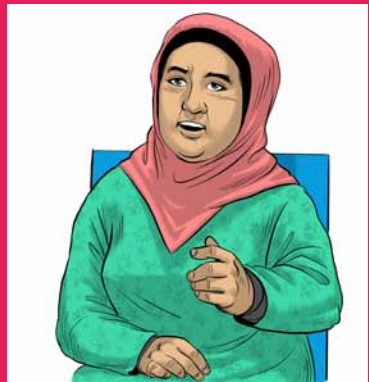


# Food for Thought



1st edition published in 2016

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as part of a joint project with Public Health,  
Tower Hamlets Council.

Other learning packs with readers available:

- 'In Safe Hands' about prostate cancer.
- 'Ahmed's Health Scare' about stopping smoking.
- 'Zenith Goes to the Clinic' about breast screening.
- 'Better to be Safe Than Sorry' about cervical screening.
- 'Hillary's Under the Weather' about getting the right treatment.
- 'The Morning After' about alcohol awareness.
- 'Jon Loses Weight' about weight management.
- 'Zaynab's Narrow Escape' about lung cancer.
- 'Faisal Gets the All Clear' about bowel cancer.
- 'As Fit as a Fiddle' about general cancer.
- 'Salim Gets Back on Track' about diabetes.
- 'A Problem Shared is a Problem Halved' about mental wellbeing.
- 'Hafiza Stands Her Ground' about early years.

# Food for Thought

A health reader for Entry 2  
ESOL students

Written by Linda Haslam

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Designed by Sparrow

**Cardio** = heart      **Vascular** = relating to the veins and arteries which carry blood

In the UK, there are about 7 million people with cardio vascular disease (CVD). It kills more than 1 in 4 people, that is nearly 200 people every day.

Many people do not realise that their lifestyle can make a big difference. People who are overweight, have high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels or have diabetes have a higher chance of developing heart disease. People who don't smoke, don't drink much alcohol, eat a healthy diet, take regular exercise and maintain a healthy weight have a lower chance of developing heart disease.

For more information about how to look after your heart and avoid heart disease, look on the NHS website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or visit the British Heart Foundation website: [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

If you would like to make an appointment with a Health Trainer, ring: **020 8709 9845** or email [HT@bbbc.org.uk](mailto:HT@bbbc.org.uk) for more information.



Priti is 31 years old and lives in east London with her husband and 2 children. Priti's dad died suddenly 4 years ago after having a heart attack. He was only 54 years old. He worked long hours as a cab driver, didn't eat properly, smoked and never exercised. The doctors said his lifestyle was one of the things that led to his heart attack.

