

## UK National guidelines



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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Public Health England (PHE) keeps dietary recommendations under review as part of its role in maintaining the evidence base and promoting evidence based public health. PHE committed to review healthy eating messages in July 2014 in light of, the then draft, conclusion of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition's Carbohydrate and Health report. Although there are many similarities between the Eatwell plate and the Eatwell Guide, however there are also some distinct differences:

- **Renamed the 'Eatwell Guide'** - Research found that the approach of having a plate with a knife and fork no longer resonated with the public. As such, Eatwell Guide was considered to be a helpful term and PHE adopted this following the consumer research.
- **Removal of the knife and fork** - Consumer research highlighted that the knife and fork featured in the eatwell plate were no longer considered appealing aspects of the overall design. It was felt that these added little to the meaning of the model and could cause confusion when interpreting the plate to be a recommendation for every mealtime.
- **Drawn images instead of photographs of foods** - PHE research showed that those who are already engaged with food and nutrition tended to prefer photos, but those who are less engaged, and more likely to have a poor diet, preferred drawn images. In order to make the model accessible to the whole population drawn images have been used, which tested well with all consumers.

- **Updated segment names** - The names of the food group segments have been updated to place emphasis on certain food products within a food group that can be considered more environmentally sustainable. For example, the pink segment is named 'Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins' to highlight the contribution non-meat sources make to protein intake.
- **Food group segments resized** - The segment sizes of the food groups have been adjusted to reflect current government advice on a healthy balanced diet.
- **The purple segment now only contains 'oils and spreads'** - The new Eatwell Guide differentiates unsaturated oils (such as vegetable /olive) and lower fat spreads from other foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar. This is because some fat is essential in a healthy balanced diet, but other foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar are not and should be eaten less often and in small amounts. The small size of the purple section reflects the fact that oils and spreads are high fat and contain a lot of calories, so these should only be consumed in small amounts.
- **High fat, salt and sugar foods have been removed from the purple section** - Foods high in fat and/or sugar, which previously featured in the purple section of the eatwell plate, have now been placed outside of the main image. The role of these foods and drinks in the diet are as products to be consumed infrequently and in small amounts.
- **Inclusion of a hydration message** - Keeping hydrated is part of a healthy diet and so the Eatwell Guide reinforces fluid recommendations and the best drinks to choose - water, low fat milk and sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee.
- **Additional messages for further guidance** - Consumer testing highlighted that most people found it helpful to have additional messaging on the guide as this helped to answer some of the immediate questions raised when looking at the image alone.
- **Inclusion of energy requirements** - An orange border featuring the energy requirements for men and women has been used to reinforce the message that all food and drinks consumed contribute to total energy intake.
- **Inclusion of a front of pack nutrition label** - A front of pack nutrition label has been added to the guide to respond to consumer comments regarding the lack of guidance on choosing foods lower in fat, salt and sugars when shopping. As there are several variations of the front of pack label, an amalgamation of the most commonly used features of the front of pack nutrition label was used.
- **Fruit juice has been removed from the fruit and vegetable segment** - Although fruit juice (at a maximum of 150ml/day) still counts towards one of your 5-a-day, the advice around drinks has been encompassed with the hydration message on the new Eatwell Guide.

The Eatwell Guide shows the proportions of the main food groups that form a healthy, balanced diet:

- at at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day.
- Base meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates, choosing wholegrain versions where possible.
- Have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soy drinks); choosing lower fat and lower sugar options.
- Eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins (including 2 portions of fish every week, 1 of which should be oily).
- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads and eat in small amounts.
- Drink 6 to 8 cups/glasses of fluid a day.

If consuming foods and drinks high in fat, salt or sugar have these less often and in small amounts.

## How does it work?

The Eatwell Guide divides the foods and drinks we consume into five main groups. Try to choose a variety of different foods from each of the groups to help you get the wide range of nutrients your body needs to stay healthy and work properly.

It is important to get some fat in the diet, however, foods high in fat, salt and sugar are placed outside of the main image as these types of foods are not essential in the diet and most of us need to cut down on these to achieve our healthy balance. Unsaturated fats from plant sources, for example vegetable oil or olive oil, are healthier types of fat. But remember, all types of fat are high in energy and so should only be eaten in small amounts.

