

EATING WELL BREAKING DOWN THE MAIN MESSAGES

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.



FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

- Aim for 5 portions a day. A portion for example would be an apple, or a small bowl of salad, or 2 tablespoons of vegetables.
- Choose a variety- different colours, tastes and textures.
- All varieties including fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, and tinned are good sources.
- Good source of fibre, which is important for healthy bowels & digestive system.
- Good source of vitamin C plus other vitamins and minerals needed to help the body stay healthy e.g. maintain healthy gums, skin teeth etc.
- Eating plenty of these foods can help to protect against chronic health problems such as heart disease and some cancers.
- Try to avoid regularly adding sugar/ syrup, or fat/ creamy sauces to these foods.

BREAD, RICE, POTATOES, PASTA AND OTHER STARCHY FOODS

- These provide the body's main energy source (starch).
- A portion of these foods should form an important part of all meals.
- This group includes all types of bread, cereals, grains, pasta and rice.
- Breakfast cereals are a good way to start the day- try to avoid those that are chocolate/ honey or sugar coated.
- Choose wholegrain and high fibre varieties of these foods e.g. granary or wholemeal bread, whole-wheat pasta, breakfast cereals such as shredded wheat, porridge, bran flakes, Weetabix, Shreddies.
- Try different variations of these foods e.g. bread- try pitta bread, crusty rolls, French stick, tortilla wraps, crumpets, teacakes, breakfast muffins etc.

MEAT, FISH, EGGS, BEANS AND OTHER NON-DAIRY SOURCES OF PROTEIN

- These provide protein that enables growth, and helps the body to repair worn out cells (our bodies are made up of lots of little cells).
- A serving of one of these foods should be included with main meals.
- Many of these foods are a good source of iron, which the body needs to make healthy blood.
- Alternatives to meat include beans, lentils, pulses, tofu and quorn. These are high in fibre, low in fat, and a good source of protein.

- Some meat can contain a large amount of fat so try to cut off the extra fat that you might see around meat (remove skin from chicken). Grilling or baking meat/ fish/ eggs instead of frying is much healthier!

MILK AND DAIRY FOODS

- These provide calcium, which we need for healthy bones and teeth.
- They are also a good source of protein.
- 3 servings of these foods should be eaten daily; one serving could be either a glass of milk, a pot of yoghurt, or a small piece of cheese.
- This group does not include cream, butter, or ice cream as these foods contain larger amounts of fat (they belong in the food group 'foods high in fat and/or sugar').
- Choose a variety of foods from this group including milk, yoghurt, fromage frais, soft cheese, cottage cheese, and custard.
- Try to make healthier choices e.g., drinking semi skimmed milk instead of full cream.

FOOD AND DRINKS HIGH IN FAT AND/OR SUGAR

- These foods should be eaten only in moderation.
- Foods that contain a lot of fat and sugar include sweets, biscuits, crisps, chocolate, cake, soft drinks, ice cream, jam, honey etc.
- Margarine, oil, and butter are also included in this group- although these might be used daily e.g. margarine on toast, they should be used only in small amounts.
- Too much fat is not good for the heart and can cause our bodies to gain weight- this is not good for our overall health.
- Too much sugar is bad for our teeth. Sugary foods do not really provide any useful nutrients needed by the body, other than energy (which we should get from starchy foods- see earlier). Too many of these foods can also cause unwanted weight gain.
- Many foods in this group are high in both fat and sugar e.g. chocolate and biscuits

NOTE

This information provided here is based solely upon teaching healthy eating principles and does not include consideration of any specific individual dietary needs. Where a Dietitian has provided individual advice this should always be followed.