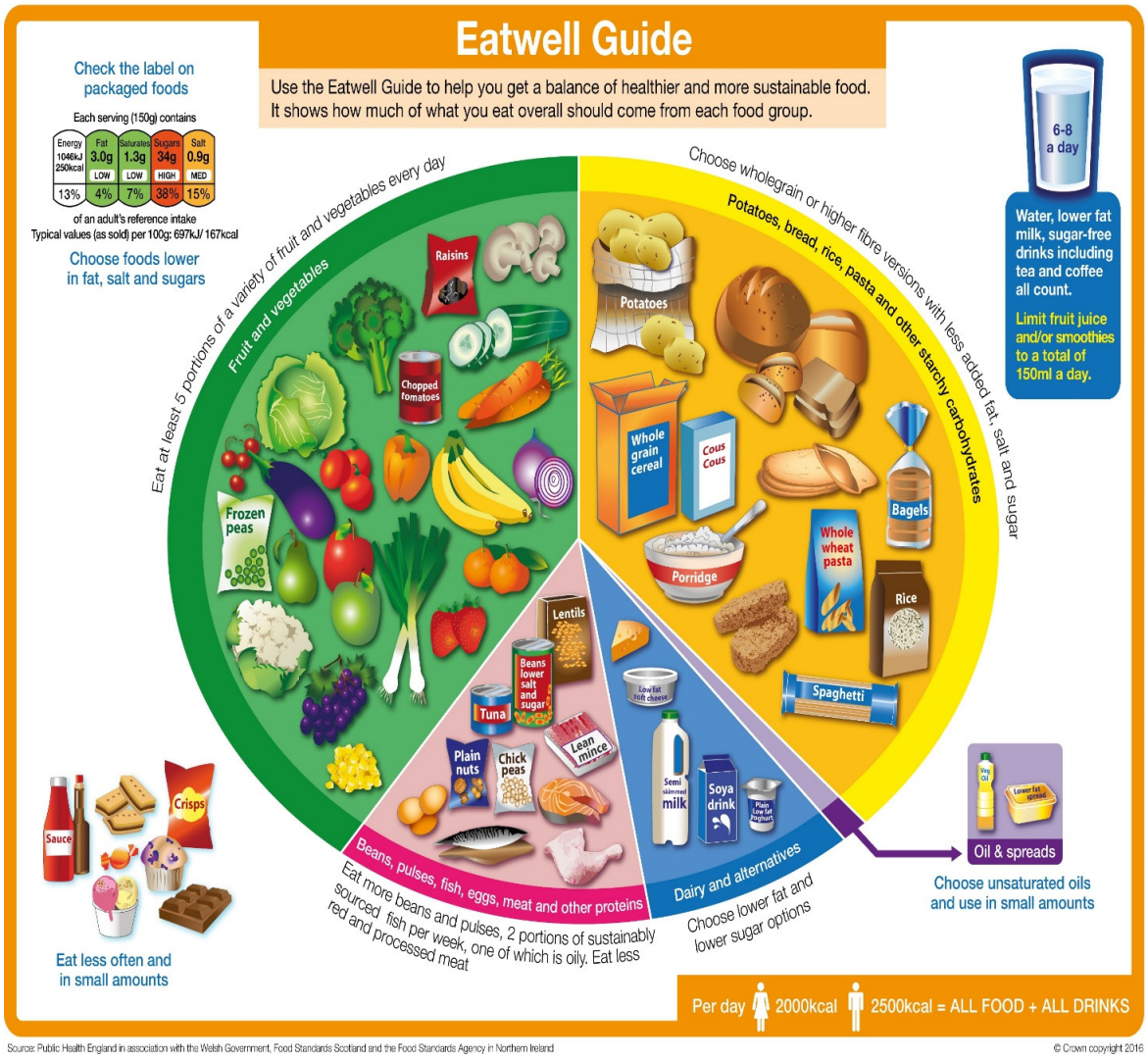
Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Healthy Meal Ideas

The Eatwell Guide shows how much of what we eat overall should come from each food group to achieve a healthy, balanced diet.

You do not need to achieve this balance with every meal, but try to get the balance right over a day or even a week.



Choosing a better variety of meals will help ensure you obtain a good balance of nutrients and prevent your taste senses tiring.

Try to have breakfast, one main meal and one light meal in the day.

