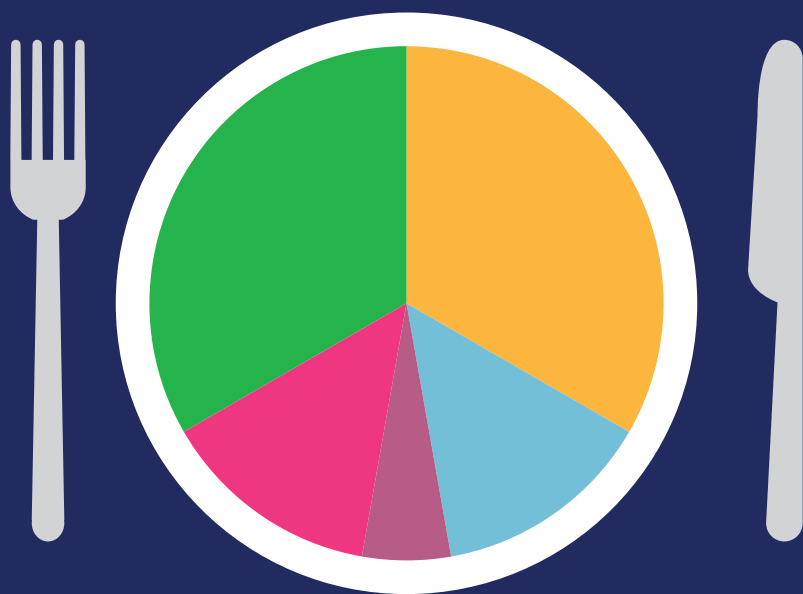


The Eatwell Plate



A balanced diet is important for good health. It can help you to manage your weight and increase your wellbeing, whilst also reducing the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers.

This leaflet will introduce you to The Eatwell Plate, which can help you to understand what a balanced diet looks like and how to introduce it into your meals.

The Eatwell Plate consists of five food groups and shows the different types of food we need to eat for health and wellbeing, and the portion size of each food group we should be incorporating into our daily diet.

Comparing what you have eaten in the last few days with The Eatwell Plate groups and proportions should help you to decide how balanced your current diet is.

Eating Well for Weight Loss

To lose weight you will need to consider the amount of food you are eating and the types of foods you choose to eat. Most food and many drinks give us energy in the form of calories. The key to weight loss is to take in less energy/calories from your food than you are using each day in activity and to maintain your body.

The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



Yellow Group

Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods

Foods in this group include bread, breakfast cereals, pasta, rice, oats, noodles, couscous, potatoes, sweet potatoes, yam and barley. Starchy foods are naturally low in fat.

Try to include at least one food from this group at each meal. Wholegrain varieties contain fibre, which we digest more slowly helping us feel fuller for longer.

Here are some of our recommended choices:

- Wholemeal and wholegrain breads
- Wholemeal pasta
- Brown rice
- Wholegrain breakfast cereal
- Oats



Weight Loss Tips

Are your portion sizes of starchy food too large? If you think your portion size is wrong try and begin cutting down, starting with a reduction of one third to start with.

If you're adding fats to your starchy foods before or after cooking them, you will be increasing the calories within your meal e.g. butter on bread and potatoes, fried rice, chips and Yorkshire puddings. Try to keep this to a minimum.

Speciality breads such as croissants and cheesy breads can be higher in fat.

Choose savoury crackers carefully as many of these are high in fat.

Green Group

Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are a vital part of a healthy diet and with so much colour and variety you never need to get bored. Fruit and vegetables should make up at least one third of the foods we eat each day.

Fruit and vegetables are low in fat and packed full of nutrients which help our bodies to function and they also protect us against a range of diseases. Fresh, frozen, dried and canned varieties all count towards your daily intake. You've probably heard about the '5 a day' guidance which is the minimum amount of fruit and vegetables we should be enjoying each day.

Here are some handy examples of what one portion looks like:

A medium apple, orange, pear or banana / A dessert bowl of mixed salad or vegetables / Two satsumas, plums or similar sized fruit / One handful of cherries, grapes or berries / Three heaped tablespoons of vegetables / A small glass of fruit juice / Three tablespoons of fruit salad or stewed fruit / One tablespoon of dried fruit



Weight Loss Tips

While dried fruits like apricots and raisins count towards your 5 a day, once fruit has been dried it also becomes a concentrated source of sugar and calories so try to stick to one portion a day.

