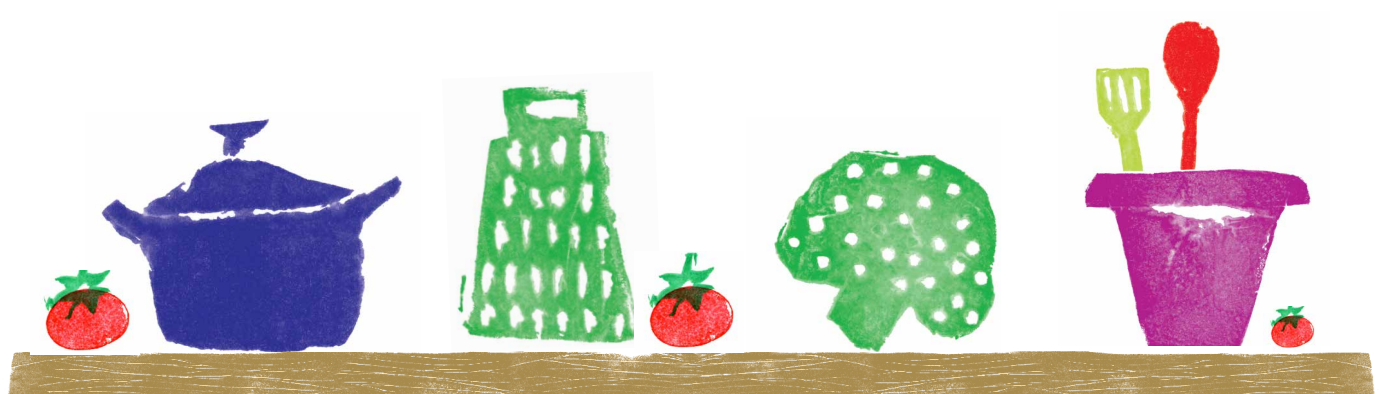




# Nutritional messaging for children



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# The five food groups

There are five different food groups that provide us with the different things we need to keep healthy and strong. It's really important to eat a variety of different foods to make sure we get all the nutrients our bodies need to function properly.

## What are the five food groups?



**Vegetables and fruits: Eat at least five a day**  
(e.g. apples, bananas, mango, broccoli, carrots, lettuce)

Vegetables and fruits contain vitamins and minerals that help us to fight illness and keep all the different parts of our body healthy.



**Starchy carbohydrates: Choose wholegrain**  
(e.g. bread, pasta, rice, potatoes)

Starchy carbohydrates give us energy.



**Protein: Vary your protein**  
(e.g. beans, fish, eggs, meat, nuts, tofu)

Protein helps our muscles grow and repair.



**Dairy: Know your dairy**  
(e.g. milk, cheese, yoghurt)

Dairy contains calcium and vitamin D, which help to keep our bones and teeth healthy and strong.



**Fats and healthy oils: Limit them**  
(e.g. butter, olive oil)

We need a small amount of fat to help us to grow and to protect our organs. Too much fat can lead to weight gain and illness.



**Make sure you eat from all five food groups**

# The Eatwell Guide

The Eatwell Guide is the Government's guidance on what a nutritionally balanced meal should look like. It is made up of roughly 40% vegetables and fruits, 40% carbohydrates, with the remainder split between protein and dairy, and a very small amount of healthy oils. Treats are for special occasions.

You need to make sure you eat from all of the food groups (see page 3), and in the right amounts, to stay healthy. It's not possible to balance your plate at every single meal, but try to eat the right amounts in your diet to get an overall balance.

What else do you need to know about The Eatwell Guide?



**Don't supersize**

Portion size (see page 12) varies depending on your age, gender and how active you are. Remember, if you're full, stop eating.



**Drink more water**

The Eatwell Guide shows a glass of water to emphasise the importance of staying hydrated (see page 8).



**Keep an eye on portion size**

The amount of food you eat depends on your age, gender and how physically active you are. Don't choose a larger portion just because you are offered one, and if you're full, stop eating! Small changes to your portion size can make a big difference to your overall health.



**Balance your plate**



## Vegetables and fruits

Vegetables and fruits are one of the biggest parts of a balanced diet. Different coloured vegetables and fruits contain different vitamins and minerals, which each have a different job in keeping our bodies healthy. Try to eat at least five different servings of vegetables and fruits every day.

### What is a serving?

For a child, one serving equals roughly one handful of fruit or vegetables (roughly 50g).

