just a small amount of foods and drinks high in fat/sugar.



Nutrition

The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



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Department of Health in association with the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

Healthier eating tips

Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables – at least 5 a day

- Fruit and vegetables are good sources of many of the vitamins and minerals that we need to help us feel our best
- It's a good idea to eat as wide a variety as possible to give you a selection of different vitamins and minerals. You can choose from fresh, frozen, tinned, dried or juiced.



What is a portion?

ONE portion = 80g = any of these
1 apple, banana, pear, orange or other similar sized fruit
2 plums or similar sized fruit
½ a grapefruit or avocado
1 slice of large fruit, such as melon or pineapple
3 heaped tablespoons of vegetables (raw, cooked, frozen or tinned)
3 heaped tablespoons of beans and pulses (however much you eat, beans and pulses count as a maximum of one portion a day)
3 heaped tablespoons of fruit salad (fresh or tinned in fruit juice) or stewed fruit
1 heaped tablespoon of dried fruit (such as raisins and apricots)
1 handful of grapes, cherries or berries
a dessert bowl of salad
a small glass (150mls) of fruit juice (however much you drink, fruit juice counts as a maximum of one portion a day)



Eat plenty of fibre

- Choose wholegrain varieties whenever you can as they contain more fibre, for example, wholegrain bread, wholegrain breakfast cereals, brown rice and wholemeal pasta
- Eat more vegetables, dried fruit and pulses (such as beans and lentils)
- Foods rich in fibre help us to feel fuller for longer so we are less likely to want fatty and sugary foods. This helps us to reach and stay at our ideal weight
- Including more fibre in our diet can also help prevent constipation, protect against some cancers, e.g. bowel cancer and may help reduce the amount of cholesterol in the blood.



Potatoes are counted as a starchy food rather than one of your five fruit and vegetables and they're a great choice, particularly if they're not cooked in too much salt or fat.

Cut down on salt

Cutting down on salt can help to reduce blood pressure, especially as part of a healthy diet that includes plenty of fruit and vegetables.





Tips for cutting down on salt:

- 75% of the salt we eat is already in the foods we buy, so check the label and choose those with less salt
- Get out of the habit of adding salt to your food – remember to taste it first
- Cut down on salty snacks such as crisps and salted nuts, and heavily-salted foods such as bacon, cheese, pickles and smoked fish
- Choose tinned vegetables, pulses and fish that say 'no added salt'
- Use herbs, spices, chilli and lemon to add flavour to your food instead of salt
- Go easy on the ketchup, soy sauce, mustard, pickles and mayo – these can be high in salt
- Look out for words on labels like: cured, smoked and pickled – these foods can be high in salt
- Men are eating on average 10g of salt a day. Adults need much less than this. In fact, we should be eating no more than 6g per day.

Cut down on fat, especially saturated fat

There are two main types of fat: saturated fat and unsaturated fat.

Over time, eating foods that are high in saturated fat can raise the level of cholesterol in your blood. Having high cholesterol increases your chance of developing heart disease.





Tips for cutting down on saturated fat:

- Choose lower fat dairy products. Try semi-skimmed, 1% fat or skimmed milk and low-fat yoghurts
- Grate cheese instead of slicing – this can help you eat less of it. Look out for cheese that is lower in fat
- Eat chicken without the skin and when you're cooking chicken, go easy with the creamy sauces – try a bit of lemon and some herbs instead
- Use leaner mince.
- Trim the fat off meat and try grilling meat instead of frying
- Compare food labels and choose the option that is lower in saturated fat
- Eat less pastry. Pastry is high in saturated fat, so try not to have pies, pastries and sausage rolls too often
- When you're cooking, use unsaturated oils such as sunflower, olive and rapeseed, instead of butter, lard and ghee
- Eat healthier snacks when you're on the go. Many snacks can be high in saturated fat, so pick up an apple, some dried fruit, or another healthier option. Cutting down on saturated fat can also help you to eat a healthy balanced diet and control your weight.

Eat oily fish

Oily fish (such as salmon, mackerel, trout and sardines) are rich in omega 3 fatty acids, which can help keep our hearts healthy. Aim to eat at least two portions of fish a week, including a portion of oily fish.



