

Patient information

Ten simple steps to a healthy diet



- Step 1** **Include starchy foods in your diet**
- Step 2** **Eat lots of fruit and vegetables**
- Step 3** **Eat more fish**
- Step 4** **Cut down on saturated fat**
- Step 5** **Cut down on sugar**
- Step 6** **Try to eat less salt**
- Step 7** **Get active and try to be a healthy weight**
- Step 8** **Drink plenty of water**
- Step 9** **Don't skip breakfast**
- Step 10** **Know your food groups and portions**

Step 1: Include regular starchy carbohydrate foods in your diet

Carbohydrate foods such as bread, cereals, rice, pasta and potatoes are a really important part of a healthy diet. Choose wholegrain varieties whenever you can.

Carbohydrate foods are a good source of energy and the main source of a range of nutrients in our diet. As well as starch, these foods contain fibre, calcium, iron and B vitamins. Carbohydrates are the **only** source of fuel that our brains can use to function, therefore it is essential that we have regular intake.

Starchy foods should make up $\frac{1}{3}$ of the food you eat, try to include *at least one starchy food* with each of your main meals.

For example:

- Start the day with a wholegrain breakfast cereal
- A sandwich or filled pitta bread or something hot on toast for lunch
- And pasta, potatoes or rice with your evening meal

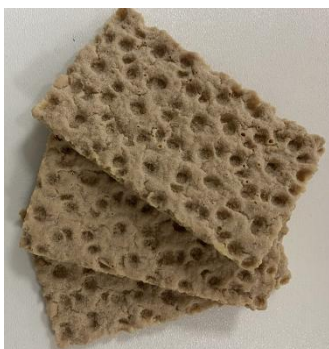


Some people think starchy foods are fattening, but gram for gram they contain less than half the calories of fat.

You just need to watch the fats you add when cooking and serving these foods.

Why choose wholegrain?

Wholegrain foods contain more fibre and other nutrients than white or refined starchy foods. Foods higher in fibre help to keep your bowels regular and keep you feeling fuller for longer as they are digested more slowly.



Examples of wholegrain foods are: wholemeal and wholegrain bread, wholemeal pitta bread and chapatti, wholemeal pasta, brown rice, wholegrain breakfast cereals such as Branflakes®, Weetabix®, All Bran®, Shredded Wheat®, muesli, Shreddies® etc.

Potatoes cooked and eaten with their skins on will provide additional fibre and vitamins.

Step 2: Eat lots of fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables contain essential vitamins, minerals and fibre and can help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers.

Recommended intake of fruit and vegetables is at least 5 portions per day.

What is a portion?

An adult portion is: 80g, this looks like:

1 slice of large fruit such as melon or pineapple

1 medium fruit such as apple, banana, pear, orange or other similar size fruit

2 small fruit such as plums, kiwi, clementine or other similar size fruit

½ a grapefruit or avocado

7 - 14 small fruit such as strawberries, cherries, blackberries, raspberries

1 heaped tablespoon of dried fruit

1 x 150ml glass unsweetened fruit/vegetable juice (max one 150ml portion a day)

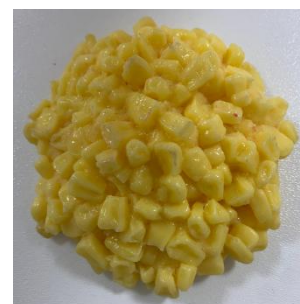
3 heaped tablespoons of vegetables – raw, cooked, frozen, and tinned

A cereal bowl of lettuce, watercress or spinach

Choose from fresh, frozen, dried or juiced.

Smoothies: depending on the quantity of fruit or vegetable and juice used, can only count for a maximum of 2 portions per day. These should be limited to 150ml daily.

Remember potatoes count as a starchy carbohydrate food, not as portions of fruit and vegetables.



