

EATING FOR HEALTH



healthier
scotland
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

NHS
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What You Can Do

The subject of healthy eating can seem both very simple and quite confusing.

Most of us know the main messages—more fruit and vegetables, more bread and cereals, less fat, salt, sugar and so on—but we can all improve what we eat. Eating well is about having a wide variety of foods. It doesn't have to mean completely stopping eating what you have always eaten. Nor does it have to mean spending more on food.

We buy a lot of our food these days in supermarkets. But, of course, not everyone is in easy reach of a supermarket. For some people getting access to a healthy balance of food can be a problem whether for transport or financial reasons.



The picture below makes healthier eating easier to understand by showing the types and proportions of foods needed to make a well-balanced and healthy diet.



People living in rural areas or city housing schemes may need special support. For these reasons community food projects have been set up in a number of places. These projects can give general advice on healthy eating, including making your food budget go further. Some sell and deliver food (food co-ops), while others provide healthy eating classes. Each reflects what a local community wants.

There are now quite a lot of these projects around and more support for them is being provided through the Scottish Government-funded, Community Food and Health (Scotland) based at Consumer Focus Scotland. If you would like more information about local projects such as these or how to go about starting one, contact Consumer Focus Scotland or your local health promotion department.



In practice what does healthy eating mean?

Fruit and vegetables:

Research tells us that fruit and vegetables protect against heart disease and some cancers, help to reduce high blood pressure and help to control weight. Aim to eat 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Eating a total of 'five-a-day' is easier than you might think. Use any kind of fruit and vegetables, including fresh, frozen, tinned and dried, and a daily glass of fruit juice.



Bread, cereals and potatoes:

These should make up the main part of each meal and include all kinds of bread (wholemeal, white, brown, multi-grain, rolls, pitta bread and chapatis made without fat), rice, pasta, breakfast cereals and potatoes. Wholegrain varieties of bread and cereals contain more fibre and are more filling and there are now low-salt varieties of bread available. These foods are not fattening in themselves but spreads and fillings often are. This is important to remember if you're trying to control a weight problem.





Meat, fish and alternatives:

Chicken, fish, meat, eggs, beans, lentils and nuts give you the balance of nutrients you require and add texture and flavour to meals. Aim to eat at least two portions of fish a week, one of which should be oil rich (eg mackerel, sardines, salmon, herring). Fish may be fresh, tinned or frozen.*

Milk and milk products:

Eat these foods in moderate amounts every day, and where possible choose lower fat types. Avoid hard margarine and use low-fat spreads. Using about half-a-pint of skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, low-fat yoghurt or fromage frais, or about 30gms of reduced fat cheese such as cheddar is good for you, and is particularly important for children and teenagers whose growing bones need calcium. Children up to two years should use full-fat varieties. This group does not include butter or cream.

Sweets, snacks, fats and sugar:

Sweets, snacks and some processed foods often contain large quantities of fat and sugar, and can contribute to being overweight and more serious health problems. So avoid eating foods such as biscuits, cakes, chocolate, crisps and chips every day. Fat used in cooking, and spreads, should be used sparingly.

Many of us do not have regular or fixed mealtimes and may have to eat a snack-food meal. Even if this is the case the guidance is still the same. The food guide and the tips for healthy eating will help you to work out what changes you might want to make.

*If you are pregnant, breastfeeding or thinking of becoming pregnant in the next year, you should avoid eating shark, swordfish and marlin, and limit the amount of tuna you eat because of the amount of mercury in these fish.

See www.eatwell.gov.uk/agesandstages/pregnancy

Making It Happen

Making it happen can involve you in two ways. You can make changes to what you eat and how you cook it, and you can also play a part in influencing the people who sell, provide and serve food. First, though are our Tips for Healthy Eating.

By following the advice in these tips you'll be heading in the right direction for a good balance of food and improved health. Use the boxes on the right below to help you identify how you might want to change the way that you eat.

Tips for Healthy Eating

- 1. Eat 5 portions from the fruit and vegetable group every day. (One portion can be fruit juice.)
- 2. Serve bread with your meals as well as using it for sandwiches. Eat more bread, not less, using mainly wholemeal bread.
- 3. Eat a large bowl of breakfast cereal every day.
- 4. Rice, pasta or potatoes should take up about a third of your plate for main meals. Eat more rice, pasta and potatoes.

What do you need to change?

Definitely need to change	Need to change some things	Almost there



What do you need to change?

