



Better Deals on Meals

Essential tips on value for money food



bread

milk

eggs

tomatoes

Get ready to shop!

Eating well doesn't have to cost a fortune. This leaflet gives lots of useful tips for getting the best value for money and eating a balanced diet.

Planning what you are going to eat in advance can save money as well as time. Cooking from scratch instead of buying ready made foods can be cheaper.

Before you go

- < Check what you already have in your kitchen. Households can waste a lot of money each year on food thrown out uneaten
- < Write a list of things you need and stick to it
 - o If you don't have time to write a list, try taking a picture of the inside of your fridge or cupboard on your phone before going to the shop. You can then easily check to see if you already have an item while you're shopping!
- < Doing a big shop eg. once a week, can help. Lots of visits to the shops to buy one or two items may tempt you to buy things you don't need
- < Shopping when you're hungry can increase temptation. Eat something before you go
- < Try to do food shopping soon after you get money for the week. Only take the money you need so you are not tempted to over spend
- < Avoid pester power - if possible don't take children food shopping with you!



When you are shopping

- ✓ Shop around for the best value. Compare prices at greengrocers, butchers, bakers, supermarkets, markets and discount shops
- ✓ Buy essentials first then see what's left over for other foods
- ✓ Buy supermarket 'own brands' instead of brand names. These are usually cheaper and often just as nutritious
- ✓ Use your calculator to compare value between multi-packs and single items. Bigger packs may be better value but consider whether they will be used before they spoil
- ✓ Loose fruit and vegetables may be cheaper than pre-packed
- ✓ Compare prices by using shelf-edge labels as much as possible. Use the unit price (eg. price per kilogram or millilitre) to compare the costs of similar items
- ✓ Supermarkets often sell off food cheaply at the end of the day. Find out what time food is marked down at so you can grab a bargain. Make sure you use it before the 'use by' date or freeze it if suitable.



RED POTATO
55P
Kilo
4^{LB} For 1.00
1.814 per

PARSNIP
2.64 | 1.20
Kilo | LB



Eatwell Guide

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving contains

Energy 100kcal 200kcal	Saturated fat 5g	Sugars 1.3g	Salt 0.9g
LOW	LOW	LOW	HIGH
12.5%	7%	6.5%	38%
			15%

of an adult's reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 687kcal / 167kcal

Choose foods lower
in fat, salt and sugars

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

Fruit and vegetables



Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins
Eat more beans and pulses, 2 portions of sustainably sourced fish per week, one of which is oily. Eat less red and processed meat



Eat less often and
in small amounts

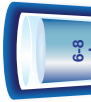
Choose wholegrain or higher fibre versions with less added fat, salt and sugar



Dairy and alternatives
Choose lower fat options
lower sugar if possible



Oils & spreads
Choose unsaturated oils
and use in small amounts



Water, lower fat
milk, sugar-free
drinks including
tea and coffee
all count.

Limit fruit juice
and/or smoothies
to a total of
150ml a day.

Per day  2000kcal

 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

Get the balance right

Aim for a varied diet. Get a good balance of foods from the 4 biggest food groups shown on the eatwell plate.

Foods from the fifth food group, should be used sparingly.

Read on to get suggestions of how to eat a balanced diet without spending a fortune.



Value fruit and veg

Fruit and vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals and fibre. Aim to eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day. Fresh, frozen, tinned, dried or juiced all count.

A portion of fruit or vegetables is:

- ◀ 1 medium sized fruit eg. apple, pear or banana
- ◀ 2 smaller fruits eg. kiwi or plums
- ◀ A handful of small or berry fruits eg. grapes or strawberries
- ◀ 1 small glass of pure fruit juice (150mls)
Nb. fruit juice counts as only one portion a day even if more is taken
- ◀ 3 heaped tablespoons of cooked vegetables
- ◀ 1 dessert bowl of salad.