Checking the label

It's a good idea to look at the food label to help you make a healthier choice. Try comparing similar products and choose the ones with less fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt. Sometimes there can be a big difference between similar products.

Many foods are now also labelled with 'traffic light' colours so you can tell at a glance if they are **high (red)**, **medium (amber)** or **low (green)** in fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt. Simply look at the 'per 100g' information panel on the pack and use this grid to make a healthier choice.

All measures per 100g	LOW A healthier choice	MEDIUM Ok most of the time	HIGH Just occasionally
Sugars	5g or less	5.0g-15g	More than 15g
Fat	3g or less	3.0g-20g	More than 20g
Saturates	1.5g or less	1.5g-5g	More than 5g
Salt	0.30g or less	0.31g-1.5g	More than 1.5g

Try to choose products with more **greens** and **ambers** and fewer **reds**.





Managing your weight

Being a healthy weight is an important part of protecting our health. An active healthy man requires approximately 2,500 calories a day (a woman approximately 2,000 calories a day).

Being overweight can increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease and problems with joints and mobility. It's a good idea to check if your weight is within the healthy range, using the Body Mass Index (BMI) chart overleaf.

Whether you want to lose weight, gain weight, or just stay the same, it's very important to eat regularly and eat a variety of food.

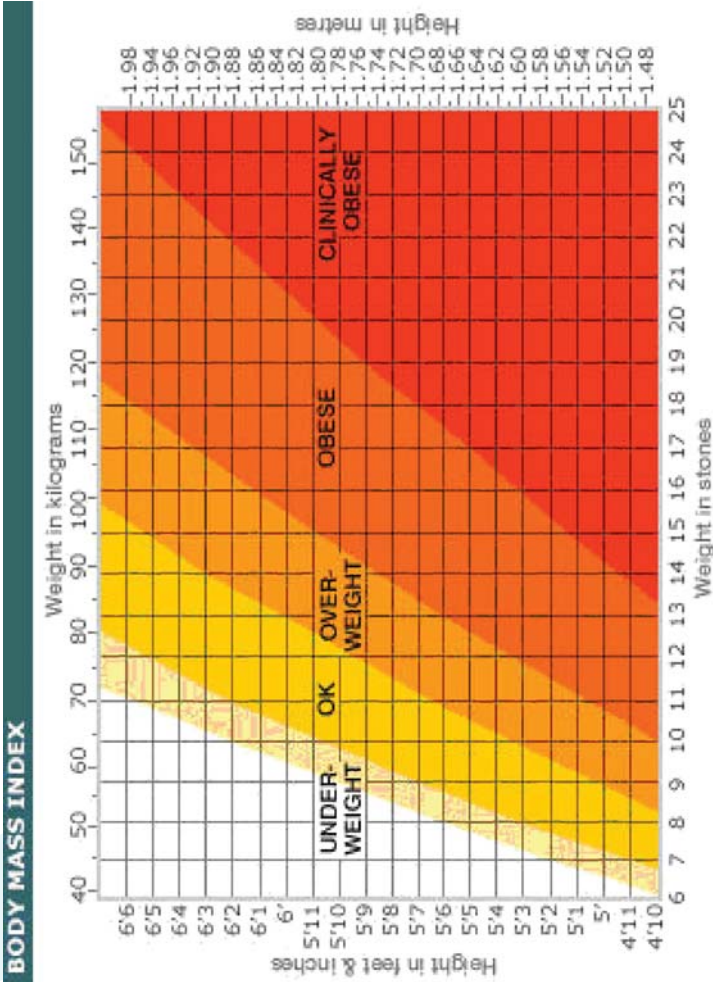
If you have any concerns about your weight, contact your GP who can refer you to a dietitian.



One of the simplest ways to find out if you're a healthy weight is to take the tape test. Storing fat around your middle increases the likelihood of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and diabetes. Measuring your waist will show if you are at higher risk. Measure half way between the bottom of your ribs and the top of your hips (usually about tummy button level), and check against the table below. (Source: www.getalifegetactive.com under Weight management)

Waist measurement for risk	At increased risk	At high
Women	80cm (32 inches)	88cm (35 inches)
Men	94cm (37 inches)	102cm (40 inches)

The Body Mass Index (BMI) chart below tells you whether your weight falls within the healthy range for your height.



