



## Healthy Eating

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Good health is central to leading a full and active life, and getting the right nutrition is an important step towards good health. The more balanced and nutritious the diet, the healthier the person can expect to be.

The benefits of a balanced diet are numerous. No single food contains everything the body needs so it is important to eat a wide variety of foods. The right amount of vitamins and nutrients can increase life expectancy by keeping the heart and body healthy and preventing many long-term illnesses.

### Food

There are five main food groups, and each one contains nutrients that are essential for your body's growth, energy and maintenance. Nutrients are vitamins and minerals that regulate your body's chemical processes and functions and help to keep you fit and healthy.

The five main food groups are:

**Carbohydrates** these include foods like bread, pasta, potatoes, cereals, rice, oats, noodles, couscous, maize and cornmeal.

Carbohydrates provide energy and should make up about one third of your diet. They are divided into two groups - refined and unrefined. Refined carbohydrates include white bread and sugary cereals that have had the fibre removed. Unrefined carbohydrates include brown and wholemeal bread, pasta and rice, you should choose these options whenever possible.

### Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are rich in vitamins and minerals which are essential nutrients that your body needs in order to work properly. As well as keeping your skin and hair healthy, they can reduce your risk of getting heart disease and some cancers. You

should aim to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. They can be fresh, frozen, canned or dried. One portion counts as a large piece of fruit, such as an apple or banana, three heaped tablespoons of vegetables, or one glass of 100% fruit or vegetable juice (although this only counts as one portion regardless of how much you drink). Beans and pulses, such as baked beans or lentils, also contribute to this group, but they only count towards one portion no matter how many different types you eat.

**Protein** this includes meat, fish and eggs, beans, nuts and tofu.

Protein helps to build and repair your body; foods containing protein should make up about one fifth of what you eat each day. Proteins such as meat and fish also contain minerals, such as iron, zinc and magnesium, as well as important B vitamins. To keep your proteins healthy, trim fat from meat, remove the skin from chicken, drain fat away after cooking, and try to eat two portions of fish each week including oily fish such as salmon, mackerel or fresh tuna. Avoid frying meat and fish, and try to grill, roast or microwave instead.

**Dairy** this includes cheese, milk, yoghurt, and calcium fortified soya alternatives

Dairy products are rich in calcium, which is important for strong bones and teeth. You should aim to get 700mg of calcium each day, which is roughly a pint of milk, or two small yoghurts. Choose lower fat versions, such as semi-skimmed milk, low fat yoghurt and reduced fat cheese.

**Fat and sugar** this includes butter, mayonnaise, chocolate, crisps, cakes, soft drinks, jam, sweets and ice cream.

Fats and sugars contain more energy than any other food group and should make up the smallest part of your diet. Foods such as all usually contain high amounts fat. Fats are divided into two groups - saturated and unsaturated. Saturated fat is found in cream, margarine, and fried foods. This type of fat can contribute to heart disease. Unsaturated fat is found in vegetable oils and oily fish. Eating a small amount of unsaturated fat will help to keep your immune system healthy and can reduce cholesterol levels. Sugary foods are bad for your teeth and are full of calories. You should therefore eat them sparingly.

## **Fluids**

Over half of an adult's total body weight is made up of water, which needs to be topped up when it is lost through sweating, and passing urine. Not enough water in the body can lead to headaches, tiredness and lack of concentration.

You should aim to drink at least 1.2 litres of fluid a day (between 6-8 glasses). Ideally, this should be water, but it also includes other drinks like squash, fruit juices, milk, tea and coffee. You should drink more when the weather is hot, and during and

after exercise because more fluid is needed to compensate for what is lost from your body.

If you drink alcohol, try not to exceed the maximum daily intake which is 3 to 4 units for men and 2 to 3 units for women. Excess drinking can increase your risk of some cancers, heart and liver disease.

## **What happens if I don't eat a balanced diet?**

***Not getting enough of certain vitamins and minerals can lead to malnutrition and other disorders:***

**Vitamin A/retinol** – in liver, cheese, eggs and oily fish.

If you have too little vitamin A/retinol in your diet your immune system can become weakened meaning that you become ill more easily. Pregnant women should avoid taking vitamin A.

