

Food4Health



Guide to Healthy Eating


Middlesbrough
moving forward




Middlesbrough

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Benefits of Healthy Eating

There are many benefits to eating healthily. They include;

- Preventing heart disease
- Preventing certain cancers and many other long-term illnesses
- Preventing the development of type II diabetes
- Maintaining healthy blood pressure
- Increased life expectancy
- Improved mental health
- Improved self esteem and confidence
- Aiding weight loss
- Maintaining a healthy body weight

Healthy eating means giving the body the nutrition it needs to function. Over-eating, under-eating or not getting the right balance of foods, can lead to weight gain or weight loss and other diet-related health problems.

This may include brittle bones, absent periods in women, vitamin and mineral deficiencies, tiredness and breathlessness due to a reduced red blood cell count. Serious conditions linked to obesity include type II diabetes, certain types of cancers, heart disease and stroke.

Even if you have a healthy weight it is important that your diet is balanced otherwise you may be at risk from high blood pressure or high cholesterol. Both of these conditions increase your chances of developing cardiovascular disease and suffering a heart attack or stroke.

Healthy eating is also about enjoying your food and eating foods that are generally healthier and balanced.

Balance of Good Health

The balance of good health makes it easier to understand and enjoy healthy eating. It is based on the five main food groups and shows the different food groups and amounts needed to make a balanced and healthy diet.

The balance of good health applies to everyone regardless of age*, weight or ethnic origin. However, people with special dietary needs may need to check with their doctor before deciding if it applies to them.

*It does not apply to children under two years of age as they require full fat milk and more dairy products.



The Balance of Good Health is based on the following guidelines:

- ✓ Enjoy your food.
- ✓ Eat a variety of different foods.
- ✓ Eat the right amount for healthy weight.
- ✓ Eat plenty of foods rich in starch and fibre.
- ✓ Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables.
- ✓ Don't eat too many foods that contain a lot of fat.
- ✓ Don't have sugary foods and drinks too often
- ✓ If you drink alcohol, drink sensibly.

Starchy Foods

Starchy foods such as bread, pasta, rice, cereals, noodles, grains, potatoes should form the main part of most meals and snacks.

Starchy foods are the most nourishing and filling foods. They contain B vitamins, vitamin E, calcium and iron.



Whole grain varieties of breads, pasta and rice also contain fibre which prevents constipation and some intestinal disorders. The soluble fibre found in oats can also help to reduce cholesterol level.

- Use potatoes to thicken soups, casseroles, stews or mince dishes. Make starchy foods the main part of meals.
- Try including exotic foods such as yam, cassava, plantain, sweet potato in your recipe.
- Have wholegrain, unsugared breakfast cereals as healthier options such as wheatabix, unsweetened muesli and porridge.
- Have different types of bread as an accompaniment to main meals.
- Where possible avoid frying starchy foods (e.g. chips) and use cooking methods that don't require extra fat to be added such as boiling, microwaving, steaming, baking
- Always have bread offered with children's meals
- Avoid adding excess fat during cooking and serving, as this adds extra calories to the meal.
- Increase the fibre content of meals by using more potatoes, high fibre grains (wholegrain pasta, wholegrain rice, oats, breakfast cereals) and high fibre breads.

Fruit and Vegetables

Fruit and vegetables contain plenty of vitamins and minerals. They are also a good source of fibre, antioxidants and other essential nutrients.

Fruit and vegetables are low in fat and calories and should make up a third of our total food intake. They could be fresh, frozen, canned or dried. Aim for at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables as this count towards your 5 A DAY.



- Serve extra vegetables, salad or fruit with every meal.
- Have fresh or dried fruit available as snacks or adding to breakfast cereals.
- Boil, steam or microwave vegetables in as little water as possible and for a short time to avoid loss of vitamins.
- Have fruit based desserts such as fruit crumble, fresh fruit salad, and stewed seasonal fruit.
- Fruit and vegetables contained in convenience foods can contribute to 5 A DAY, but watch out as they can be high in sugar or fat. Always read the label for nutritional information.
- Serve cooked vegetables as quickly as possible after cooking as keeping them warm for long periods will result in loss of vitamins.
- Use a minimal amount of water in cooking vegetables, cook over a short time and steam if possible.
- Add vegetables into dishes such as fish recipes, meat recipes, rice dishes and soups.

Potatoes, yams and cassava are classed as starchy foods and don't count towards 5 A DAY

Meat, fish & alternatives

These types of foods are good sources of protein, vitamins and minerals, particularly iron. They include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, beans and pulses.

Pulses such as peas, lentils, beans and nuts also contain dietary fibre. The soluble fibre found in beans and lentils may help reduce blood cholesterol. Red meat is an excellent source of iron, zinc, selenium and has a high vitamin D content. The iron from meat has been found to be easily absorbed by the body and the meat helps in the absorption of iron from vegetables and cereals.