Managing your weight



Buying local

Buying local

Try to choose local produce. Buying local can directly support local businesses, sustain local employment and keep money in the local economy. It will also reduce the number of 'food miles' food has travelled.

In Northern Ireland, food is produced to the highest standards of animal welfare, food safety and environmental protection. Independent quality assurance schemes oversee the industry which delivers fresh, high quality nutritious produce. Supporting local produce is good for the economy, good for the environment, good for consumers and good for farmers.



Alcohol

Go easy on the alcohol

Alcohol for some people can prove to be addictive. Choosing to abstain is a safe lifestyle choice. If you drink alcohol men should not consume more than 3 to 4 units a day and no more than 21 units per week. (For women not more than 2 to 3 units per day or 14 units per week.) It is better to drink less than this and it is advised you have at least two alcohol free days per week. There is also evidence that older adults drink less than half the recommended guidelines for men and women.



Alcohol

Binge drinking

Many people think 'binge drinking' is when a person drinks continually, possibly for a couple of days or more or drinking until you fall over. However binge drinking is defined as taking 10 or more units at a time for a man and 7 or more units at a time for a women. Many of us do this at the weekend without realising but research suggests we may be damaging our health. Binge drinking can increase the risk of liver disease, stroke, high blood pressure and cancer. It can also affect mental health.

Women's bodies have less water than men's so alcohol is more concentrated in women's blood and they will feel the effect of alcohol more quickly than men. Hence the lower limits set for them (see above).




Alcohol

Remember that calories from alcohol add up quickly and can increase your weight, particularly around the abdominal area. To help you cut down try drinking lower-strength drinks, drinking half pints instead of pints or alternating alcoholic with non-alcoholic drinks.

**Our
liver can only
break down
1 unit of alcohol
every hour.**

The following is a guide only for the number of units in common alcoholic drinks (Source: 'You don't have to be drunk to be doing real damage' information leaflet, Public Health Agency).

	Pint of lager/cider/stout	2½ units
	NI pub measure of spirits/shot	1½ units
	Alcopop/bottle of lager	1½ units
	Bottle of Wine (6 small glasses)	9 units
	Can of extra strong lager	4½ units
	Small pub bottle of wine (187.5ml)	2¼ units

Smoking



If you smoke, giving up is probably the greatest single step you can take to improve your health. Smoking increases your chance of developing a range of life threatening diseases including heart disease, lung disease, stroke and cancers. Stopping is a good way to reduce the risk. Each cigarette contains over 4000 toxic chemicals including some which are direct cancer-causing agents.

If you think it's too late and the damage is probably done, remember the benefits of stopping smoking start immediately. After 48 hours there is no nicotine left in the body and within weeks you will be breathing more easily. The risk of serious disease goes down immediately.

- 20 minutes – Blood pressure and pulse return to normal
- 8 hours – Nicotine and carbon monoxide levels in the blood reduce by half and oxygen levels return to normal
- 24 hours – Carbon monoxide will be eliminated from the body
- 48 hours – There is no nicotine left in the body
- 72 hours – Breathing becomes easier
- 3-9 months – Coughs, wheezing and breathing problems improve as lung function increases
- 1 year – Risk of heart attack is half that of a smoker
- 10 years – Risk of lung cancer falls to half that of a smoker

Further information and support to stop smoking can be found in the 'Useful contacts' section.





Safety first

Farming often involves using large pieces of machinery, dealing with unpredictable livestock and working long hours, often alone.

As we all know together, these factors can make farms dangerous places to work, and there's no doubt that many farming operations involve significant hazards that can result in injury or worse.

Risk assessment

Before you carry out any task on the farm think 'Risk'. Risk assessment is a careful look at what, in your business, could cause harm to people, so that you can decide whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more.

Don't be complacent - take care on the farm and remember you and your family are your farm's most valuable asset!



Medical matters

In addition to accidents on the farm the main risks farmers face to their long-term health can be considered under three headings:

Healthy arteries

The blood vessels supplying the brain and the heart are critical to our wellbeing. Any factors which cause deterioration and disease in these lead to stroke and heart attack. The main threats are:-

- Smoking
- Uncontrolled high blood pressure
- Poorly controlled diabetes
- High cholesterol

Modifying these risk factors is the key to reducing diseases in the arteries.