**Vitamin B6/pyridoxine** - in poultry, whole cereals (oatmeal, wheat germ) and peanuts.

If you have too little vitamin B6/pyridoxine in your diet this can lead to depression and irritability.

**Vitamin B12** - in meat, salmon, cheese and eggs.

If you have too little vitamin B12 in your diet this can lead to anaemia. Anaemia can make you tired, faint and breathless.

**Vitamin C/ascorbic acid** - in oranges, peppers, broccoli and cabbage.

If you have too little vitamin C/ascorbic acid in your diet this can lead to tiredness, bleeding gums, aching joints and loosening of teeth. Severe cases of vitamin C/ascorbic acid deficiency are known as scurvy.

**Vitamin D** - in oily fish and eggs (sunlight is also a rich source of vitamin D).

If you have too little vitamin D in your diet this can lead to muscle weakness, and aching and weakened bones.

**Calcium** - in milk, cheese, broccoli and cabbage.

If you have too little calcium in your diet this can lead to can lead to bone and tooth decay.

**Folic acid/ folate** - in broccoli, Brussels sprouts, peas and brown rice.

If you have too little folic acid/ folate in your diet this can lead to anaemia. Folic acid/ folate reduce the risk of birth defects in unborn babies, so it is particularly important for pregnant women.

**Iron** - in meat, beans, whole grains, watercress, and curly kale.

If you have too little iron in your diet this can lead to anaemia.

**Magnesium** - in spinach, nuts and bread.

If you have too little magnesium in your diet this can lead to tiredness and bone and tooth decay.

**Niacin/vitamin B3** - in beef, pork, eggs and milk.

If you have too little niacin/vitamin B3 in your diet this can lead to skin problems, dizziness, swelling of the tongue and vomiting.

**Potassium** - in bananas, vegetables, nuts, and seeds.

If you have too little Potassium in your diet can lead to an irregular heartbeat, irritability, nausea and diarrhoea.

**Riboflavin/vitamin B2** - in mushrooms, rice, eggs, and milk.

If you have too little riboflavin/vitamin B2 in your diet can lead to an an lead to dry and cracked skin, sensitivity to light, dizziness and difficulty sleeping.

**Thiamin /vitamin B1** - found in peas and other vegetables, pork, milk, and cheese.

can lead If you have too little thiamine/vitamin B1 in your diet can lead to headaches and tiredness.

**Zinc** - in meat, shellfish, milk, cheese, and wheat germ.

If you have too little zinc in your diet can lead to hair loss, skin problems, diarrhoea and poor wound healing.

### ***Eating too much***

***As well as eating enough of certain food types, a balanced diet also means not eating too much of others:***

**Fats** - a daily diet containing too much saturated, and unsaturated, fat may lead to you gaining weight, and can lead to poor health including heart disease.

**Sugar** - a daily diet containing too much sugar may lead to tooth decay. In severe cases, your teeth can rot to the point where they must be removed altogether.

**Salt** - a daily diet containing too much salt may lead to a rise in blood pressure. This is dangerous because people with high blood pressure are three times more likely to develop heart disease or have a stroke than those who do not.

### **Making positive changes to your diet**

Just by making some simple changes to your diet can result in you leading a healthier lifestyle.

#### **Eat more starchy foods.**

Starch is a good energy provider and adding it to your daily diet can help to reduce

your fat intake and increase fibre. Starch can be found in foods such as bread, potatoes, rice and pasta.

**Eat more fruit and vegetables.**

Fruit and vegetables contain a large amount of the vitamins and minerals your body needs to function at its best. They are also very low in fat and are therefore helpful if you are trying to lose weight. The Department of Health recommends that you should eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables per day

**Eat more fish, especially oily fish.** Fish is a good source of protein and iodine, and oily fish in particular is rich in omega-3 fatty acids which can lower your risk of cardiovascular disease. Try to eat at least two portions of fish per week, one of which should be oily fish.