- Buy leaner cuts of meat wherever possible or trim off visible fat from meats.
- Add pulses, such as pea and beans, to casseroles, stews and mince dishes.
- Aim to eat fish at least twice a week, including at least one portion of oily fish. Fish includes frozen and canned fish such as sardines, tuna, fish fingers and fish cakes.
- Use stir-fries as a way to combine vegetables and meat produce for a healthy diet. Use minimum oil.
- Grilling, casseroles, baking, microwaving, braising and steaming are good ways to cook without the need of adding extra fat.
- If adding nuts to dishes use little amounts as they are high in fat and calories.
- Try to eat moderate amounts from this food group.
- Have a variety of lean meats such as beef, pork, and lamb. Include poultry such as chicken and turkey where possible, especially without the skin.
- A good source of protein for vegetarians includes canned beans such as baked beans or other pulses.
- Meat products such as sausages and beef burgers can be high in fat and salt so should be eaten in small amounts

Milk and Dairy Foods

Milk and dairy foods, such as cheese, yogurt and fromage frais are an essential part of our daily diet. They are a good source of protein, vitamins and calcium. Foods from this group are very important for growing children.

Some milk and dairy foods have a high fat content, especially saturated fat. Too much saturated fat in the diet is bad for your heart and increases the risk of coronary heart disease. Some dairy foods such as yoghurts can contain probiotic bacteria which benefit the immune system and improves gut health.



Low-fat dairy foods contain just as much calcium and protein as full-fat dairy products but have far less saturated fat. Try to eat or drink items from this group 3 times a day.

- Use semi-skimmed, skimmed or 1% fat milk.
- Use low-fat natural yogurt, low-fat fromage-frais, semi skimmed or skimmed milk instead of cream, in soups, sauces, custard and other recipes.
- Use low-fat yogurt and low-fat ice-creams.
- Use natural low-fat yogurt for salad dressings and serve dressings separately.
- Use grated cheese in salads and sandwiches whenever possible as you will use less.
- Use low fat or half fat cheeses.
- Keep the amount of high-fat foods in the diet to a minimum.
- Where possible use stronger flavoured cheese as you will use less

Fats & Oils

Foods that contain fats and oils are concentrated sources of energy. However, because fat contains only small amounts of nutrients, many such foods are not essential to a healthy diet but add extra taste.

There are two main types of fat; saturated and unsaturated fat. Foods that are high in saturated fat can raise blood cholesterol levels and lead to heart disease. Most people eat more fat than is needed for health. In order to maintain a balanced diet, we should only eat small quantities of foods that are high in fat and treat such foods like pastries as occasional treats

However, not all fat is bad as fat helps the absorption and transportation of fat soluble vitamins around the body.

- Eat more starchy carbohydrate foods instead of fatty foods.
- Choose leaner cuts of meat instead of fatty cuts, sausages or pies. Cut off any visible fat.
- Choose lower-fat milk and dairy products.
- Use a low-fat spread instead of butter.
- Cook with vegetable or olive oil instead of butter or ghee and use only a small amount.
- Eat foods such as hard cheese, cream, soured cream, crème fraiche and coconut oil less often and in small amounts.
- Use minimal amounts of cooking and salad oils
- Avoid adding butter to vegetables after cooking
- Watch out for hidden fats in confectionary, biscuits and cakes. Always read the label.
- Use semi-skimmed, skimmed or 1% fat milk.



Composite Foods

Composite foods contain more than one kind of food item and many manufactured foods fall under this category. An example of a composite food could be a ham, cheese and mushroom pizza which contains a dough base. If more fruit and vegetables such as mixed salad, peas or broccoli and a piece of fruit were added to the meal it can become a balanced diet as shown in The Balance of Good Health. To make healthy choices, identify the main food item or ingredient in order to decide which food group it fits into.

Fluids

Fluids are important part of maintaining a balanced diet but are often overlooked. Water is essential and needed for our bodies to function properly but fluids do not only include water alone, we take in fluids from most drinks including tea, coffee, fruit juice and milk. It is important to drink enough fluids to prevent constipation and dehydration. Aim to drink about 6 to 8 glasses (1.2 litres) of water or fluids a day. In warm weather or after a lot of activity you might need more than 1.2 litres. Avoid drinking fluids that are high in added sugar.

Alcohol

There is nothing wrong with having the occasional drink. However, avoid drinking too much alcohol as heavy drinking can lead to many health problems such as cancer, liver disease, stroke and high blood pressure. It can also have a negative effect on mental health. Women should not exceed 2 to 3 units of alcohol everyday while men should not exceed 3 to 4 units a day.

Exceeding this amount can be a significant risk to health. For good health it is better to spread drinking throughout the week to avoid binge drinking.

Breakfast

Breakfast is an important meal and can help give us the energy we need to face the day as well as some of the vitamins we need for good health. Skipping breakfast does not help loose weight as we can miss out on essential nutrients and eat more than we need at other times. Eating breakfast can actually help people control their weight. Having whole grain/ whole meal cereal can also contribute to your daily fibre needs. Including fruit with your breakfast will help you achieve your 5-A-DAY.