Action points

- Stop smoking
- Get your blood pressure checked
- Increase physical activity
- Reduce salt intake
- Have your urine or blood checked for sugar levels
- Avoid diabetes in later life by maintaining an ideal body weight
- If diabetic, aim for good control by adhering closely to diet and treatment
- Get your cholesterol checked
- Reduce your fat intake particularly saturated fats, increase your fibre intake with wholegrains, fruit and vegetables
- If requiring cholesterol lowering medication take as directed and attend for monitoring.

A family history of heart disease or stroke at an early age (under 60) is particularly significant if the individual affected had no known personal risk factors.

Reducing cancer risk

Many cancers can be prevented by making healthy choices in diet and habits. Avoiding exposure to chemicals in the workplace also reduces the risk. Some cancers can be identified early by screening and many can be treated more successfully if picked up promptly when symptoms first present.

Action points

- Stopping smoking reduces the risk of cancer in the lungs, mouth, throat, gullet, stomach and bladder
- Avoid skin contact or inhalation of chemicals including exhaust fumes and burning plastic
- Increased fibre from fruit, vegetables and wholegrains reduces the risk of bowel cancer
- Reducing animal fat intake may reduce the risk of prostate cancer.
- Sun exposure particularly in fair skinned individuals increases the risk of developing skin cancers - protect your skin
- Consult your GP if you notice a change in bowel habit or pass blood from your bowel or your urine
- Consult your GP if you cough up blood or have an area in your mouth or skin that looks abnormal or does not heal
- Consult your GP if you notice a change in shape or irregularity in your testicles to exclude a serious underlying condition
- Consult your GP if you have unexplained weight loss
- Participate in any health screening opportunities offered to your age group i.e. cervical and breast screening for women and bowel screening for men and women.





Infections

We all are exposed to infections passed from person to person which can cause colds and flu like symptoms but these rarely cause us many problems. Other infections some of which are more serious can be easily picked up on a busy working farm.

Action points

- Be informed. Know what the infection risks are in any given environment
- Use appropriate gloves or other protective gear
- Good hand hygiene - don't eat drink or smoke with contaminated hands or lips
- Promptly use copious amounts of water to wash skin wounds and protect healing wounds from contamination
- Know your tetanus vaccination status
- Pregnant women and those who are medically compromised should avoid animal excrement as it is full of micro organisms many of which can cause serious illness especially to vulnerable elderly and children.
- Pregnant women should avoid aborted animal material as this may be heavily contaminated
- All antibiotics both for animal and human use should be used respectfully as inappropriate use leads to resistant organisms evolving and current treatments becoming ineffective
- As symptoms do not present immediately in all conditions think back over a few weeks and seek medical advice if unwell, giving a full account of possible exposures.

Protect your hearing and eyesight

“Look after your hearing and sight as nothing works as well as the original parts well maintained.”



Hearing

The single most preventable cause of hearing loss is noise. Recreational noise from music and shooting are every bit as damaging as occupational noise from machinery. Older tractors with less or damaged noise insulation give little protection from high revving engine noise generated in the likes of slurry mixing or mowing.

Hearing deteriorates with age but some factors make this happen more rapidly. As well as affecting the areas of brain used in hearing, smoking, poorly controlled diabetes, raised blood pressure and high cholesterol cause deterioration in the health of the tissues and structures in the ear itself.

Action points

- Protect your hearing - avoid loud music and wear protection in the workplace
- Stop smoking, control blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol.
- Wax removal from the ear should be done properly
- Don't go poking in your ear!
- A discharge from the ear should be discussed with a doctor
- Water should be kept out of an ear with a perforated drum or one with a vent placed in it
- Deafness in one ear should be properly assessed
- If you feel your hearing is reduced speak to your doctor
- Encourage children and younger people to avoid loud music
- Be careful if purchasing hearing aids privately that they are appropriate for you and represent value for money.





Eyesight



Your eyes are vital to your work and social well being and can give an early insight into the presence of other conditions.