6. Use half a pint of milk (semi-skimmed or skimmed), or low-fat yoghurt every day. Choose reduced-fat cheeses, low-fat or reduced-fat spreads and avoid processed meat products.
7. Avoid adding salt at the table and eat fewer salted foods.
8. Keep cakes, biscuits, ice cream and sweets for special occasions. (If you always have them in the house, you'll eat them!) This will help control your intake of fat and sugar.
9. Avoid sugary products for children, particularly soft drinks, and sweets between meals.

Definitely need to change	Need to change some things	Almost there

How do you know if you're carrying too much weight? A simple and accurate way is to measure your waist, using an ordinary tape measure.

For **men**, if your waist measurement is 37ins or over you're overweight. So try to keep below this figure. A waist over 40ins points to ill health and an urgent need to lose weight.

31 **32** 33 34 **35** 36 **37** 38 39 **40** 41

For **women**, if your waist measurement is 32ins or over then you're overweight, so try to keep below this figure. A waist over 35ins points to ill health and an urgent need to lose weight.

If you would like help with a weight problem then do go and see your family doctor.



An easy way to change

You might find that introducing some of the changes gradually is a good idea.

This can help you and members of your family to get used to and enjoy a new way of eating. By substituting some foods a bit at a time you can also plan within your existing food budget.

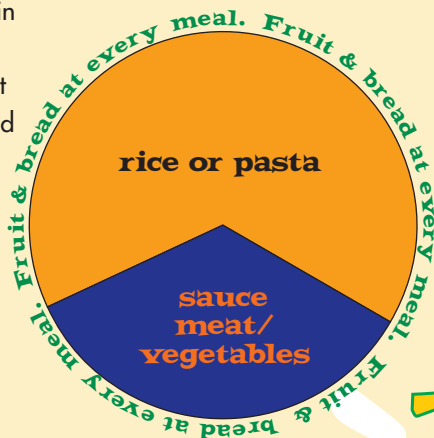
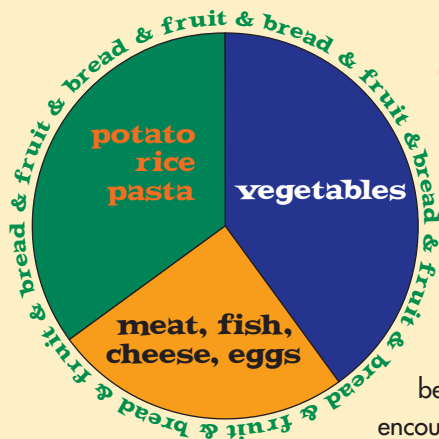
Healthy eating doesn't have to mean a more expensive food bill.

The perfectly balanced meal

Using a standard dinner plate, these plate models show the perfect proportions of foods for healthy eating when you're planning your meals. Think about this when looking at our meal ideas. Some of the changes needed will not require you as a member of the public to do much at all, because food manufacturers are being encouraged by Government to

change their products in

line with the healthy eating guidance. Some manufacturers have already lowered the salt content in such products as baked beans and bread and you probably haven't noticed it.





To help move these changes along the Government is meeting with leaders of the Food Industry—manufacturers and retailers—to discuss what else they can do and to find out how quickly industry can make changes to their products to encourage healthy eating. What you do as a consumer does make a difference, the more wholemeal bread we ask for and buy, the more supermarkets will stock it. The fewer fatty pies we buy, the fewer will be produced and the recipes will have to be changed by the manufacturers. As a consumer you really can make a difference, and remember 'the customer is always right'.

A good start in life

Parents always want the best for their children and there's no doubt that breastfeeding provides babies with the best start. As children grow up, parents will still want to get the best for them. That could mean making sure that the school has a healthy eating policy. You might want to think of joining or setting up a School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG).





SNAGs involve teachers, catering staff, parents and pupils in working together to make healthy eating choices the easy ones. The more that healthy choices are around, the more likely our children are to choose them. By encouraging our children to enjoy a healthy balance of foods from the start we can help them avoid immediate and future health problems such as tooth decay, being overweight, heart disease and cancer. So ask your local school if they have a SNAG.

Eating out – at work or play

If you're going out for a special occasion, the chances are that you'll want to treat yourself to something special and that's fine. But many people now 'eat out' every day whether it's at the staff canteen, cafe, a takeaway or a sandwich on the move. To help you see what the healthy options are, the healthyliving award scheme for caterers has been established by the Scottish Government working with Consumer Focus Scotland. Look out for the award branding and encourage caterers such as those in your workplace to apply for the award.





Consumer Checklist

Some things for you to think about

How does your local foodstore or supermarket measure up?