Step 3: Eat more fish

Fish is an excellent source of protein and contains many vitamins and minerals. We should aim for *at least* 2 portions of fish (approximately 140g per portion) a week, including one portion of oily fish.



Fresh, frozen or canned are suitable but remember canned and smoked fish can be high in salt.

Oily fish are rich in certain types of fats, called omega 3 fatty acids, which can help prevent heart disease. These include: salmon, mackerel, trout, herring, fresh tuna, sardines, pilchards.

Non-oily are fish such as haddock, plaice, pollock, coley, tinned tuna, halibut, skate, sea bass, hake or cod are also important sources of protein, vitamins and minerals.

Shark, swordfish and marlin should not be eaten if you are pregnant or trying for a baby. Breastfeeding women and all other adults should not have more than one portion a week due to the higher levels of mercury in these fish.

Research, however, suggests that fish oil supplements do not provide the same benefit to heart health.

If you do not eat fish - plant sources of omega 3 fatty acids, include walnuts, flax seeds (linseeds), hemp seeds, chia seeds and soya beans.

Step 4: Reduce intake of saturated fat

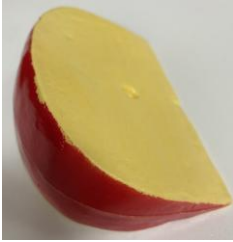

In order to stay healthy, we need some fat in our diets, however what is important is the *kind* of fat we are eating.


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

Saturated fat can increase the amount of cholesterol in the blood, which increases the chance of developing heart disease.

Unsaturated fat can help to lower blood cholesterol; therefore, opt for unsaturated fat options when available, e.g., vegetable oils (sunflower, rapeseed and olive oils), oily fish, avocados, nuts and seeds.

This table contains foods to avoid due to high saturated fat content and healthier alternatives.

Foods	Foods high in saturated fat	Healthier alternatives
Milk	Full fat or added cream milk	Semi-skimmed/skimmed milk
Cheese 	High fat cheeses such as cream cheese, mascarpone, stilton, cheddar cheese, gouda, parmesan, full fat cheese spread, fried paneer	Low fat cheeses such as cottage cheese, curd cheese, quark, ricotta, half-fat edam, low fat cheese spread
Other dairy produce	Greek yoghurt, thick and creamy yoghurts	Low fat natural or fruit yogurts
Meat 	Fatty cuts of meat	Small lean cuts of meat
Fruit and veg	Deep fried or with added fat	All fresh, canned, frozen
Bread, cereals and potatoes	Garlic bread, croissants, waffles, samosas, fried rice, deep fried chips	Wholegrain varieties of bread, chapatti without fat, pitta bread, wholegrain breakfast cereals, oats, potatoes without added fat
Fatty and sugary foods	Butter, ghee, palm oil, coconut oil, lard, cream, crème fraiche, salad creams, mayonnaise,	Unsaturated fat spreads/oils such as sunflower, soya, flax seed (linseed), olive oil and

	<p>cakes, pastries, cheesecakes, chocolate, chocolate biscuits, shortbread, doughnuts, crisps, ice cream, cheese snacks</p>	<p>rapeseed oil, fat free fromage frais, low fat salad cream, plain biscuits, crumpets, fruit salad, sorbet, sugar free jelly, unsalted seeds and nuts</p>
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Know your labels

To monitor fat intake, please read the labels on the food packaging:

A food is classed as **HIGH** in fat if it contains more than 20g fat per 100g.

A food is classed as **LOW** in fat if it contains less than 3g fat per 100g.

If the amount of fat is between 3 - 20g per 100g, this indicates a **MEDIUM** level of fat.

Some labels also give a figure for saturated fat or 'saturates':

A food is classed as **HIGH** in saturated fat if it contains more than 5g per 100g.

A food is classed as **LOW** in saturated fat if it contains less than 1.5g per 100g.

If the amount of saturated fat is between 1.5 - 5g per 100g, this indicates a **MEDIUM** level.