Action points

- Protect your eyes and those of others when using liquids, sprays, dusts grinding and welding.
- If you get something in your eye wash it profusely with clean water. Keep an eye care first aid kit updated and close to the workplace and seek medical advice early.
- A distortion in vision may suggest a detached retina and needs immediate hospital assessment and treatment by an eye specialist.
- An acutely painful eye especially if affecting vision is a medical emergency and requires prompt assessment.

Disease detection and prevention

- Reduce the risk of eye disease by not smoking, controlling blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes. Attend screening and review appointments when offered with optician, hospital and GP
- Seek the advice of an optician if you notice any change in vision
- If you have a close family member with Glaucoma you should attend an optician for a simple screening test
- Check your vision in each eye independently as a deterioration in one eye can go unnoticed as the other compensates
- Sunglasses if worn should filter out ultraviolet light to reduce risk of cataract (some cheap glasses including children's do not do this)
- Have a comprehensive eye examination with an optician. They have the knowledge, skills and equipment to detect a range of conditions which suggest disease in the body or in the eye itself.

What is stress?

Farmers as a group are multi-skilled, multi-talented and resourceful but are also human and sometimes need time to “recharge their batteries” like everyone else.

Everyone can suffer from stress but how it affects you depends on how you view the situation. All of us experience pressures in our lives, which can motivate and help us to perform better. However, an accumulation of pressures over a period of time can lead to stress. If ignored, prolonged stress can result in a loss of wellbeing in all areas of our lives and this may impact our physical/mental health and personal relationships. Men in particular tend not to discuss their problems and instead “bottle up” their worries and concerns rather than use the safety valve of a “burden shared is a burden halved”.

How do I know if I'm stressed?

Having good mental health means feeling positive about yourself and being able to cope with everyday pressures. It is therefore important to recognise the symptoms of stress, find a way of treating them and take steps to prevent the problem happening again.

You may be experiencing stress if:

- You feel anxious, worried or overwhelmed by problems
- You notice changes in your sleeping or eating patterns – being unable to get restful sleep so that you are tired during the day. Eating more ‘comfort foods’ which are full of fat and sugar
- You are angry for no reason
- You are finding it hard to concentrate or make decisions.
- You don't feel motivated to see people or get things done.





In addition the immune system weakens increasing the risk of coughs and colds. Back pain, headaches, low energy and stomach and bowel problems are more common too.

However, there are many things you can do to help reduce your stress levels and promote and protect your mental health.

Action points

Talk to someone

Many people find it difficult to speak about their worries but it can be helpful to talk to someone else. Your G.P can refer you on to specialised services if required. The organisations listed at the back of this booklet also provide help and support. Try not to delay seeking help and remember - you are not the only one.

Sleep well

If you are stressed you may find it difficult to either get to sleep or you may wake up early. Try to make time to relax before going to bed.

Eat well

Eating well builds the foundations of good health and a balanced diet can help you handle the pressures of stress and give you more energy.

Physical activity

Taking regular, recreational, physical activity can reduce stress and can make you feel fit, relaxed and give you more energy. You may think of joining a sports club or organisation and this will also bring you into contact with other people. For instance, bowls is a sociable activity and is good for maintaining suppleness in the spine and upper and lower limbs.

Find time to have fun and do something you enjoy
If you feel stressed it is often difficult to feel enthusiastic about other things but try to take a break regularly from routine to relax, socialise or enjoy hobbies and interests.

Spiritual peace

Many farmers due, to their closeness to nature have a strong faith. The promise of a seedtime and harvest as long as the earth remains can offer reassurance when situations are difficult.



Stress



Look after your skin

Cool advice for safe working in the sun

Prolonged sun exposure, even if seasonal, causes skin damage which can turn into skin cancers. Even on dull days skin damage can occur especially to fair skinned individuals.

Just a few simple steps can give protection for those exposed to the sun's rays:

- Cover up with loose fitting clothing that protects shoulders, arms and legs;
- A wide brimmed hat will provide protection for the face by shading the nose, neck, ears and lips;
- If possible, limit the time you are in the sun around midday;
- Even in Northern Ireland it is important to use sunscreen, at least SPF 15. (Higher SPF is recommended for children).



Skin cancer accounts for one in four of all cancers detected in Northern Ireland and it is becoming more common.

