

The eatwell plate : What is a healthy diet? Eating a varied and healthy diet is important.

Publication/Creation

[Place of publication not identified] : [publisher not identified], [2013]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/gtszubyn>

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THE EATWELL PLATE

WHAT IS A HEALTHY DIET?

Eating a varied and healthy diet is important for your general health and wellbeing. The Eat Well Plate shows what a healthy diet looks like. Research shows many diseases such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, type 2 diabetes and gut diseases are influenced by diet – so it is important to eat a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle. The Eat Well Plate shows all food can be included in your diet, but for a healthy balance it is important to eat foods in the right proportions.



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Department of Health in association with the Welsh Assembly Government,
the Scottish Government and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

Fruit and vegetables

This food group includes all fresh, frozen, tinned and dried fruits and vegetables. **Try to eat lots – at least five portions of different fruits and vegetables every day.** Beans, pulses and 100% fruit juice can only count as one portion, and some smoothies can contribute only two a day no matter how much you eat or drink. Try to eat a rainbow of different coloured fruits and vegetables to help ensure you get a variety of vitamins and minerals.



Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods

This food group includes all types of bread, cereals, pasta, rice, oats, noodles, couscous, potatoes, yams and plantains. **Try to eat plenty of these foods each day** as they provide carbohydrate – the body's main source of energy. Where possible try to choose wholemeal or wholegrain varieties as they contain more B vitamins, fibre and release energy more slowly – which can help to keep you fuelled and fuller for longer.



Milk and dairy foods

This food group includes milk, cheese, yogurt and fromage frais. It doesn't include cream, crème fraîche or butter. **Try to eat some dairy foods every day**, about 2-3 servings a day and go for low or reduced fat options where possible as they contain less saturated fat. This group provides protein, calcium, zinc and vitamins including vitamin B12 and riboflavin. If you don't eat dairy foods make sure you choose fortified dairy alternatives.



Meat, fish, eggs and other non-dairy sources of protein

This group includes all meat, meat products (e.g. sausages, burgers etc.), poultry, offal, fish, fish products (e.g. fish fingers, fishcakes etc.) and vegetarian sources of protein such as Quorn, soya, tofu, eggs, nuts, beans and pulses. **Try to eat some of these foods at each meal and at least two portions of fish a week**, one of which should be oily for a good source of essential omega 3 fats (e.g. salmon, trout, sardines, fresh tuna, herring or mackerel).



This food group provides the body with protein. Lean red meat is a good source of minerals such as iron and zinc. Beans and lentils are a good alternative to meat as they are low in fat and a great source of fibre.

Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar

This group includes margarine, butter, fats, oils, oil based dressings, mayonnaise, cream, crème fraîche, chocolate, crisps, biscuits, pastries, cakes, puddings, ice cream, honey, soft drinks, sweets, jam and sugar. These foods and drinks can be included in the diet but, as they tend to be high in energy, saturated fat, fat and sugar, **try to limit the amount you eat and choose lower fat or sugar varieties where possible.**