Many of the things we eat, such as pizzas, casseroles, pasta dishes and sandwiches, are a combination of the food groups. For these sorts of food, you just need to work out the main ingredients and think about how these fit with the sections on the guide. For example, if you're having a cottage pie: the potato fits into the yellow segment; the milk in the mashed potato fits into the blue segment, the spread in the mashed potato fits into the purple segment, the meat, meat substitute or beans would fall into the pink segment; the onion, carrots and peas would fit into the green segment.

## *Fruit and vegetables*

Fruit and veg should make up just over a third of the food we eat each day.

Aim to eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and veg each day. Choose from fresh, frozen, canned, dried or juiced. A portion is 80g or any of these: 1 apple, banana, pear, orange or other similar-size fruit, 3 heaped tablespoons of vegetables, a dessert bowl of salad, 30g of dried fruit (counts as a maximum of one portion a day) or a 150ml glass of fruit juice or smoothie (counts as a maximum of one portion a day).

## *Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates*

Starchy food should make up just over a third of the food we eat. Choose higher-fibre, wholegrain varieties (wholewheat pasta, brown rice, or simply leaving the skins on potatoes).

Base your meals around starchy carbohydrate foods:

- Start the day with a wholegrain breakfast cereal; choose one lower in salt and sugars.
- Have a sandwich for lunch.
- Round off the day with potatoes, pasta or rice as a base for your evening meal

## *Why choose wholegrain?*

Wholegrain food contains more fibre than white or refined starchy food, and often more of other nutrients. We also digest wholegrain food more slowly so it can help us feel full for longer. Wholegrain food includes, wholemeal and wholegrain bread, pitta and chapatti, wholewheat pasta, brown rice, wholegrain breakfast cereals and whole oats.

## *Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins*

These foods are sources of protein, vitamins and minerals, so it is important to eat some foods from this group.

Beans, peas and lentils (which are all types of pulses) are good alternatives to meat because they're naturally very low in fat, and they're high in fibre, protein, and vitamins and minerals. Pulses, or legumes as they are sometimes called, are edible seeds that grow in pods and include foods like lentils, chickpeas, beans and peas. Other vegetable-based sources of protein include tofu, bean curd and mycoprotein; all of which are widely available.

Aim for at least two portions (2 x 140g) of fish a week, including a portion of oily fish. Most people should be eating more fish, but there are recommended limits for oily fish, crab and some types of white fish. For more information on fish see [www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/fish-shellfish](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/fish-shellfish) and [www.msc.Org/](http://www.msc.Org/)

Some types of meat are high in fat, particularly saturated fat. So when you're buying meat, remember that the type of cut or meat product you choose, and how you cook it, can make a big difference. To cut down on fat, choose lean cuts of meat and go for leaner mince, cut the fat off of meat and the skin off of chicken, try to grill meat and fish instead of frying and have a boiled or poached egg instead of fried. If you eat more than 90g of red or processed meat per day, try to cut down to no more than 70g per day. The term processed meat includes sausages, bacon, cured meats and reformed meat products.

## *Foods high in fat, salt and sugars*

This includes products such as chocolate, cakes, biscuits, full-sugar soft drinks, butter and ice-cream. These foods are not needed in the diet and so, if included, should only be done infrequently and in small amounts. If you consume these foods and drinks often, try to limit their consumption so you have them less often and in smaller amounts. Food and drinks high in fat and sugar contain lots of energy, particularly when you have large servings. Check the label and avoid foods which are high in fat, salt and sugar!

## *Hydration*

Aim to drink 6-8 glasses of fluid every day. Water, lower fat milk and sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count. Fruit juice and smoothies also count towards your fluid consumption, although they are a source of free sugars\* and so you should limit consumption to no more than a combined total of 150ml per day. Sugary drinks are one of the main contributors to excess sugar consumption amongst children and adults in the UK. Swap sugary soft drinks for diet, sugar-free or no added sugar varieties to reduce your sugar intake in a simple step.

Alcohol also contains lots of calories (kcal) and should be limited to no more than 14 units per week for men and women. The calorific content of an alcoholic beverage depends on the type of alcohol, the volume served and the addition of mixers. As an example 1 pint of standard strength lager contains approximately 136kcal, a 175ml medium glass of wine contains approximately 135kcal and a 25ml shot of spirit (40% vol) contains approximately 56kcal.

\*Free sugars - Any sugar added to food or drink products by the manufacturer, cook or consumer including those naturally found in honey, syrups and unsweetened fruit juice.

