



Wellbeing toolkit

Healthy eating

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Healthy eating

Every part of our body, including our immune system, works better when supported by healthy living strategies such as exercising regularly, not smoking and eating a healthy diet.

By fuelling our body with the nutrients it needs we can have more energy, achieve a healthy weight, improve our mood and support a healthy immune system.

What we eat and drink can affect our body's ability to prevent, fight and recover from infections.

But what makes a diet healthy and how easy is it for us to achieve whilst we're in lockdown?

The foundation for a balanced diet comes from eating a range of fruit and vegetables which are high in vitamins and minerals.

Most of us know we should be eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day but in reality, only one in four adults consume the recommended daily amount.

Fruit and vegetables don't always need to be fresh. So whilst we're limited on access to groceries, remember tinned and frozen all count towards your five a day and can also help to reduce waste.

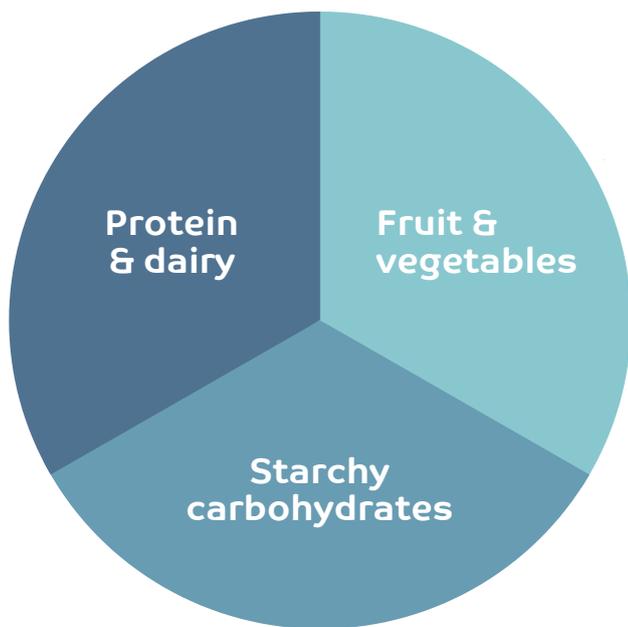


In this factsheet

- The healthy plate
- Portion control
- Snacking

The healthy plate

According to the NHS Eat Well guide, the healthy plate should be split into thirds:



In an ideal situation, we'd have access to a full range of different foods so whilst we're currently only shopping for essentials it may be more of a challenge to eat a balanced diet.

Aim for this balance of thirds every day or week if it's easier to fit into your lifestyle.

There's a number of ways that you can incorporate healthier eating:

- Plan ahead – make a list of meals that include fewer ingredients so you have some options, particularly if you're unable to get what you need on your weekly shop.
- Eat the rainbow in fruit and vegetables – choose a variety of different colours and kinds to get a range of nutritional benefits. Remember this can be fresh, frozen or tinned.
- Include brown or wholegrain starchy carbohydrates in each meal for energy – they're higher in fibre than white varieties which is better for gut health.
- Pick proteins like lean meat and white or oily fish, beans, lentils, pulses and tofu. Beans and lentils are lower in fat and higher in fibre. If you eat fish, aim to include oily fish once or twice a week.
- Dairy products like milk, cheese, yoghurt and non-dairy alternatives are important for protein, calcium and some vitamins. Lower fat and lower sugar versions are better for you.
- Use fats sparingly and choose unsaturated fats like olive oil or low-fat spread. Snacks like biscuits, cakes, chocolates and crisps aren't needed so try to limit these to occasional treats.
- Don't forget to drink – drink at least six to eight glasses of water a day. Milk, low-sugar drinks, tea and coffee all count towards your total.

Portion control

With many of us currently at home more than usual, staying active can be a challenge.

Being restricted to one daily run, walk or cycle may be less than you're used to and you could find you're spending more time sitting at your desk or on your sofa.

With this in mind, it's worth evaluating your energy intake in relation to your activity levels to prevent any unwanted weight gain.

Matching your calorie intake to your activity levels is the best way to maintain a healthy weight.

Calorie awareness

Do you know how many calories you eat on an average day? Public Health England reports that a third of us in the UK are underestimating our daily calorie intake.

Data from the Office of National Statistics suggests that British men believe they are consuming 2,000 calories a day, when in fact their actual average consumption is closer to 3,000.

Women are reporting their average calorie intake as 1,500, while consuming nearly 2,500.

The recommended daily calorie allowance is 2,500 for men and 2,000 for women.

Understanding portion sizes is important for ensuring our diet is balanced and healthy and in managing our weight. Use the guide on the right to create the right portion size for you.

A visual guide to portion sizes



Proteins
Palm of your hand



Carbohydrates
The size of your fist



Fats
The tip of your thumb



Fruits
The size a tennis ball



Vegetables
No limit

Snacking

More of us are snacking in addition to, or instead of, our three meals a day. It's a growing phenomenon that's changing how many of us eat and shop.

Remember that whilst snacks help to maintain your energy levels, they still count towards your daily calorie intake.

Eating the right kind of snacks, however, can be a great way to keep your mind and body fuelled throughout the day.

Why do we snack?

In a report by Harris Interactive, almost a third of respondents named convenience their main reason for snacking, saying it was 'easier'.

Another 18% reported the need to eat 'on the go', while another 20% cited not wanting to cook or lacking time to plan meals.

The research showed that lunch was the most-skipped meal, followed by breakfast then dinner.

Tips for healthy snacking

- Have a drink of water first – thirst and hunger are similar sensations.
- Beware of 'Snaccidents' – it's easy to think a snack isn't a meal and eat too much.
- Choose your snacks carefully – avoid nibbles with added salt or sugar.
- Fruit and vegetables should be your go-to snack.
- Plan your snacks – planning and shopping for healthy snacks encourages you to stay away from unhealthy snacks.
- Don't shop when you're hungry: you may end up with unhealthy snacks.



Did you know...

60% of UK adults eat snacks instead of full meals

What kind of snacker are you?

Nielsen's research into snacking led them to develop seven categories of snackers:

- **Impulsive:** those who buy unplanned snacks, like new products near the till
- **Planner:** the planner knows exactly what they need from the supermarket
- **Meal replacement:** serious about snacking, this group looks for products to help them refuel
- **Healthy:** avoiding treats is important for wellness snackers, who are after nutritionally beneficial snacks
- **Investigator:** looking at labels matters to canny consumers who want a balance between price and nutrition
- **Promo:** if it's on offer, it will find its way into promo snackers' trollies who are influenced most by price
- **Indulgent:** emotional eaters are shopping for treats that make them feel good, like sweets, chocolates and crisps

Identifying what kind of snacker you are can help you anticipate when you might be at risk of making unhealthy choices and use that awareness to look for a healthy alternative.



Healthy snack ideas that are 50-150 calories

- Banana
- Rice cake
- Hummus with carrot sticks
- Wholemeal toast or pitta
- Small plain yoghurt with fruit
- Plain popcorn
- Small handful of unsalted nuts

Wellbeing toolkit

This factsheet is part of our Wellbeing Toolkit aimed at helping teams stay well during the coronavirus outbreak.

Each week, a new pair of factsheets covering mental and physical wellbeing is released.

Take a look at westfieldhealth.com/covid-19 for access to all resources.