Most skin cancers are linked to excessive exposure to sunlight. Ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun can cause skin cancer. Tanning and sunburn are both signs of skin damage.

If treated early, most skin cancers are curable. Check your skin regularly for any changes to moles or freckles; If you notice a new coloured spot or a change in a mole or freckle (growing larger, having a ragged edge or irregular outline or change in colour), seek medical attention.

Take care of your skin when working with chemicals

On the farm we rely on a vast range of products to keep machinery operating, to maintain animal health, to promote crop growth and keep the environment clean. Many of these products if in contact with living tissue can do significant harm.

Oils fuels and other petroleum products including many paints can cause skin irritation or dermatitis. The natural oils in the skin, which are essential to maintain it in healthy flexible condition, are removed by petrol or other volatile agents. Prolonged exposure will increase the chances of cancerous change. This can not only affect the skin but as some of the substance can be absorbed into the body it causes this in other body organs.

Animal health products especially those designed to be absorbed through the skin should be handled with great care as human skin does not act as a barrier to them and the active ingredients are not designed to be a human medicine. Skin protection and immediate washing are essential. Sheep





dip has been known for years to have long term health implications for those users who have not taken adequate steps to avoid skin contact or ingestion.



Crop treatments and sprays if inhaled or in contact with skin can give immediate and long term health problems. We should never blow out blocked nozzles by mouth or indeed allow sprays even in diluted form onto skin as absorption can occur even at high dilutions. Artificial fertilizer in contact with skin can cause a chemical burn especially if moisture is present allowing the granules to 'melt'. Products used to treat harvested grains are strong acids, even more damaging than battery acid to human tissue. These should be treated with utmost care including the wearing of eye protection to avoid devastating injury and disfigurement.

Detergents and hypochlorite can cause skin and eye irritation in even droplet sized amounts. Appropriate protection is essential to avoid risk of injury. Industrial/agricultural grade detergents in contact with skin remove protective natural oils leaving skin vulnerable to further damage and infection.

To get the gain without the pain from chemicals we need to have some simple rules in place.

Action points

- Do you really need to use the product?
- Keep the product in the original labelled and re-sealable container
- Protect children and animals from accessing them
- Keep instructions and use only for intended purpose
- Use appropriate personal protection
- Have close access to eye wash kit and clean water
- Maintain a clean air supply
- Wash off contamination immediately
- Seek medical advice if unsure of correct action if exposed
- Dispose of discarded supply in an appropriate way.





Useful contacts

Alcohol

www.knowyourlimits.info

Cancer

www.actioncancer.org

www.ulstercancer.org

Care in the sun

www.careinthesun.org

Diabetes

www.diabetes.org.uk

Health and safety

www.hseni.gov.uk

Heart health

British Heart Foundation – www.bhf.org.uk

Mental health

Rural Support provides a listening ear and signposting service for farmers and rural communities. All calls are confidential and the helpline operates from 8.00am to 11.00pm, seven days a week (voicemail and support options available at all other times).

Tel: 0845 606 7 607

Lifeline

Lifeline counsellors are there to help you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week Tel: 0808 808 8000. Calls are free.

Visit www.lifelinehelpline.info

Samaritans provide confidential and emotional support 24 hours a day: Tel: 08457 90 90 90. Visit www.samaritans.org

For further information on dealing with stress view www.mindyourhead.info

Nutrition

NI direct – www.nidirect.gov.uk/eatwell

British Dietetic Association

www.bda.uk.com

Physical activity

Get a Life Get Active – www.getalifegetactive.com

Your definitive guide to walking in Northern Ireland

www.walkni.com

Walking the way to health

www.whi.org.uk

Sport Northern Ireland

www.sportni.net

Stop smoking

You can get support to help you stop smoking from various sources including your GP, Practice nurse, Pharmacist and the Northern Trust Smoking Cessation Service, www.northerntrust.hscni.net Tel: 028 2563 5575

Visit www.want2stop.info

Smokers Helpline 0808 85 85 85

Stroke

Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke Association (NICHSA) www.nichsa.com

Stroke Association www.stroke.org.uk





Leisure Facilities

Antrim Forum Leisure Centre

Lough Road,
Antrim BT41 4DQ
Tel: 028 9446 4131
www.antrim.gov.uk

Valley Leisure Centre

Church Road
Newtownabbey BT36 7LJ
Tel: 028 9086 1211
www.newtownabbey.gov.uk/valley