## Food labelling

Lots of pre-packaged foods have a food label on the front of pack which shows the nutrition information per serving. They also refer to reference intake which tells you how much of each nutrient should be included in the daily diet. The percentage refers to the contribution that the product makes to the reference intake for each nutrient. Food labels can help you to choose between foods and to pick those that are lower in calories, fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt. Where colour coded labels are used you can tell at a glance if they are high, medium or low in fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt. For a healthier choice, try to pick products with more greens and ambers and fewer reds. Remember that the portion sizes used on the label are suggestions and may not be the same as you actually consume. For example, some foods and drinks commonly consumed as single servings have the nutritional information presented per half pack.

To find out more about food labelling, visit [www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/food-labelling.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/food-labelling.aspx)

## Cutting down on saturated fat

Cutting down on saturated fat can lower your blood cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease. Most people in the UK eat too much saturated fat. The average man should have no more than 30g saturated fat a day. The average woman should have no more than 20g saturated fat a day. Children should have less saturated fat than adults. But remember that a low-fat diet isn't suitable for children under five. One of the easiest ways to cut down on saturated fat is to compare the labels on similar products and choose the one lower in saturated fat. And watch out for foods that are high in saturated fat, including fatty cuts of meat, sausages, butter, cream, cheese, chocolate, pastries, cakes and biscuits. You don't need to stop eating these foods altogether, but eating too much of these can make it easy to have more than the recommended maximum amount of saturated fat.

To find out more, visit [www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/Eat-lesssaturated-fat.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/Eat-lesssaturated-fat.aspx).

## Cutting down on sugar

Regularly consuming foods and drinks high in sugar increases your risk of obesity and tooth decay. Ideally, no more than 5% of the energy we consume should come from free sugars\*.

Currently, children and adults across the UK are consuming 2-3 times that amount.

## Age recommended maximum free sugars intake in sugar cubes

4-6 years - No more than 19g/day 5 cubes

- 7-10 years - No more than 24g/day 6 cubes
- From 11 years, including adults - No more than 30g/day 7 cubes

Many packaged foods and drinks contain surprisingly high amounts of free sugars\* including some breakfast cereals, yoghurts and fruit juice drinks. Use the food label to help you choose foods lower in sugar. Swap sugary breakfast cereals for plain cereals such as plain porridge, wholewheat biscuit cereals, shredded whole grain or no added sugar muesli. Cereal bars often contain high levels of free sugars\* too, so remember to check the label. Swap flavoured or corner-style yoghurts for low fat, lower sugar yoghurts, adding fresh fruit for variety.

Sugary drinks have no place in a child's daily diet but account for a surprisingly large proportion of the daily sugar intake of both children and adults. Almost a third of the free sugars consumed by 11-18 year olds comes from soft drinks. We should aim to swap sugary drinks for water, lower fat milk or sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee. Be sure to check the label for added sugar. For more information, visit [www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/sugars.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/sugars.aspx).

## Cutting down on salt

Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure, which increases your risk of developing heart disease or stroke. And since many people in the UK eat too much salt, that means that lots of people would benefit from cutting down. Adults should eat no more than 6g of salt a day. Children should have even less. 6g of salt is about a teaspoonful. But remember we're not just talking about the salt you add to your food because most of the salt we eat is already in everyday foods such as bread, breakfast cereal, pasta sauce and soup. Try replacing salt with pepper, herbs and spices to add flavour to your favourite dishes. Checking the label and choosing foods that are lower in salt is one of the best ways to cut down. For more information, visit [www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/salt.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/salt.aspx).

## How much food do I need?

We all need different amounts of energy (or calories) from food to be a healthy weight. How much you need depends on lots of things, including how active you are. Whenever we eat more than our body needs, we put on weight. This is because we store the energy we don't use as fat. Even if we have just small amounts of extra energy each day, we can put on weight. And most people in the UK eat more than they need.

Daily energy requirements				
Age	Males		Females	
	Kcals	KJ	Kcals	KJ
1	765	3201	717	3000
2	1004	4201	932	3899
3	1171	4899	1076	4502
4	1386	5799	1291	5402
5	1482	6201	1362	5699
6	1577	6598	1482	6201
7	1649	6899	1530	6402
8	1745	7301	1625	6799
9	1840	7699	1721	7201
10	2032	8502	1936	8100
11 and over	2500	10,460	2000	8368

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>