Here are a few healthy meal ideas for you to try.

compassionate care

Breakfast

- Wholegrain cereals are good choices. Suitable varieties include: bran flakes, fruit and fibre, no added sugar muesli, oat/wheat biscuit cereals, porridge with semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, low sugar granola.
- Wholegrain, granary or seeded breads are a good choice. Use a low fat spread rather than butter, if needed. Try topping with grilled mushrooms or tomatoes, poached or scrambled eggs, baked beans, a thin scraping of jam or marmalade or low fat cheese spread.
- Crumpets and currant teacakes are also suitable alternatives.
- Small pot of low fat natural or Greek yoghurt and a handful of berries / 2-3 tablespoons fruit salad / stewed / tinned fruit in juice.

Light Meals

These could consist of:

2 slices of wholegrain, granary or seeded bread or 1 medium teacake (5") or 1 large or 2 small pitta bread or 4 wholemeal / wholegrain / rye crackers or 4 oatcakes or a wholemeal wrap.

Your choice of sandwich fillings or toast toppings could be a small portion of:

- Lean meat - ham, beef, pork, chicken, turkey.
- Fish - tuna, sardines, pilchards, salmon, mackerel.
- Low fat cheese such as Quark, Ricotta, light cream cheese, reduced fat cheddar, feta, light mozzarella.
- Cottage cheese - buy varieties with chives or pineapple in; or add olives or sundried tomatoes for extra taste.
- Egg - hard boiled or mashed with low calorie dressing or pepper and vinegar.
- Hummus.
- Other ideas for toast - baked beans, scrambled egg, tomatoes, grilled mushrooms.
- Add veg wherever possible – for example hummus with grated carrot, ham and tomato, cream cheese with cucumber
- If you are trying to lose weight, try not to add butter or mayonnaise to your sandwich – especially if fillings are moist

Ideas for jacket/baked potato:

- Tuna with sweetcorn, chilli con carne, baked beans or cottage cheese.
- Add lots of salad to your sandwich or jacket potato.
  For example, tomato, cucumber, lettuce, grated carrot, beetroot, cress, onions, radishes, sweetcorn, green/red peppers, reduced fat / calorie coleslaw.

Soups:

Choose tomato, vegetable or pulse-based soups rather than cream based ones. Try homemade soups as they are lower in salt than tinned varieties.

Other light meal ideas:

- Sushi
- Hummus with pitta, vegetable sticks or falafel
- Salads (using dressing sparingly)
- Rice and pasta salads

Main Meals (including ready meals, take-aways and eating out)

Rice and noodles

- Chicken/pork/beef/tofu/quorn stir-fry with noodles or basmati rice and vegetables.
- Choose stir-fry dishes rather than deep fried dishes.
- Choose plain boiled rice or noodles rather than fried varieties.

Curries

- Chickpea/lentil/chicken curry with basmati rice or chapatti and salad.
- Choose drier dishes, such as biryanis, tandoori or tikka over dishes with high fat or creamy sauces, such as korma or masala.
- Choose plain boiled rice rather than pilau rice.
- Choose wholemeal chapattis or a small plain naan rather than parathas or garlic / filled naans.

Pizza and pasta

- Spaghetti bolognaise (made with lean meat or quorn) with added mushrooms and peppers.
- Salmon and broccoli or tuna and sweetcorn pasta bake with low fat white sauce (made with skimmed or semi-skimmed milk).
- For pizzas, choose a thin crust with lean meat or vegetable toppings

Meat and fish

- Grilled or baked fish with new potatoes and vegetables or salad.
- Chicken portion (without skin), jacket potato and large portion of vegetables.
- Stew, casserole, or cottage pie with vegetables
- Grilled fish fingers or sausages, mashed potato or potato wedges and beans.
- Rice and peas (black-eyed, pigeon, kidney beans) with chicken or lean mutton and salad or vegetables.

Meat-free meals

- Mixed bean chilli and basmati rice.
- Spanish omelette with vegetables or salad.
- Cous cous and vegetable stew.
- Lentil and vegetable hotpot.
- Bean Burger with oven cooked sweet potato wedges.
- Aubergine Bake with salad.
- Stir-fry with vegetables, tempeh, quorn of tofu.

* ensure to include a protein source with each meal such as beans, egg, quorn, tofu, tempeh or seitan

Eating out / Takeaways

Food in restaurants and takeaways tend to be higher in fat and salt than homemade food. However, it is fine have takeaways and eat out occasionally.