### What counts as one of your five a day?

- ➡ Raw, dried, cooked, fresh, frozen and tinned vegetables or fruits (except potatoes – see below) all count as long as nothing has been added to it, such as sugar or salt.
- ➡ Dried fruit can only ever count as one of your five a day: it contains fibre but lacks most of the vitamins, and the sugar content is more concentrated (1 portion = 30g).
- ➡ Potatoes don't count – this is because they live in the starchy carb food group (see page 9). Sweet potatoes are less starchy so they do count.
- ➡ Fruit juice and smoothies only count as one serving, no matter how much you drink – this is because sugar is released from the fruit when juiced or blended, which can damage your teeth. Also, fruit juice doesn't contain the fibre that whole fruits or vegetables do. Try to limit yourself to one 150ml unsweetened serving of fruit juice or smoothie per day.
- ➡ Beans and pulses only count as one of your five a day, so make sure you're eating plenty of other vegetables and fruits, too.



## Eat the rainbow

# Calories

Calories are a measure of energy. They are the energy that is transferred from the food and drinks you put into your body. We get calories from almost everything we eat or drink. Just as petrol fuels a car and keeps it running, calories provide fuel for our bodies so we're able to keep thinking and moving. The scientific definition of a calorie is: 1 calorie = the amount of energy it takes for 1 gram of water to heat up by 1 degree celsius.

So, we can simplify it and say: calories = energy.

## How many calories do you need each day?

The amount of calories you need depends on a few different things: how old you are, whether you are a boy or a girl, and how much exercise you're doing. The Government recommends that the average seven to ten year old needs approximately 1800 calories a day.

## How do calories work?

It all comes down to balancing energy. If you eat more calories than your body needs, you will gain weight. If you eat fewer calories than your body needs, you will lose weight.

## Nutritious calories vs. empty calories



### Avoid eating empty calories

**Nutritious calories** come from foods that contain vitamins, minerals and fibre, such as vegetables, fruits, nuts, yoghurt and meat – they provide your body with something essential, as well as energy.

**Empty calories** come from foods that give us energy but not much else, such as sweets, chocolate, crisps and fizzy drinks – they often cause us to put on weight because it's easy to eat a lot of them without feeling full or satisfied.



## Eat nutritious calories



# Exercise

Keeping active is very important part of staying healthy. Not only does it reduce the risk of disease, but it is also known to boost mood, sleep and energy levels. In the past people had to move much more because their jobs and daily life were naturally more active. Today we need to make a conscious effort to be active.

## How much exercise should you do?

Children should do at least an hour of physical activity every day. This can range from moderate intensity to vigorous intensity, but three times a week this should include muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening exercises.

## What counts?

- ➡ Moderate-intensity aerobic activity raises your heart rate and increases your breathing, but you are still able to speak (e.g. walking or playing in the playground).
- ➡ Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity causes you to breathe hard and fast and your heart rate is significantly raised (e.g. running or swimming).
- ➡ Muscle-strengthening exercise require you to lift your own weight or work against resistance (e.g. tug of war or rugby).
- ➡ Bone-strengthening exercise promotes growth and strength of bones (e.g. skipping or playing tennis).
- ➡ Some activities count towards both muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening exercise (e.g. gymnastics or playing football).



Move more

# Water and staying hydrated



The Eatwell Guide shows a glass of water to emphasise the importance of drinking water. It is essential because it keeps us hydrated and alert. Our brain is made up of roughly 73% water, so poor hydration can affect how it functions.

## How much water should I drink?

The exact amount of water your body needs depends on your age, gender, body size, health, diet, how active you are and what environment you are in. For example, if it is hot or humid we lose more water and so we need to drink more to replace it. As a general rule, we should aim to drink at least 1.2 litres (around 6 to 8 glasses) of water every day.

## What about other drinks?

A lot of drinks, besides water and milk, contain empty calories and lots of sugar. Too much sugar can weaken your teeth, make you gain weight and increase your risk of disease.

### Fruit juice and smoothies

No matter how much you drink, fruit juice and smoothies only count as a one of your five a day because they are high in sugar. Fruit juice does not contain the fibre and other nutrients that whole fruit does. It is better to eat a whole piece of fruit rather than to drink a glass of fruit juice or a smoothie.

### Fizzy drinks

These are sweetened, coloured drinks loaded with sugar and empty calories.



**Eat your calories, don't drink them**



## Drink more water





# Starchy carbohydrates

Most starchy carbohydrates (aside from foods like potato) are made from grains such as wheat, barley or rice, which are used to make foods like bread, pasta and cereal.