Avoid butter, cream and cheese sauces. Fruit and vegetables are low in calories but this will be increased if you use butter, cream or sauces which are high in fat. They may be low in calories but as soon as you add extra elements you could lose some of the benefits.

Limit the amount of fruit juice or smoothies you drink to one small glass a day. These can be a concentrated source of calories and it can be easy to drink a lot.

Pink Group

Meat, fish, eggs and beans (and other non dairy sources of protein)

You should include a food from this group in at least two meals each day.

Foods include

- Fresh meats, fish and eggs
- Processed varieties of meats and fish including bacon, sausages and fish fingers
- Vegetarian sources of protein come from foods such as nuts, tofu, Quorn, beans and pulses (red kidney beans, lentils, baked and butter beans)

Weight Loss Tips

Think about your portion size. Many of us eat much more of these foods than we need for health.

Meat can be high in fat and processed meats such as bacon, sausages, burgers, pies and salami should only be eaten occasionally.



Try choosing leaner cuts of meat and cut off any excess fat and skin. Watch out for meat and fish products in pastry, batter or breadcrumbs as these all tend to be high fat options.

Avoid frying your foods and instead try grilling, baking, boiling, steaming or poaching.

Eating beans and lentils in the place of meat or adding to a dish can help you to reduce your calorie and fat intake as they are lower in fat than many meat options.

Try to eat two portions of fish each week and make one of your portions an oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, trout, sardines or fresh tuna.

Blue Group

Milk and Dairy Foods

Foods within this group include milk, cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais. Butter, eggs and cream are not included in this group. These foods help to provide us with calcium, which we need to build and maintain our bones.

These sorts of food can be high in fat but you can get all the calcium you need from three servings per day.

A serving equals:

- 200mls or 1/3 pint milk
- A small pot of yoghurt or fromage frais
- A matchbox size piece of cheese (30g or 1oz)
- A small pot of cottage cheese



Weight Loss Tips

Choose low fat versions when you can such as skimmed, 1% or semi-skimmed milk; low fat or natural yoghurt; cottage cheese and reduced fat hard cheese. Portion sizes of cheese are often too big. Try using stronger tasting cheese in a smaller portion or grate cheese to make it go further.

Trade in your cream or crème fraiche toppings for a healthier alternative of yoghurt or fromage frais.

Purple Group

High fat, sugary foods

These sorts of foods give us a lot of calories from fat and/or sugar but not a lot of other nutrients – most of us need to eat less of these sorts of foods.

Foods which are high in fat

include: Margarine, butter, spreads, cooking oils, mayonnaise, salad dressings and cream.

Other high fat foods include:

Chips, chocolate, crisps, biscuits, cakes, puddings, ice cream, pastry, rich sauces and gravy.

Examples of high sugar foods include:

Non-diet soft drinks, sweets, jam, honey, sugar, cakes, biscuits, puddings, ice cream and pastries.



Weight Loss Tips

Use cooking oils, margarine, butter and low fat spread sparingly.

Try to think of foods like cakes, biscuits, crisps and pudding as occasional treats rather than everyday items.

Avoid sugary, fizzy drinks and juices. Also try to reduce the amount of sugar you add to your hot drinks and breakfast cereal.

Compare the labels on food and choose ones that have less sugar and/or fat.

Some More Little Ways to Eatwell

- Compare the way you eat to The Eatwell Plate – are you getting the balance right?
- Eat regular meals and always have breakfast. Planning ahead will help you choose healthy meals and snacks throughout the day.
- Include one food from the yellow section of The Eatwell Plate at each meal.
- Enjoy the wide variety of fruit and vegetables on offer to fill your plate with nutrients and colour.
- Reduce your fats and sugars to help you on your weight loss journey.
- Too much salt can raise your blood pressure. Cut down by adding less to food and having high salt foods like cheese, processed meat, ready meals and crisps less often.
- Drink plenty of low sugar fluids. Water, no-added sugar squashes, tea or coffee with low fat milk are all good options and if you can't resist fizzy drinks choose a diet option.
- Only eat as much food as you need, take a look at our *Hunger Scale* leaflet for more advice on how to recognise when you're full.
- Eating from smaller plates and bowls can help you control your portion size. Use a dinner plate that is 10 inches or 25cms across and a shallow dessert/cereal bowl that is 6 inches or 16cms across.