Try these tips;

- Choose soup, salad, bruschetta as starters rather than nachos, garlic bread, poppadums or prawn crackers.
- Just have one source of carbohydrate per meal and request extra vegetables or salads.
- If you want a pudding, have a carbohydrate free main meal or reduce the amount of carbohydrate at the main meal and share a pudding.

* carbohydrates include pasta, bread, rice, cereals, potatoes.

Ready Meals

Ready meals can be useful occasionally if you are short on time to cook a meal. However, they can be high in fat and salt and lack essential vitamins and minerals if vegetables are not included. Improve the balance of the meal by adding some extra vegetables or salad.

It is important to check the label before buying ready meals. Aim to choose the healthy option/low fat ranges but beware they can sometimes just be smaller portions of the ordinary high fat/calorie versions.

Tip - If you have a freezer, try cooking several portions of meals such as chilli, cottage pie, pasta sauce etc. Freeze in portions for home made ready meals which are healthier and cheaper.

Flavourings and Sauces and Alternatives to Salt

- Try pepper, herbs, garlic, spices, mustard, lime and lemon to provide flavour.
- Certain types of relish, chutneys and pickles can be used in small quantities however they can be high in salt or sugar therefore use sparingly.
- Oil-free dressings, such as lemon juice and vinegar, or shop bought dressings providing less than 20kcals per serving (check the label) can also be added to salads.
- Watch out for ready made sauces, cheesy and creamy ones are likely to be high in fat. Try making your own lower fat version with skimmed milk or a vegetable base such as tomatoes.

Suppers or Snacks

- Fresh fruit, for example: 1 apple, orange, pear or banana.
- A small handful of dried fruit such as raisins or apricots.
- A slice of granary or multigrain bread / toast or 2 ryvitas / high fibre crackers or 2-3 oatcakes with topping such as low fat cheese spread, hummus or salsa.
- 2 small plain biscuits such as Rich Tea or 1 digestive biscuit.
- A small scone, currant teacake, toasted muffin or crumpet with low fat spread.
- A small pot of healthy option, light, virtually fat free or low calorie yoghurt.
- Celery, cucumber, carrot or pepper sticks with a low fat dip e.g. tomato salsa.

If you are trying to lose weight you may want to think about cutting out supper/snacks altogether to reduce the amount of calories you eat per day. A warm drink may be adequate to keep you going until the next meal or before you go to bed.

Why not try:

- Peppermint, green or herbal teas.
- Low calorie hot chocolate drinks
- Instant Cup Soups that are low calorie (40-60Kcals per mug).

Puddings / Desserts

If you enjoy puddings it is fine to have them sometimes. However if you are trying to lose weight think about how often you are having them.

Healthier Options could include:

- Custards, yoghurts or rice pudding that are ‘light’ or ‘diet’.
- Reduce the amount of sugar used in crumbles or in fruit compotes by using cinnamon and nutmeg to add flavour instead. Sweetener can be used as an alternative to sugar.
- Sugar free jelly with added fruit.
- Low fat, sugar free mousse.
- Tinned fruit in juice (not syrup).

Portion sizes

The example below are one portion and a guide to ensure your diet balanced with the right proportions from each food group.

- Fruit and vegetables - 1 handful of berries/grapes, 2x kiwi or satsumas, 3 tablespoons of vegetables.
- Dairy - 200ml milk, 1x standard yogurt, matchbox size piece of cheese.
- Carbohydrate - 1 slice of bread, 2-3 tablespoons of rice or pasta, 1 medium baked potato, 6 thumb sized new potatoes, 30g cereal, 40g oats, 45g granola
- Protein - 2 eggs, palm size piece of fish, deck of card size piece of meat, handful of nuts, 4 tablespoon of beans or pulses/or tofu.
- Oils and spreads - 1 teaspoon.

Other useful resources to help you make healthier choices:

Food labelling: nutrtion information - British Dietetic Association (BDA)
Healthy snacks - British Dietetic Association (BDA)
Healthy packed lunches - British Dietetic Association (BDA)

If you need further advice about your diet contact your local hospital Dietitian:

Your Dietitian: _____

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Nutrition and Dietetics Department
Huddersfield Royal infirmary
Telephone: (01484) 342749

Calderdale Royal Hospital
Telephone: (01422) 224267

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪਾਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں.

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"