Each burger contains:

ENERGY 924KJ 220kcal 11%	FAT 13g MED 19%	SATURATES 5.9g HIGH 30%	SUGARS 0.8g LOW <1%	SALT 0.7g MED 12%
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% of an adults reference intake.
Typical values per 100g: Energy 966kJ/ 230kcal

Step 5: Reduce intake of sugar

Most people in the UK are eating too much sugar. Too much sugar can lead to unwanted weight gain and tooth decay if eaten in excess.

We should all be trying to eat fewer foods containing added sugar, such as sweets, cakes, biscuits, sugary drinks.



Know your labels

To know the sugar content of foods, we need to look at the label on the packaging.

Look at the 'carbohydrates (of which sugars)' figure on the label.

A food is classed as **HIGH** in sugar if it contains more than 15g sugars per 100g.

A food is classed as **LOW** in sugar if it contains less than 5g sugars per 100g.

If the amount of sugar is between 5 - 15g per 100g, this indicates a **MEDIUM** level of sugars.

Added sugars

The 'Carbohydrate (of which sugars)' figure does not tell you how much of the sugars is *added sugars* (the type we need to cut down on) or how much of the sugars are *naturally* found in the foods we eat. You can spot *added sugars* by looking at the ingredients list. The ingredients are listed in order of size of content so if 'sugar' is near the top of the list, then you know that the food is likely to be high in *added sugars*. Other words used to describe *added sugars* are sucrose, glucose, fructose, maltose, invert sugar, hydrolysed starch, corn syrup and honey.

To reduce your sugar intake:

- Reduce sugar added to hot drinks and breakfast cereals gradually until you can cut it out completely, or switch to sweetener
- Replace sugary fizzy drinks and juice drinks with water or no added sugar squash
- Choose wholegrain breakfast cereals instead of those coated in sugar / honey
- Reduce intake of high sugar foods such as sweets, chocolate, biscuits, cakes etc

Step 6: Reduce your salt intake

Many people feel that they do not eat too much salt as they do not add salt to their foods, however approximately 75% of our salt comes from foods that we buy, such as breakfast cereals, soups, sauces, bread and ready meals.

Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure. People with high blood pressure are more likely to develop heart disease or have a stroke than people with normal blood pressure.

Know your labels

Make sure you read your food labels and choose the brand with the lowest salt content. To know the salt content of foods we need to look at the label on the packaging.

A food is classed as **HIGH** in salt if it contains more than 1.5g salt per 100g (0.6g sodium).

A food is classed as **LOW** in salt if it contains less than 0.3g salt per 100g (0.1g sodium).

If the amount of salt is between 0.3 - 1.5g per 100g, this indicates a **MEDIUM** level of salt.

If you regularly add salt to your meals, begin to gradually reduce the amount that you add until you do not need to add it anymore, and try some alternative flavouring such as lemon juice, garlic, chilli, ginger, herbs and spices.