- ✓ Compare pricing of pre-packed and loose fruit and vegetables by looking at the unit price eg. price per kg. Unit price can also allow you to compare the cost of one portion of fruit or vegetable to another
- ✓ Low cost vegetables include onions, carrots, cabbage, frozen mixed vegetables and frozen peas but look out for other weekly deals at supermarkets and local shops
- ✓ Tinned or frozen fruit or vegetables can be very convenient and just as nutritious as fresh
 - o Choose tinned fruit in own juice rather than syrup and tinned vegetables in water rather than brine
 - o Tinned tomatoes can be cheap and versatile. Use them to make sauces, soups and stews
- ✓ Use leftover vegetables the next day eg. add to a stew, soup or smoothie, or include in your packed lunch
- ✓ Fruit and vegetables such as oranges, apples, carrots, peppers and onions last longer when stored in their original packaging in the fridge
- ✓ Buy fruit and vegetables in season, these are usually cheaper.



Fruit in season

Winter

Dec/Jan/Feb

Apples
Avocado
Clementines
Grapes
Oranges
Pears

Spring

March/April/May

Apples
Apricots
Grapefruit
Lemons
Rhubarb

Summer

June/July/August

Apples
Blackberries
Kiwi fruit
Melons
Nectarines
Plums
Raspberries
Strawberries

Autumn

Sept/Oct/Nov

Apples
Cranberries
Grapes
Peaches
Pears
Plums
Satsumas

Vegetables in season

Winter

Dec/Jan/Feb

Broccoli
Cabbage
Kale
Parsnips
Spinach
Turnip

Spring

March/April/May

Asparagus
Broad beans
Carrots
Cucumber
Lettuce
Peas

Summer

June/July/August

Aubergine
Beetroot
Cauliflower
Corn on the cob
Peppers
Tomatoes

Autumn

Sept/Oct/Nov

Brussels sprouts
Celery
Onions
Parsnips
Pumpkin
Sweetcorn

Low cost carbs

Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods are great sources of energy, B vitamins and can be rich in fibre too.

Eat these foods at each meal. They make good snacks too.

These foods are usually cheap and should make up a big part of your food shopping.

- ✓ Try to go for wholegrain varieties where possible eg. wholemeal bread and wholegrain rice or pasta
- ✓ When you can afford it buy some extra packets of pasta, rice, noodles, breakfast cereals or crackers. These store well and are handy to have in the cupboard
 - o Or buy larger bags as they are often better value for money
- ✓ If you have a freezer buy bread on offer and freeze it for use later. You can toast bread directly from frozen
- ✓ Make your own sandwiches instead of buying them ready made.

Meaty matters

Meat, poultry, fish and eggs are important sources of protein and some are rich in iron too. Vegetarian alternatives include pulses eg. peas, beans and lentils, soya products and nuts.

We need moderate amounts of these foods in our diet.

- ✓ To reduce cost try using more pulses and less meat in dishes like chilli, curry or bolognese
 - o Dried pulses and lentils are often better value for money than tinned
- ✓ Cheapest may not always be best for your health or your pocket
 - o Cheap cuts of meat can be high in fat and eating too much red or processed meat eg. sausages, bacon, ham, salami and pâté may increase your risk of bowel cancer. It may be better value to buy a smaller amount of lean meat instead
 - o Ready meals may initially appear good value for money however if the content of meat/poultry/fish is low and cheaper ingredients are used to add bulk to the dish, it may be better value to cook the meal yourself. Check the ingredients list
- ✓ When preparing meat or poultry remove visible fat and skin and drain off fat during cooking. Ask your butcher for advice on the best way to cook cheap cuts
- ✓ After shopping freeze suitable portions of meat/poultry for use at a later time.

meat fish eggs and beans





**use
meats
in a
variety
of ways**

Fresh ideas

Use meat/fish/eggs in a variety of ways:

- ✓ Chicken can be roasted, made into casseroles and curry or cooked and used in sandwiches
- ✓ Lean minced beef can be made into stews, burgers, bolognese and curries
- ✓ Tinned fish eg. tuna, sardines and mackerel are delicious in sandwiches, on toast and pitta bread, or with pasta
- ✓ Eggs can be used in many different ways. Try them boiled, poached, scrambled or made into an omelette.



Milk it!

Milk and dairy foods eg. yoghurt, cheese, milk puddings, are important sources of calcium. They also contain protein as well as some vitamins and minerals. Eat moderate amounts of these foods.