Sixmile Leisure Centre

Ballynure Road
Ballyclare BT39 9YU
Tel: 028 9334 1818
www.newtownabbey.gov.uk/sixmile

Ballyearl Recreation Centre

585 Doagh Road
Newtownabbey BT36 5RZ
Tel: 028 9084 8287
www.newtownabbey.gov.uk/ballyearl

Seven Towers Leisure Centre

Trostan Avenue,
Ballymena BT43 7BL
Tel: 028 2564 1427
www.ballymena.gov.uk/seventowers



Carrickfergus Amphitheatre

Prince William Way
Carrickfergus BT38 7HP
Tel: 028 9335 8888
www.carrickfergus.org/amphitheatre

Larne Leisure Centre

28-30 Tower Road
Larne BT40 1AB
Tel: 028 2826 0478
www.larne.gov.uk

Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre

33 Garryduff Road
Ballymoney BT53 7DB
Tel: 028 2766 0260
www.ballymoney.gov.uk

Coleraine Leisure Centre

23 Railway Road
Coleraine BT52 1PE
Tel: 028 7035 6432
www.colerainebc.gov.uk

Shesburn Recreation Centre

7 Mary Street
Ballycastle
Moyle BT54 6QH
Tel: 028 2076 3300
www.moyle-council.org



Useful contacts

Cookstown Leisure Centre

Fountain Road
Cookstown BT80 8QF
Tel: 028 8676 3853
www.cookstown.gov.uk

Magherafelt Leisure Centre

Bride well (Temporary venue)
6 Church Street
Magherafelt BT45 6AN
Tel:028 7963 1510
www.magherafelt.gov.uk

Maghera Leisure Centre

43 Coleraine Road
Maghera BT46 5BN
Tel:028 7954 7400
www.magherafelt.gov.uk



Your GP	
<p>Dalriada Urgent Care</p> <p>028 2566 3500</p> <p>Monday – Thursday 6.00 pm – 7.30 am</p> <p>From 6.00 pm on Friday to 7.30 am on Monday plus bank holidays.</p>	<p>Ballymena Dalriada Urgent Care 80 Larne Road Link Ballymena BT42 3GA</p> <p>Coleraine Dalriada Urgent Care Outpatients 4 (Fracture Clinic) Causeway Hospital 4 Newbridge Road Coleraine BT52 1HS</p> <p>Moneymore Dalriada Urgent Care Mid-Ulster PCC 13 Station Road Moneymore Magherafelt Co.Londonderry BT45 7RA</p> <p>Whiteabbey Dalriada Urgent Care Whiteabbey PCC Day Rehabilitation Unit Whiteabbey Hospital Whiteabbey BT37 9RH</p>



Hospitals

Antrim Area Hospital	Bush Road Antrim BT41 2RL	028 9442 4000
Causeway Hospital	4 Newbridge Road Coleraine BT52 1TP	028 7032 7032
Dalriada Hospital	1a Coleraine Road Ballycastle BT54 6BA	028 2076 2666
Holywell Hospital	60 Steeple Road Antrim BT41 2RJ	028 9446 5211
Mid Ulster Hospital	Hospital Road Magherafelt BT45 5EX	028 7963 1031
Moyle Hospital	Gloucester Avenue Larne BT40 1RP	028 2827 5431
Robinson Hospital	23 Newal Road Ballymoney BT53 6HB	028 2766 0322
Whiteabbey Hospital	Doagh Road Newtownabbey BT37 9RH	028 9086 5181

This booklet has been funded by the Northern Partnership for Physical Activity (NPPA). It is also available on www.northerntrust.hscni.net

We would like to thank the farmers from the South Londonderry UFU Group who participated in the pilot physical activity initiative which formed the basis of this booklet.

For further information about physical activity in the Northern Trust area contact Nicola Browne on 028 2563 5575 or email nicola.browne@northerntrust.hscni.net

For further information about farmers' health and wellbeing in the Northern Trust area contact Yvonne Carson on 028 2563 5575 or email yvonne.carson@northerntrust.hscni.net