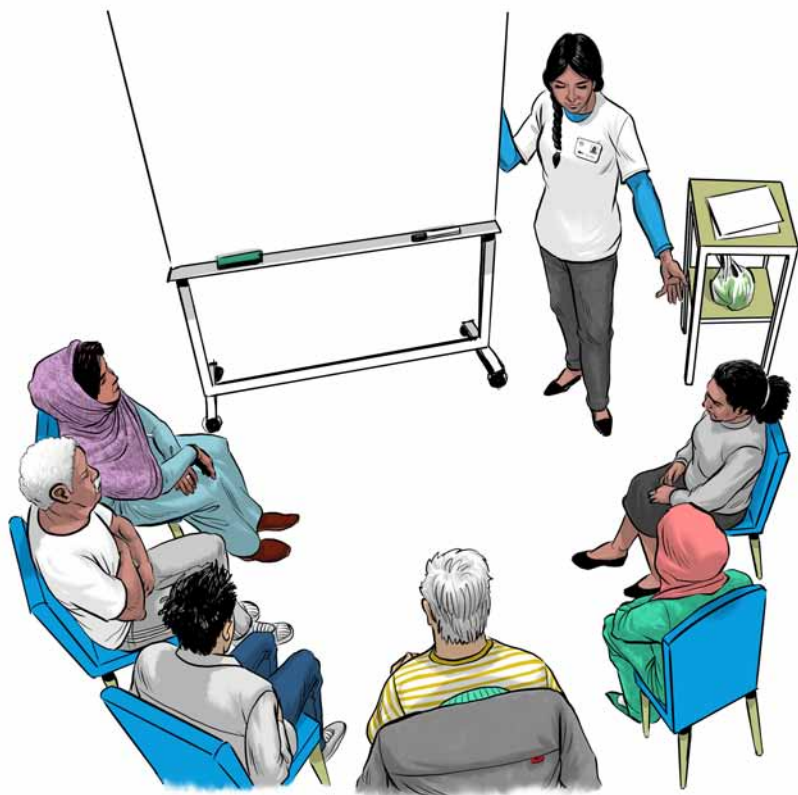


Priti was devastated. She decided she wanted to do something to help prevent heart disease. At the time her father died, Priti was working for a local charity. They wanted people to volunteer as Health Champions, so Priti decided to apply.

She had to help a Health Trainer run healthy living activities in the local community such as exercise classes and 'cook and eat' sessions.



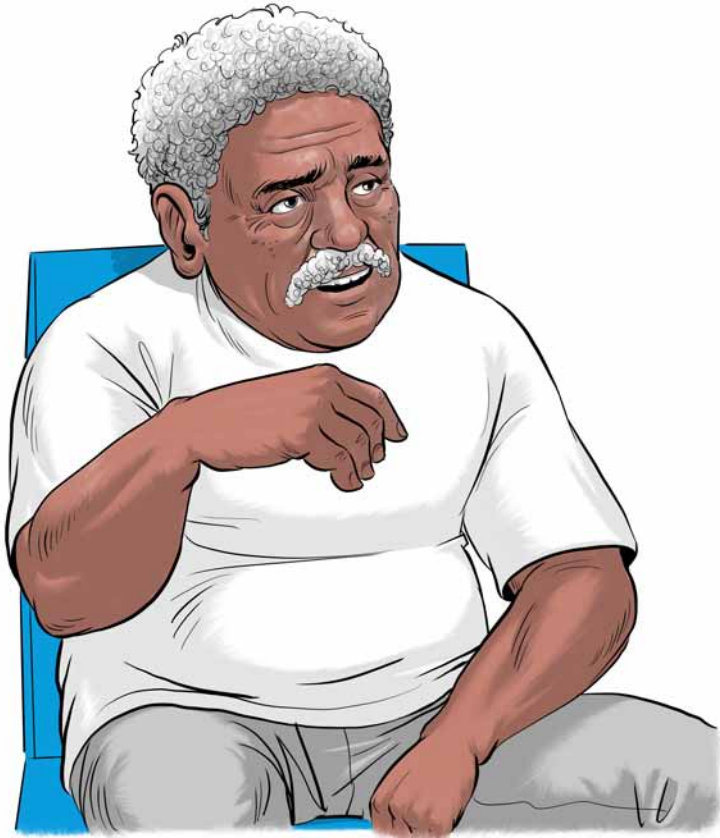
The charity supported Priti to do a course to become a Health Trainer herself. As a Health Trainer, she runs events to tell people about the Health Trainer programme, sets up exercise and healthy cooking sessions, teaches at health education workshops and helps people one-to-one to make small changes to their lifestyles so that they can live healthier and more active lives.



Priti runs a class teaching about healthy lifestyles at a local community centre. "Today we are going to learn how to look after our hearts," says Priti. "Did you know that eating a healthy diet can reduce the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure? What do you think we need to do to keep our hearts healthy?"



"We need to keep our cholesterol levels down," says Charlie. "If we don't, it blocks up the arteries in our heart." "That's right," says Priti. "There are good and bad types of cholesterol. When we eat the fats found in animal products like meat, butter, cheese and some vegetable products like palm or coconut oil, the level of bad cholesterol goes up in our blood. It's best not to have too much of these."