- ✓ Choose skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, low fat cheese and diet yoghurts. These are healthier and usually just as cheap as the standard varieties
- ✓ Many supermarkets have counters where you can buy smaller amounts of cheese which may reduce wastage
- ✓ UHT (long life) milk is a handy store cupboard item. Once opened, it needs to be stored in the fridge
- ✓ Dried milk powder can be made up and used in drinks or for puddings such as custard. Once it has been mixed it needs to be kept in the fridge
- ✓ Dairy products such as milk, yoghurts and hard cheeses can be frozen to prevent wastage.

A glass of milk with a splash of milk being poured into it against a blue background. The milk is white and the background is a solid blue color. The splash is dynamic, with several droplets and a larger splash of milk rising from the top of the glass. The text 'milk and dairy foods' is overlaid on the right side of the image in a light gray, sans-serif font.

milk and dairy foods



butter
margarine
oils
pastry
buns
cakes

Costly conveniences

Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar are not an essential part of a healthy diet, although they can add flavour and enjoyment if eaten in small amounts.

Foods and drinks such as butter, spreads, oils, dressings, cakes, buns, sugary fizzy drinks, sweets, chocolate, biscuits and fried items are high in fat and/or sugar. When these are eaten too often they can cause weight gain and tooth decay and can increase the risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

- ✓ Takeaways and ready meals may be convenient if you are short on time, however remember they are often high in fat and salt
 - A home cooked meal can be made more balanced with a greater proportion of more nourishing ingredients like meat and vegetables. It may also go further as any leftovers can be used in future meals or frozen for a later time
 - ✓ Although items such as chocolate, biscuits, sweets, crisps and fizzy drinks are often on special offer and heavily promoted in shops, it is important to budget first for foods from the 4 main groups which are more nutritious
 - ✓ Ready meals may appear like a cheaper option however many are small in portion size and they are often bulked out with cheaper ingredients and therefore can contain smaller amounts of the more expensive ingredients like meat, poultry and fish
 - It's worthwhile checking what percentage (%) of meat/poultry/fish you are actually getting for your money - this will be written in the ingredients list.
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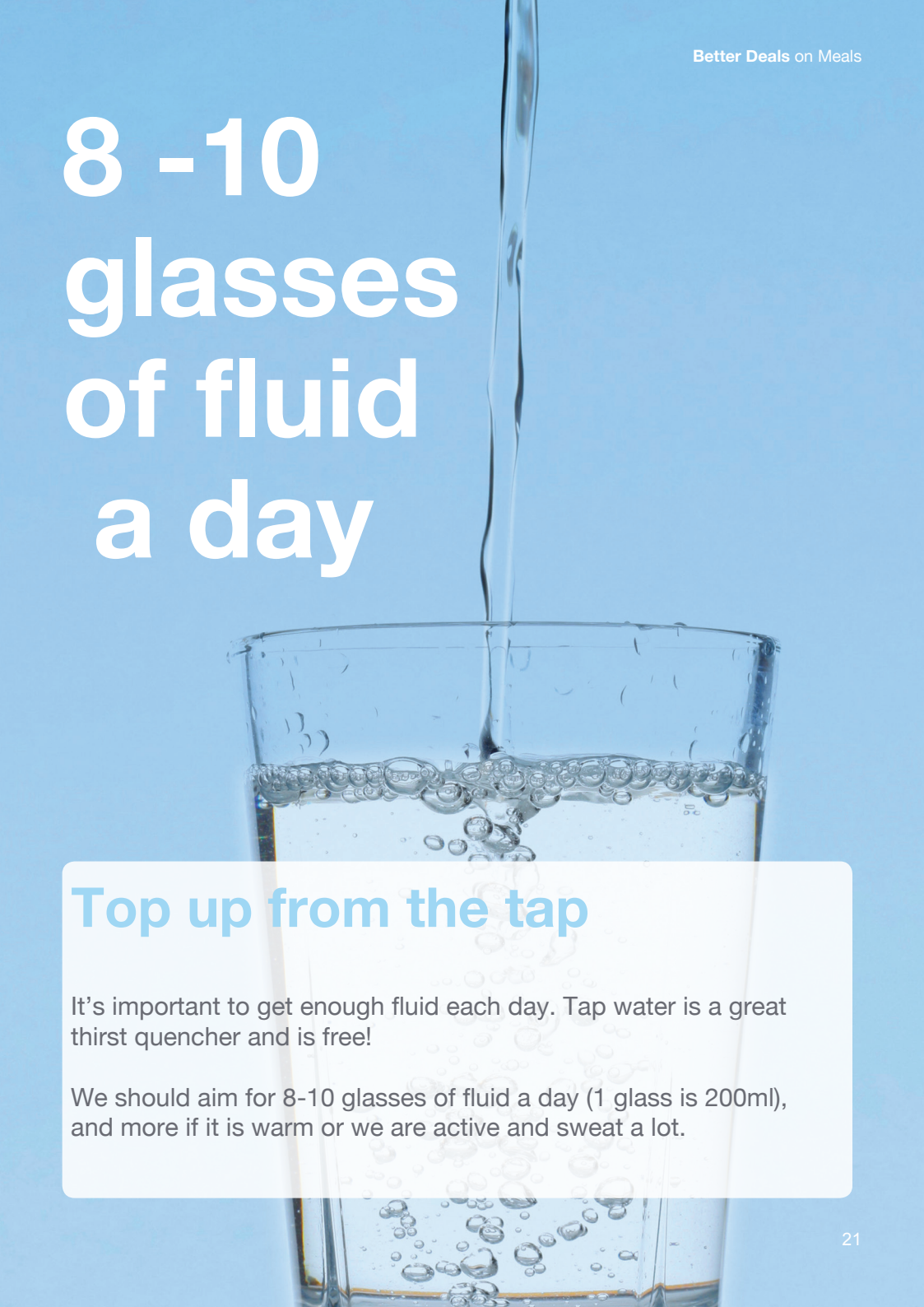
Store cupboard essentials