## What are grains?

Grains are hard, dried seeds that we harvest for food. They are popular all over the world because they are easy to store and transport, and they last longer than other starchy foods. Grains contain three parts; the germ, the bran and the endosperm. There are two types: wholegrains and refined grains.

## What's the difference between wholegrains and refined grains?



### Wholegrains

The grains remain whole, as they are when they're harvested (nothing has been taken away).



### Refined grains

The grains go through a process called milling, which removes the germ and bran – the bran is the outer layer of the grain and the germ is the reproductive part of the grain. When these parts are removed from the grain, lots of the nutrients are lost.

## Why should we eat wholegrains?

Research shows that eating wholegrains can help to reduce the risk of stroke, diabetes and heart disease. Also, they usually contain more fibre than refined grains. Fibre helps to keep our digestive system healthy and it helps to keep us fuller for longer – aim for at least 15g of fibre a day.



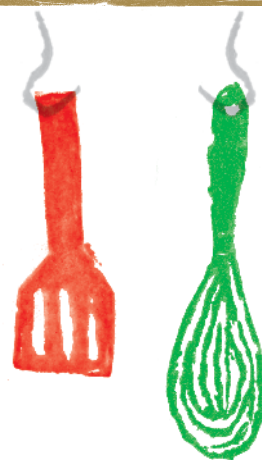
## Choose wholegrains

# Breakfast

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Your body has been without food for several hours while you have been asleep, so it is in need of a good, balanced meal to kickstart the day.

## Balance your breakfast

- ➡ A good breakfast helps you to concentrate better and restores your energy levels so that you are ready for the day ahead.
- ➡ Try to mix it up and eat from as many of the food groups as possible so you have a good balance (see page 3 and 4) – don't always opt for the same things.
- ➡ Eating breakfast means that you don't get hungry and snack on empty calories mid-morning (see page 6).



## Make your own

Some cereals and breakfast options, such as croissants, are very high in sugar, fat or salt. When you make your own breakfast you can control what goes into it and avoid adding extra sugars and salt – it's best to fill yourself up with good things.

The ideal breakfast is packed with a combination of wholegrains, vegetables, fruits and protein – a great example is: a handful of oats with added fruit, nuts, seeds and milk.



## Eat a good breakfast



Snacking on the right things during the day is good for you. It can keep your energy levels up between meals and should stop you from overeating at your next meal.

### Don't supersize

**Remember**, a snack is not a meal, so don't supersize your snacks – they don't need to be massive; they can simply be a piece of fruit or a handful of nuts.

### Avoid empty calories



Lots of the snacks you can buy are high in sugar, salt and fat, or all three, so make sure you read the nutritional information on the food label (see page 19), or better yet, make your own nutritious snacks.



**Eat nutritious snacks**

## Portion size



A portion is the amount of food on your plate.

### How do portion sizes vary?

Often the amount of food we think we need or we want to eat is bigger than the amount of food our body actually needs. The portion of food your body needs depends on how old you are, whether you are a boy or a girl, and how much exercise you're doing.

Portions served to us in restaurants or in packaged foods are much bigger today than they used to be, which means our bodies have become used to eating more than we actually need. Larger portion sizes mean that we are consuming more calories, and if we consume more calories than we need our bodies end up getting bigger.

When you are eating, pay attention to how your body feels. When you are full, stop eating – you don't have to eat it just because it's there.



**If you still feel hungry after a meal, it might just be that you're thirsty, so make sure you remember to drink water to stay hydrated (see page 8).**

### Read your food labels

It is easy to get confused by packaged foods and think that the amount in the pack is the amount you should be eating. Don't be fooled, and check the label to find out what the serving size should be (see page 19).



**Be aware of portion size**

# Protein

Eating the right amount of protein is really important as it provides you with essential amino acids. Think of these as the building blocks of the body. Your body is continually building and renewing cells, so you need amino acids to be able to do this. We are unable to produce amino acids in the body ourselves, so we need to make sure we get enough from the protein in our diets.

Where do you get protein from?

- ➡ **Meat**
- ➡ **Fish**
- ➡ **Eggs**
- ➡ **Beans, pulses (including chickpeas and lentils), nuts**
- ➡ **Dairy products**
- ➡ **Soy products (such as tofu)**

Just like vegetables and fruits, different types of protein also provide us with the different vitamins and minerals that we need to stay healthy and strong, so it is very important to vary your protein. However, meats such as sausages and bacon, and dairy foods such as cream and cheese can be higher in fat, and should be eaten less often and in smaller amounts.