**Reduce your fat and sugar intake.** Saturated fat is unhealthy in large quantities. It can raise the cholesterol level in your blood and lead to heart disease. Choose leaner cuts of meat and lower fat varieties of food for example, low fat spread contains less fat than butter, and skimmed, or semi-skimmed milk is healthier than whole fat milk. You could also try spray oil for cooking which uses oil more sparingly. Your sugar intake can be reduced by only eating sugary foods as a treat. Try to consume sugary foods and drinks as part of a meal, rather than in between meals, and try sweetening dishes with dried or fresh fruit instead of sugar.

**Reduce your salt intake.** You should consume no more than 6g of salt a day so choose foods with 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' and try adding other seasonings, such as herbs, spices, garlic and lemon juice to food, for flavour.

**Get active and achieve a healthy weight.** Being a healthy weight is important because it significantly reduces your risk of developing diabetes, cardiovascular disease and certain cancers. You are also less likely to have back and joint problems, breathlessness and difficulty sleeping. Losing weight is achieved by reducing the amount of calories you eat and increasing the amount of physical activity that you do. If you want to lose weight, always talk to your GP first. They will be able to advise you of the best way to lose weight safely and sensibly.

**Drink more water.** Most people do not drink enough water on a daily basis which can lead to headaches, tiredness and a lack of concentration. Try to drink at least 6-8 glasses, cups or mugs of fluid a day, ideally water.

**Eat a healthy breakfast.** Breakfast is important because it refuels your body, both mentally and physically. People who eat breakfast tend to be healthier than those who do not. A healthy breakfast could consist of wholegrain cereals or breads, fruit, skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, and 100% fruit juices. You could also try hard boiled eggs, low fat yoghurt, or low fat bran muffins.

## **Are you a carer?**

If you look after a relative or friend who needs support to live at home you are a carer. As a carer you have the right to ask Adult and Community Services – Adult Social Care to carry out a carer's assessment (this applies even if the person you care for is not receiving help from Adult and Community Services – Adult Social Care). Your carer's assessment is your chance to talk about your needs and is your opportunity to tell us about the things that could make caring easier for you.

There are a variety of services available to carers following an assessment including; advice & information, short breaks & respite, additional services to the person you care for, signposting to voluntary & health services, introduction to support groups.

For more information contact :

Oldham Carers Centre  
The Link Centre  
Union Street  
Oldham  
OL1 1DZ  
Tel: 0161 770 1188  
Fax: 0161 770 4789  
Email: [carers.centre@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:carers.centre@oldham.gov.uk)

## **We value your comments and suggestions about social care**

We want to provide good quality services for people in Oldham and as we are a public service, you have a say in everything we do. We want you to be completely satisfied with our services, but to ensure this we need to know what you think. What do we do best? Where could we improve things? Do you have any ideas or suggestions? Only by listening to you can we give you the service you deserve.

We welcome everything you have to say.

### **For matters relating to adult social care**

The Quality Assurance Team can be contacted by writing to:

**FREEPOST OLDHAM ADULT & COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Please note you do not need to put a stamp on the envelope.

You can also contact the Quality Assurance Team by

Phoning: 0161 770 8122

Faxing: 0161 770 8193

Emailing: [socs.quality.assurance@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:socs.quality.assurance@oldham.gov.uk)

If English is not your first or preferred language we can arrange to visit you with an interpreter.

**For matters relating to children's social care**

The Complaints and Representations Officer can be contacted by writing to:

Complaints & Representation Officer

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

PO BOX 4

Civic Centre

Level 8

West Street

Oldham

You can also contact the Complaints and Representations Officer by

Phoning: 0161 770 1129

Faxing: 0161 770 3222

Emailing: [cypf.complaints@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:cypf.complaints@oldham.gov.uk)

If English is not your first or preferred language we can arrange to visit you with an interpreter.

**DEC 2007 OCFS-ACS-GSS52S (Version 1) PID- CO**