It is always a good idea to keep food items that store well such as dried, canned and frozen foods in your cupboard or freezer. Ensuring that a few basic ingredients are available will mean it is always possible to add flavour to food and make quick nutritious meals or snacks when funds are low.

Here are some ideas of what to keep:

- ✓ Dried pasta, rice and cous cous
- ✓ Noodles
- ✓ Crackers, crispbread, oatcakes
- ✓ Flour/ cornflour
- ✓ Breakfast cereals or porridge oats
- ✓ Canned/ frozen vegetables eg. tomatoes, sweetcorn, peas
- ✓ Canned fruit – in fruit juice or frozen fruit
- ✓ Pulses eg. kidney, butter, cannellini or baked beans, tinned or dried peas or lentils
- ✓ Tinned fish eg. tuna, sardines, mackerel or salmon
- ✓ Tinned or packet soups and sauces
- ✓ Tinned milk puddings eg. custard, rice pudding
- ✓ Soy sauce
- ✓ Worcestershire sauce
- ✓ Stock cubes
- ✓ Pepper
- ✓ Dried herbs
- ✓ Spices eg. ginger, cinnamon, mixed spice
- ✓ Garlic granules.

8 -10 glasses of fluid a day



Top up from the tap

It's important to get enough fluid each day. Tap water is a great thirst quencher and is free!

We should aim for 8-10 glasses of fluid a day (1 glass is 200ml), and more if it is warm or we are active and sweat a lot.

Freezer Tips

Freezing foods and leftovers is a great way to reduce waste and can allow you to stock up on special offers or reduced foods.

- ✓ Most foods can be frozen with the exception of soft cheese
- ✓ Leftovers should be cooled quickly, ideally within 90 minutes before freezing
- ✓ You can safely freeze food up to the use-by date. It can be kept frozen for years however the quality will start to reduce so it's best to eat it within three months
- ✓ Foods to be frozen should be wrapped well and labelled with the date and content
- ✓ Food should be defrosted overnight in the fridge and cooked until piping hot. If you need it quickly, food can be defrosted safely in the microwave and used immediately
- ✓ Items should be used within 24 hours of defrosting and should not be refrozen. The only exception is if you are defrosting raw food, such as meat or poultry, if it's cooked it can be refrozen.



Can't cook?

If you'd like to improve your cooking skills and learn more about eating well on a budget, look out for practical cooking programmes in your area like 'Cook it!' or 'Food Values'. For more information contact the community nutrition and dietetic service in your local Health Trust.

For additional information:

BDA factsheet-www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/home

Love food hate waste-www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

NHS Livewell-www.nhs.uk/Livewell/eat4cheap

For low cost, healthy recipes check out 101 square meals-www.safefood.eu

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