**Vary your protein**

# Dairy

Dairy products are produced primarily from cows, but also from animals such as sheep, goats and even buffalo. The main foods in this group are milk, cheese, butter, cream and yoghurt.

## Why do we need to eat dairy?

Dairy is an important source of a number of different nutrients that help to keep us healthy and strong:



Protein is really important for growth and repair.



Calcium is really important for strong bones and healthy teeth – this is especially important during childhood and our teenage years when our bones are developing.



Vitamin A helps to keep our eyes healthy so we can see properly.

## Types of dairy

Dairy only makes up a small portion of a balanced plate (see page 4) because foods like cheese and cream can be very high in fat. Fat in whole milk provides young children with the energy and essential vitamins they need, but it is higher in saturated fat and so children over the age of five should choose or be given lower-fat options for milk and yoghurt, unless they are under weight.

It is also important to understand which dairy choices are naturally lower in fat and whether clever swaps can be made to make them healthier, e.g. swapping sour cream for yoghurt when making dips or dressings.



## Know your dairy



# Fats

A fat-free diet is not a healthy diet. We need a small amount of fat to protect our organs and to help us to grow. We just need to be careful about the type and amount of fat we eat as consuming too much fat is associated with health problems, such as weight gain, and a higher risk of developing things such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease.

## What are the different types of fat?



**Saturated fat** is found in foods such as beef, pork, chicken skin, butter, cream and cheese – it can be very bad for our health if we eat too much.



**Unsaturated fat** can help to keep our heart healthy when eaten in moderation – there are two types of good fat:

- **Polyunsaturated fat** can be found in nuts, seeds and oily fish. Essential fatty acids omega-3 and -6 are types of polyunsaturated fat that help to keep the brain, heart and eyes healthy.
- **Monounsaturated fat** can be found in avocados and olives, and their oils helps to keep cholesterol levels healthy (see below).



**Cholesterol** is made in the liver – there are two types of cholesterol: good and bad. Eating too much saturated fat can cause high levels of bad cholesterol in the blood, which puts you at risk of disease.

## Cooking with fat

Saturated fat is generally solid at room temperature whereas unsaturated fat is generally a liquid. It is important to cook with liquid fats where possible, such as olive oil. It is however, still a fat and therefore contains a lot of calories (see page 6), so if we eat too much we are at risk of gaining weight.



Know which type of fat  
you're eating



## Where is sugar found?

Different types of sugar can be found naturally in foods like honey, maple syrup and agave nectar. Some people believe that the nutritional value of these sugars is superior to white and brown sugar, which is extracted from a plant called sugar cane. Although there are some very slight nutritional differences between different sugars it is important to get the majority of your sugar intake from raw whole fruit and milk because these foods offer other nutrients to our bodies, such as vitamins and fibre.

Sugar is added to all sorts of foods to make them taste sweet or to preserve flavour. It is not just found in the foods you might expect such as cakes, biscuits, fizzy drinks and desserts, but is often hidden in foods like ketchup, bread and cereal. Check the ingredients list on the food label (see page 19) so you know how much sugar is in the food you eat.




## Why is too much sugar bad for you?

Too much added sugar is bad for your health because it can lead to tooth decay and it provides your body with lots of empty calories (see page 6). Empty calories give us lots of energy without any nutrients, and as a result we can eat lots without feeling full or satisfied. This leads to an increased risk of weight gain, disease and a cycle of highs and lows in your energy levels, which will leave you feeling tired and craving even more sugar.

## What about artificial sweeteners?

Artificial sweeteners do not add calories to foods, but we aren't sure how they affect our health in the long term. They are found in lots of things such as cakes, biscuits, tinned foods, jams and fizzy drinks. Always check food labels and avoid eating them, where possible.

## How to control your sugar intake

-  Drink water, not sugary drinks, and limit portions of fruit juice and smoothies to 150ml and dilute with water.
-  Swap sugary cereals for sugar-free options, or choose porridge, or eggs and toast for breakfast.
-  Choose fresh fruit and yoghurt for dessert, and plain popcorn or houmous and crunchy vegetables for snacks, rather than sugary options.



Be aware of sugar



Salt is one of the oldest ingredients and is used all over the world to season food. It brings out the flavour in fresh food, but it is also used to preserve food and make it last longer. The taste of salt is also one of the five basic flavours that our tongue can taste.

### Where is salt found?

Most of the salt we eat comes from the salt already present in processed and prepared foods. Manufacturers who make processed food often add a lot of extra salt to improve the flavour and make food last longer. Because of this, salt is often found in foods you wouldn't expect such as cereals, bread and even biscuits.

