

Top Tip Number 1 Eat Well Guide

The Eat Well Guide can support us in understanding how we can fulfil a healthy balanced diet. The guide includes 5 food groups which most people's bodies require daily to sustain a healthy weight and lifestyle.

It is important to include a good variety of fruit and vegetables and we should all aim to have at least 5 portions every day. This can include fresh, tinned and frozen options. Each variety will contain different vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants, all of which benefit our bodies in different ways including: protecting our immune system and reducing our risk of disease, supporting a healthy digestive system and helping us to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

It is important that plenty of starchy carbohydrates are included each day too. It is often believed that carbohydrates cause weight gain, which may be true if we over eat or choose the wrong types. Where possible we should choose starchy, wholemeal carbohydrates such as brown bread, wholemeal pasta and oats since these provide a slow release of energy, helping us to feel fuller for longer which helps us to avoid unnecessary snacking. Starchy carbohydrates are also rich in fibre which allows for a healthy digestive system.

It is important to include some dairy each day such as, cheese, yoghurt and milk. These foods provide us with calcium which is important for healthy bones and teeth. We do not require as much dairy as we do the fruits, vegetables or starchy carbohydrates since this food group is naturally higher in fat which means, too much could result in unwanted weight gain.

Another key part of the guide is the food group containing protein. Protein is required for growth, development and repair of damaged tissue and muscle. We get our protein from meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses, lentils and nuts. Choosing lean meat such as chicken or turkey, fish and beans or pulses are our healthiest options, red meat such as beef or lamb should only be eaten occasionally since these are high in saturated fat. Too much red meat can be bad for our heart and vessels.

The tiny portion of the Eat Well Guide is for our oil and fats. These can be used when cooking but the main message is to use a very small portion.

Remember, as well as eating a healthy balance of foods we must also ensure we are drinking plenty of water to keep ourselves well hydrated. When our body becomes dehydrated we can feel dizzy, have a headache and become very tired, which are all very similar symptoms of hunger. Drinking plenty helps us to avoid feeling this way and prevents us snacking more than we need to.



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