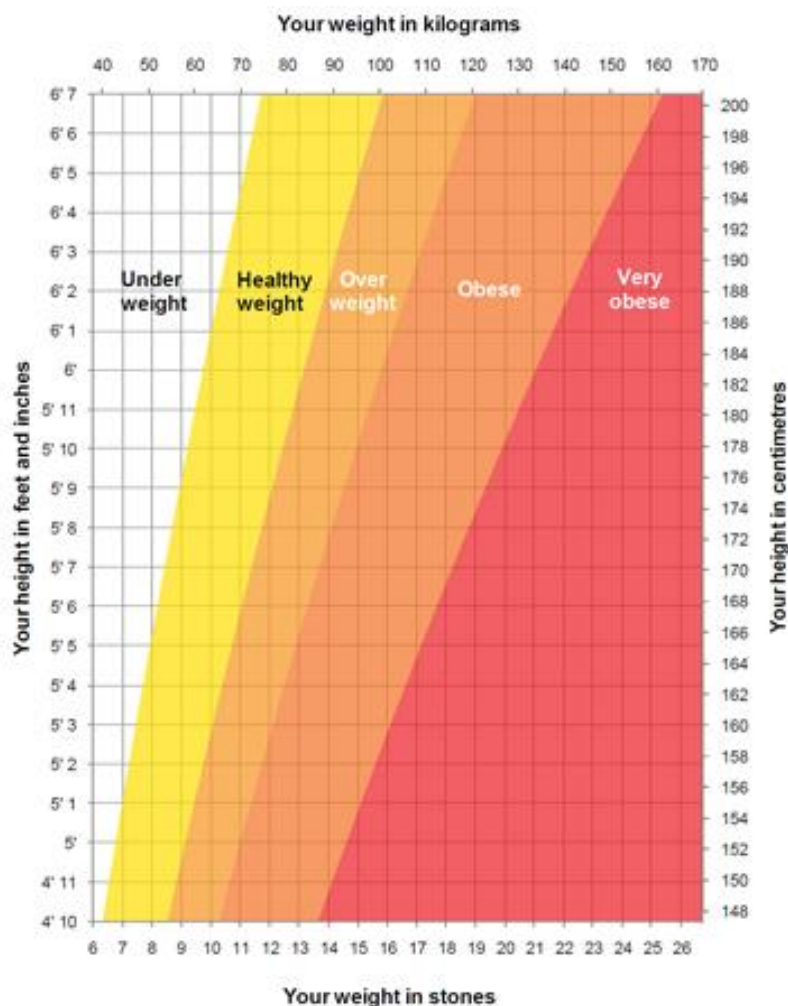
Some foods high in salt that should be kept to a minimum in a healthy balanced diet are: cheese, bacon, smoked meats and fish, ham and salami, olives and pickles, salted and dry roasted nuts, gravy granules, soy sauce and stock cubes.



Step 7: Keep active and aim to be a healthy weight

Being a healthy weight for your height is good for your health. Being overweight can lead to conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure or diabetes. Being underweight could also affect your health in a negative way.

You can use the chart below to check your weight against your height. If you're worried about your weight, ask your GP or Dietitian for advice.



If you think that you need to lose a little weight, the main things to remember are:

- Only eat as much food as you need
- Make healthy choices - it's a good idea to choose low fat and low sugar varieties where available and to eat plenty of fruit, vegetables and wholegrains
- Get more active, activity does not necessarily mean joining the gym, just keeping active every day, for example going for a daily walk

Whenever we eat more than our body needs, we put on weight. This is because we store any excess energy that we don't use up - usually as fat.

Even small amounts of extra intake can lead to weight gain - having just an extra 100kcal more than you require each day can lead to around 5lb (2.3kg) weight gain over one year.

Keep on track

1. Make a note of why you want to make changes to your diet
2. Be realistic about what you can achieve
3. Seek encouragement and support from friends, relatives and colleagues
4. Look back at what you have accomplished already
5. Treat yourself to a non-food reward once your goals have been achieved
6. Do not let one bad day put you off continuing to reach your targets

Aim to lose about 0.5 - 1.0kg (1 - 2lbs) per week, until you reach a healthy weight for your height.



Step 8: Drink plenty of water

In climates such as in the UK, females should drink around 1.6L or males should drink around 2L of water, or other fluids, every day to keep our bodies hydrated.

If you do not drink enough fluids you may find that you suffer from constipation, headaches, nausea and tiredness, and can even lead to urinary tract infections.

Dehydration

Your urine should be pale and straw-coloured. If it is any darker than this you may need to drink more fluids.

Fluids

All drinks count towards your daily fluid intake - water, tea, coffee, milk, squash etc, but do try to avoid adding sugar to hot drinks and drinking soft and fizzy drinks that are high in added sugar.

Caffeine

Caffeine is a mild diuretic which means it makes you urinate more; very large amounts could result in dehydration. Try to ensure caffeinated drinks are not your only source of fluid throughout the day.