### Why is too much salt bad for us?

Although we need a small amount of salt in our diets to help regulate the amount of water in our bodies and other bodily functions, there is a strong link between consuming too much salt and bad health. Too much salt can damage our organs and increases the risk of disease.

The amount of salt you should consume varies depending on age and health. Children aged seven to ten should have a maximum of 5g per day (approximately 1 teaspoon).

### How to control your salt intake

- Prepare your own food – takeaways and fast food are often very high in salt.
- Avoid adding salt when using salty ingredients, such as bacon, anchovies and olives.
- Season with herbs, spices and citrus.
- Taste your food before adding salt – you might not need to add any. Remember, you can always add more, but you can't take it away.
- Read the labels – salt is often hidden in foods you might not expect.



Watch your salt intake



## (Reference intakes)

RI stands for reference intake. These are set by the government and are a guide to show how much of each nutrient the average healthy adult should eat over the course of a day. Although the most important thing is to consume a balanced and varied diet, RIs are a useful tool to help us understand food and make healthier choices on a day-to-day basis.

An example of an RI for the average adult:

Typical values	Adult (RIs)	Children (GDAs)
Energy	2000kcal	1800kcal
Total fat	70g	70g
Saturates	20g	20g
Carbohydrates	260g	220g
Sugars	90g	85g
Protein	50g	24g
Salt	6g	5g
Fibre	30g	15g

**Please note:**

RIs do not exist for children, so we have included guideline daily amounts (GDAs) alongside for reference.

### What else do I need to know?



RIs are based on an average person, who is moderately active, with no special dietary requirements, at a healthy weight.



RIs vary depending on how old you are, your gender, and how much exercise you're doing.



The RI for calories is to be used as a guide.



It is fine to exceed the RI for fibre because fibre helps to keep our digestive system healthy.



The RIs for fat, sugar and salt are towards the upper limits and should not be exceeded over the course of a day.

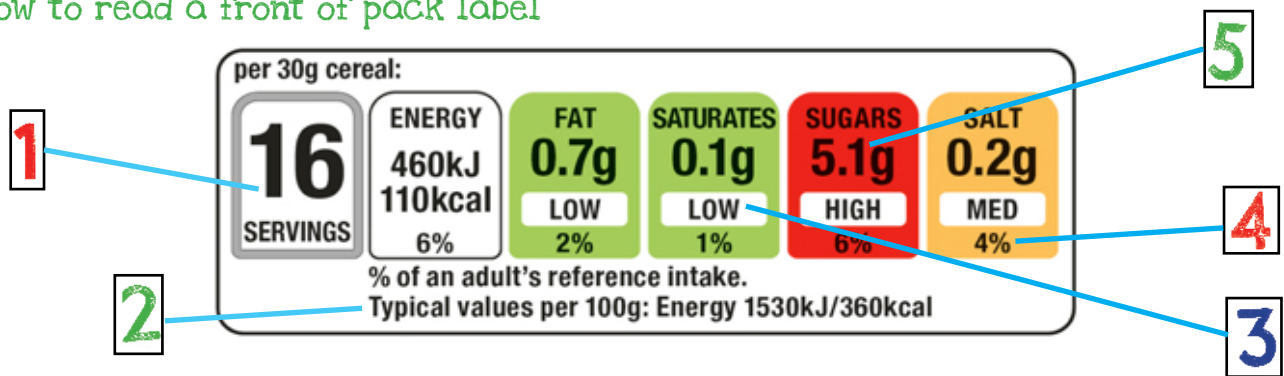


## Know your RIs

# Food labelling

On food packaging you'll often see nutritional information. This is there to help you understand the amount of calories (energy), fat, sugar and salt it contains. Food labels tell us what is in the food we are eating - use them to help you make informed decisions about the food you choose to eat.

## How to read a front of pack label



1. The number of servings per pack.
2. The number of calories per 100g.
3. The amount per serving (high or low) of the above listed – this is also shown by the colour of the tab.
4. The percentage of an adult's Recommended Intake per serving.
5. The amount of calories, fat, sugar and salt per serving.

## What do the numbers mean?

- ▶ The percentage RI for calories is to be used as a guide only (see page 6).
- ▶ The percentage RI for fat, sugar and salt are towards the upper limits and should not be exceeded over the course of a day.
- ▶ Ingredients listed on the back of packaged foods in order of how much of that ingredient the food contains.



# Your notes...