Does it have:

- a good choice of fruit and fresh and frozen vegetables?
- a wide variety of breads including brown, multi-grain or wholemeal types and bread products?
- lower fat dairy products like semi-skimmed milk, low-fat yoghurt, reduced-fat cheeses?
- lean meat and reduced-fat meat products?
- a wide range of low-salt or salt-free products
- healthy options in the store(s) well signposted and explained, eg breads, spreads, ready meals and snacks?
- readily available healthy choices?
- a policy to restrict the promotion of sweets and sugary drinks?

And elsewhere does:

- your workplace have a healthy eating policy?
- your local community centre, swimming pool, cafe have a healthy eating policy?
- your local school have a healthy eating policy?



Food Hygiene Advice

- 1 Wash hands thoroughly before preparing food, after handling raw meat, after going to the toilet or handling pets.
- 2 Prepare and store all uncooked food separately from cooked food—keep raw meat or fish at the bottom of your fridge.
- 3 Keep the coldest part of your fridge below 5°C. Get a fridge thermometer. Keep eggs in the fridge.
- 4 Keep your kitchen clean. Wash worktops, chopping boards and utensils between handling food which is to be cooked and food which is not.
- 5 Defrost frozen meats and poultry fully (in the fridge or microwave) before cooking, unless the cooking instructions state otherwise.
- 6 Cook food thoroughly, following the instructions on the pack. If you re-heat food, make sure it is piping hot.
- 7 Undercooked meat, particularly burgers, sausages and poultry, can cause illness. Take extra care to cook them thoroughly until the juice has run clear and no pink bits remain. Do not eat food containing uncooked eggs.
- 8 Keep hot food hot and cold food cold—don't leave them standing around. Take chilled and frozen food home quickly—then put them in your fridge or freezer at once.
- 9 Check 'use by' dates—use food only within the recommended period.
- 10 Keep pets away from food, dishes and worktops.

Recipes For Change

Some ideas for healthy eating

Breakfast

Have something to drink with your breakfast: tea or coffee, water or fruit juice.

- 1
 - Bowl of cereal with added raisins, or chopped fresh fruit and milk (semi-skimmed or skimmed)
 - Toast with marmalade, using low-fat spread.
- 2
 - Fresh grapefruit or tinned grapefruit segments in fruit juice
 - Bowl of cereal with milk (semi-skimmed or skimmed)
 - Bread with honey.
- 3
 - Fruit juice or piece of fruit
 - Baked beans on toast.
- 4
 - A little reduced-fat cheese and tomato on toast
 - Banana.
- 5
 - Boiled egg with toast
 - Mixed chopped fruit (apple, pear, banana) with low-fat plain or fruit yoghurt
 - Bread or toast with jam.
- 6
 - Fruit juice or piece of fruit
 - Bowl of porridge.

Light Meals

(include a hot or cold drink)



1

- Vegetable soup (with pulses like lentils or alternative) with bread
- Fruit scone
- Piece of fruit
- Glass of semi-skimmed milk.

2

- Lean ham or sardine and tomato sandwiches (any bread thickly cut)
- Low-fat fruit yoghurt
- Piece of fruit.

3

- Bowl of pasta with tomato, peas and mushroom sauce
- Green salad.

4

- Pitta bread filled with tuna and sweetcorn and salad
- Carrot and raisin salad
- Fruit loaf
- Piece of fruit.

5

- Baked potato in its jacket
- Diced lean ham or smoked mackerel and pepper
- Celery and apple salad with a honey and lemon dressing
- Tinned fruit in fruit juice
- Plain muffin
- Glass of milk.



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Main Meals

(include a hot or cold drink)

1

- Baked potato
- Two vegetables
(eg carrots, cauliflower, broccoli)
- Chicken portion in barbecue sauce
- Bread pudding.

2

- Spaghetti bolognaise
(large helping of spaghetti and
a small helping of meat sauce)
- Mixed salad
- Crusty bread
- Fruit salad.

3

- Grilled fish and new boiled
potatoes, peas and sweetcorn
- Banana and custard
(made with semi-skimmed milk).

4

- Vegetable and chickpea curry and
rice/chapati made without fat
- Low-fat fruit yoghurt.

5

- Mashed potato
- Two vegetables
(green beans, leeks,
carrots, courgettes)
- Lamb and vegetable stew
- Baked apple.

Snacks

If you need to have snacks then avoid ones which are full of fat, salt or sugar. Instead use fruit, low-fat yoghurts, breadsticks, toast, bowl of cereal. Between-meal snacks are a bad idea if you have a weight problem, but you should have a drink—tea, coffee, water. Avoid sugary drinks between meals.

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This leaflet primarily gives you information about your diet as an adult.

If you have special requirements, for example if you have diabetes, then continue to follow the advice of your doctor. If in any doubt consult your doctor or dietitian.

For other information contact your local health promotion department. See under Health Board in the telephone directory.