“What else?” “We shouldn’t have too much salt because it can raise our blood pressure” says Hasna. “And we shouldn’t drink too much alcohol” says Marlon. “That’s right” says Priti.

“Alcohol can raise blood pressure and damage the heart muscle as well as cause liver problems, stroke and some cancers.”



“We shouldn’t put on too much weight” says Farah.

“Yes” says Priti. “Being overweight or obese can raise blood pressure and cholesterol and increase the risk of type 2 diabetes. Over time high blood sugar levels can damage nerves and blood vessels and lead to things like heart disease or stroke.”



“You can plan a healthy balanced diet using the Eatwell Guide.” Priti puts up a large picture of it on the board. “This shows the 4 main food groups and how much you should eat from each one.

Most of us still aren’t eating enough fruit and vegetables. You should eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day. They are a good source of vitamins, minerals and fibre.”



“What else can we do to help our hearts,” says Priti. “We need to exercise,” says Zina. “Yes,” says Priti. “exercise or other physical activities like gardening help to reduce your blood pressure and cholesterol, control your weight and improve mental health. Also, things like yoga, relaxation or mindfulness can help to relieve stress.”



“There’s one thing we haven’t mentioned” says Priti. “Smoking” says Cheng. “I’m finding it really difficult to give it up.” “Quitting smoking is the best thing you can do for your heart” says Priti. “You are twice as likely to have a heart attack if you smoke. It’s never too late to give up and the risk to your health starts to decrease soon after stopping.”

[www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/stopsmoking](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/stopsmoking)



- smoking
- high cholesterol
- high blood pressure
- too much alcohol
- being overweight
- having diabetes
- unhealthy diet
- lack of exercise
- family history (cardiovascular disease)
- ethnicity

“There’s one more thing I need to tell you,” says Priti. “Your ethnicity is a risk factor. If you are Black African, Afro-Caribbean or South Asian: Indian, Bangladeshi or Pakistani, you have an even higher chance of developing heart disease than white people, especially if you are overweight. Everyone can get a free NHS health check at your doctor’s surgery between the ages of 40 and 74.”





“Has anyone got any questions?” says Priti. “I know that’s a lot of information to take in but it should give you some food for thought. We can talk about it again in the next class,” she says. “Healthy lifestyles = Healthier hearts!” Priti thinks about her dad, she knows he would be proud of her. She hopes that in some small way she is making a difference and helping people to live longer, healthier lives.

## Comprehension Questions

1. Why is it bad to have a high cholesterol level?

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2. If you don't want high cholesterol, what food should you avoid?

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3. Why is too much salt bad for the body?

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4. Why is smoking bad for the heart?

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5. Why is eating a healthy diet important?

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6. Name 3 things you can do to have a healthy heart.

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## A Conversation with a Health Trainer

- Hi. My doctor says I need to lose some weight. He suggested I talk to you.
- If you would like to lose some weight, we can support you to do that.
- How would you be able to help me?
- We can give you free guidance on healthy eating and also we run lots of different activities.
- What sort of activities do you run?
- We run lots of exercise classes. You can do things like yoga, swimming or keep fit or join the walking group.
- Are they all mixed or do you have any women only classes?
- Yes, there are women only classes. Also we run cook and eat sessions.
- When are the classes?
- They're every day except Sundays. I can give you a timetable if you like.
- That would be really helpful. Thank you.

## Glossary

- arteries** large tubes that carry blood from the heart
- charity** an organisation that helps people and doesn't make any money
- damaged** when something is broken, hurt or injured
- decrease** to become less
- devastated** really upset about something
- disease** an illness or abnormal condition of the body
- ethnicity** belonging to a group or race that shares the same culture, language or religion
- lifestyle** the way someone lives their life
- mental health** a feeling of wellbeing and being able to cope with the normal stresses of life
- physical** relating to the body
- risk factor** something that increases the chance of something bad happening
- stress** mental or emotional pressure or worry



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