Alcohol

New evidence around the health harms from regular drinking has emerged in recent years. There is no longer advice for a 'safe' level of drinking, rather a 'low risk' level:

Regular drinking of more than 14 units per week increases the risk of damaging your health. This applies to both men and women. If you do drink as much as 14 units per week, these should be spread across 3 days or more.

Health risks of regularly drinking more than the 'low risk' level include cancers of the mouth, throat and breast cancer, stroke, heart disease, liver disease as well as brain and nervous system damage. Alcohol is also high in calories, so cutting down could help you control your weight. If you are going to drink alcohol and are trying to lose weight, ensure you opt for low alcohol / low calorie options and choose low calorie soft drinks as mixers with spirits.

Examples of alcohol units

Alcohol	Units	Calories (kcal)
White wine 175ml 11% ABV	2	130
Premium lager 1pt 5% ABV	3	250
Cider 1pt 5% ABV	3	200
Alco pop 330ml 5% ABV	1.5	200
Spirits 25ml 37.5% ABV	1	55

ABV = a measure of the amount of pure alcohol as a percentage of the total volume of liquid in a drink

Step 9: Don't skip breakfast

Breakfast can help give us the energy that we need to face the day, as well as some of the vitamins and minerals we need for good health.

Some people skip breakfast because they think it will help them lose weight. But missing meals does not help us lose weight and it isn't good for us, because we can miss out on essential nutrients.



Research shows that eating breakfast can actually help people control their weight.

Suggestions for breakfast:

- Try a bowl of wholegrain cereal with skimmed / semi-skimmed milk and a sliced banana on top, with a glass of fruit juice
- Try a bowl of porridge made with skimmed / semi-skimmed milk with some fruit on top – this is cheap and contains lots of vitamins, minerals and fibre

- If you add salt or sugar to porridge, begin to reduce this gradually until you enjoy it without. You could also try adding some dried fruit, chunks of fresh fruit or some berries for extra flavor instead
- If you are struggling with time, bear in mind that in the time it takes to boil the kettle and make a hot drink, you would be able to eat a bowl of cereal or a pot of yoghurt
- If you prefer a cooked breakfast, choose a healthy option such as a boiled egg with wholegrain soldiers and low-fat spread, or grilled tomatoes and mushrooms on a wholegrain bagel.

If you cannot face breakfast first thing, try and have something within the first 2 hours of getting out of bed.

Keep some healthy wholegrain cereal at work or grab something on the go such as wholegrain toast, cereal, low fat yoghurts and fruit.

Step 10: Know your food groups and portions

Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are a good source of vitamins and minerals, and also a suitable source of dietary fibre which helps to keep bowel movements regular. Aim to eat 5 or more portions per day

1 adult portion = 1 apple / orange / pear, 2 satsumas / clementines / plums, 30g dried fruit, 3 heaped tablespoons cooked veg, 2 broccoli spears

