**AGHALEE SURGERY LIFESTYLE ADVICE SHEET**

*Cholesterol is a fatty substance found in your blood. Too much of this can cause your arteries to become blocked which increases your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. There are a few lifestyle changes you can make to try and lower your cholesterol:*

1. **Eat a balanced diet and aim for a healthy weight**

* Try to cut down on fatty food, especially food containing a type of fat called saturated fat. You can still eat foods containing the healthier type of fat called unsaturated fat. Check out the table below from the Association of UK Dieticians for more useful tips:

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| EAT LESS | SMART SWAP |
| Cream or cheese sauces | Tomato or vegetable based sauces |
| Fatty meat such as sausages, burgers, salami, meat pies, pasties | Lean cuts of meat and mince; trim off the fat; skinless chicken and turkey; oily fish like salmon and mackerel |
| Crisps and savoury snacks cooked in oil | Fresh or dried fruit or handful of nuts and seeds |
| Full fat milk, cream, cheese and yoghurt | Lower fat dairy foods such as skimmed milk, reduced fat cheddar, low fat yoghurt |
| Lard, dripping ghee and butter | Grill or dry/air fry; use vegetable oils like olive, sunflower, soya or rapeseed, margarines and low fat spreads |

* Try to eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day
* Try to increase your fibre intake by eating wholegrains, pulses, nuts and seeds

1. **Cut down on salt**

* Don’t cook with salt or add any to your food at the table
* Cut down on processed foods and check salt/sodium content of foods – aim for maximum of 5.8g of salt (2.3g of sodium) per day

1. **Don’t drink too much alcohol**

* Stick within recommended limits – no more than 14 units per week for men and women with at least 2 alcohol free days per week

1. **Try to stop smoking**

* You can visit your local pharmacy for advice and help to stop smoking

1. **Regular physical activity**

* Aim to do at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of exercise per week, ideally a mixture of strength/balance based and cardiovascular exercise. Good activities include walking, swimming and cycling or pilates/yoga but can include anything which raises your heart rate and makes you breathe faster. Try to find activities you enjoy so you are more likely to keep doing it.

1. **Take your medication as prescribed**