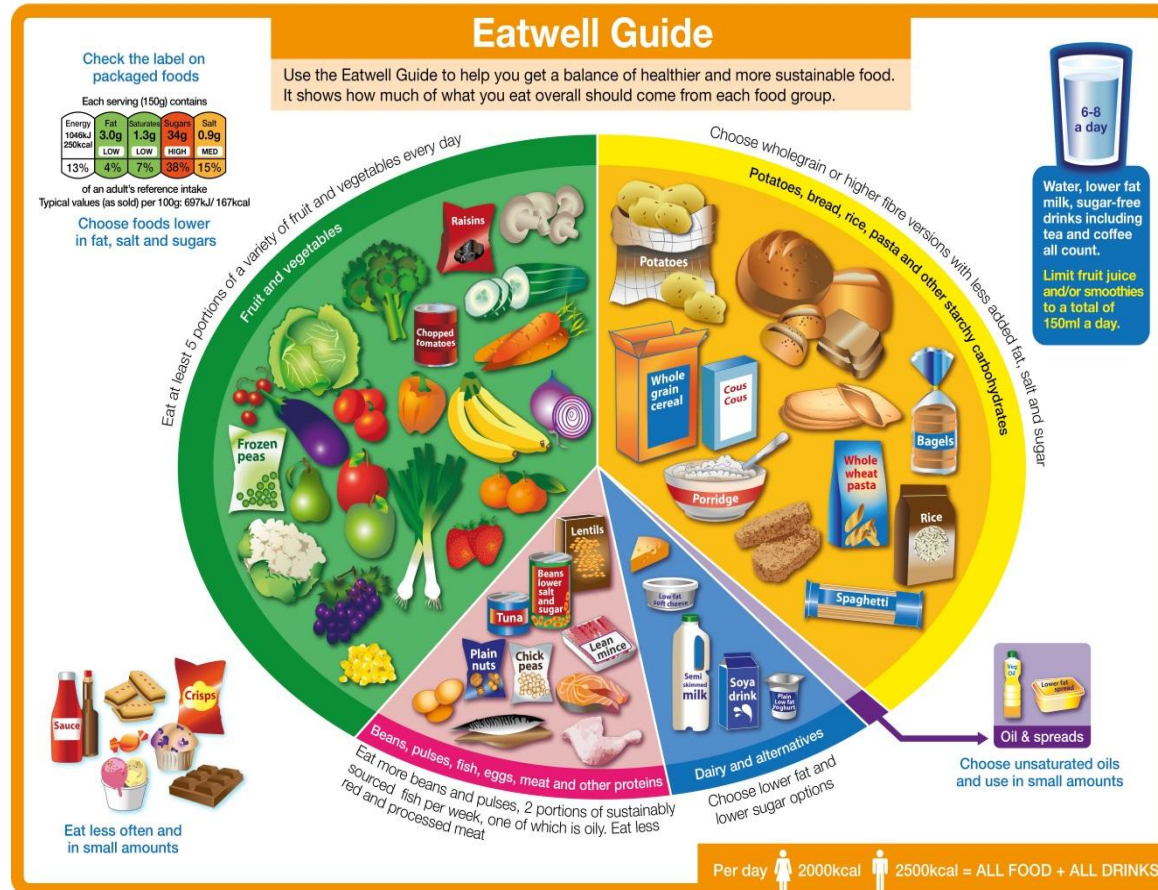
Fresh, frozen, tinned and dried all count

Foods high in sugar/fat

These should form the smallest part of your diet due to their limited health benefits

Use oils and spreads that are high in monounsaturates (e.g. olive oil, rapeseed oil)

Limit intake of high calories foods such as chocolate, cakes, biscuits, crisps, full sugar fizzy drinks specially if trying to lose weight



Protein (meat, fish, beans, lentils, eggs)

Protein foods aid growth and repair within the body
Include oily fish and/or nuts and seeds at least once a week.

Aim to eat 2-3 portions per day

1 adult portion = meat (~100g) - size of deck of cards, fish (75-150g) size of a cheque book, 2 medium eggs, 4tbsp pulses

Carbohydrate (bread, cereal, potato, rice)

Carbohydrate (starchy) foods are a good source of glucose, which is the main source of fuel for our brain, therefore you should base your meals around these foods

Eating carbohydrates higher in wholegrains provides extra fibre and vitamins (e.g. granary or wholemeal bread, brown rice, oats, whole wheat pasta)

Aim to eat 6 or more portions per day

1 adult portion = 1 slice of bread, 3 heaped tablespoons of pasta/rice, 3 egg sized potatoes, 1 small bowl of cereal, 1 Weetabix®

Dairy (milk, yoghurt, cheese)

Dairy foods are a good source of calcium to keep our bones healthy and strong

Eat 2 - 3 portions per day
1 adult portion = 1 small pot of yogurt, 30g cheese (small matchbox size), 200ml milk

This leaflet has been produced by

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