



# Healthy Eating

10 ways  
towards  
better health  
for adults

# Contact details

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Date:



# 10 ways towards better health

We all have different diet and lifestyle habits, and some may be healthier than others. You may need to make some changes. Here are some practical suggestions to help you achieve a healthy balanced diet and lifestyle.

1. Aim for a healthy weight
2. Fill up on fibre
3. Include plenty of fruit and vegetables
4. Eat less fat
5. Eat less sugar
6. Avoid salt and salty foods
7. Keep alcohol intake within recommended limits
8. Read food labels
9. Take regular physical activity
10. Do not smoke, get help to stop.



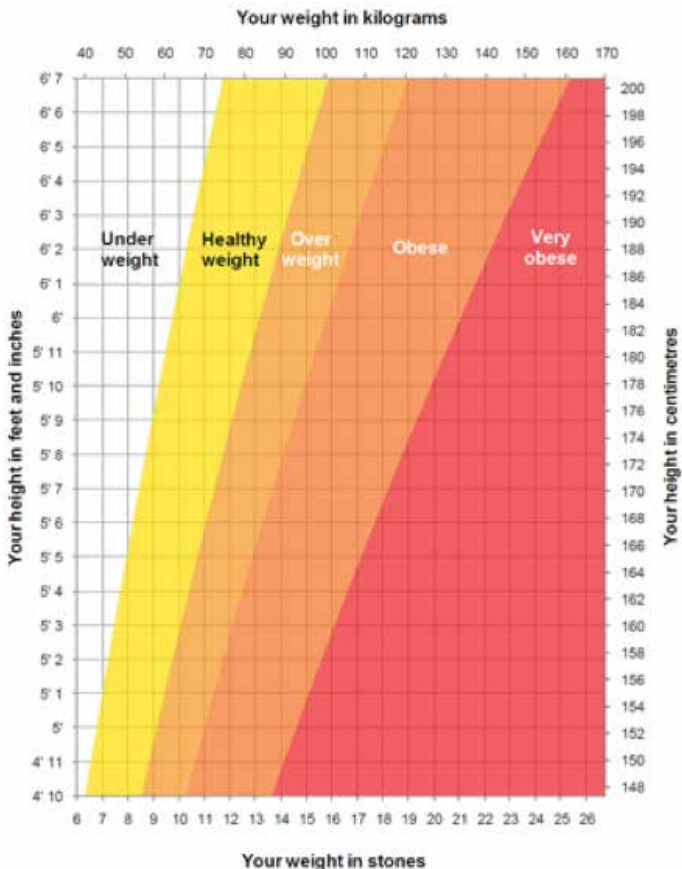
# 1. Aim for a healthy weight

If we take in more energy than our body needs, we gain weight. This is because we store any energy we don't use up as fat.

Just 100kcal extra each day could lead to 4.5kg (10lb) weight gain a year. For example, that's just 1½ custard cream biscuits with your cup of tea each day.

Check your BMI on the chart below – a healthy BMI is 18.5-25kg/m<sup>2</sup>.

If you are worried about your weight, ask your GP or a registered Dietitian for advice.



## 2. Fill up on fibre

Starchy carbohydrate foods provide our bodies with energy and fibre. We should aim to include these foods at each meal.

These include potatoes, breads, rice, pasta, noodles, couscous, chapatti and cereals.

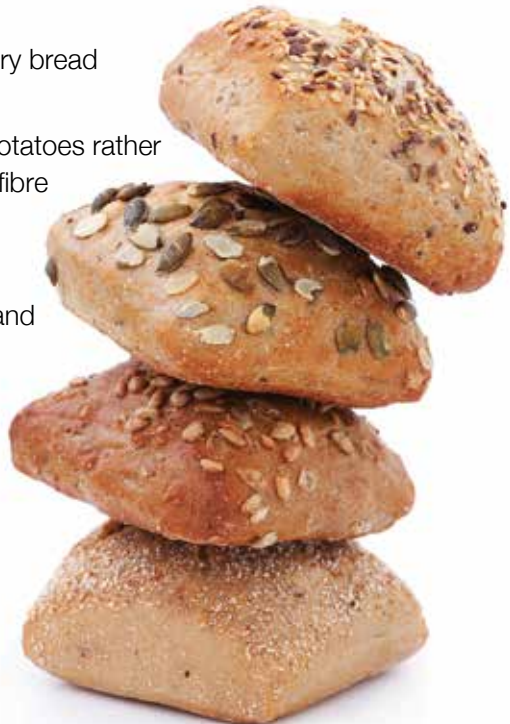
The best ones to choose are high fibre, wholegrain varieties. These are important for our bowel health, reducing the risk of heart disease and keeping us full for longer.

### Fibre Swaps:

- High fibre breakfast cereals eg: Weetabix, Bran Flakes, porridge or Shredded Wheat instead of cornflakes, Coco Pops or Rice Crispies
- Wholemeal, wholegrain, wheaten or granary bread rather than white
- Leave the skin on potatoes or try baked potatoes rather than peeled or mashed - the skin is full of fibre
- Brown rice or pasta instead of white
- Fruit, vegetables and pulses are also a great source of fibre – see 'Tip 3' on fruit and vegetables.

Don't forget to include at least 6-8 glasses (150-200ml/glass) of fluid each day. Water, lower fat milk, sugar free drinks, including tea and coffee, all count.

**Tip:** Carbohydrates are naturally low in fat – we should avoid frying them or adding lots of butter, spreads or creamy sauces.



# 3. Include plenty of fruit and vegetables

Diets rich in fruit and vegetables help protect against heart disease and some cancers.

Have at least five portions of fruit and vegetables daily. Choose a variety of different coloured fruit and vegetables for a range of vitamins and minerals.

## One portion of fruit or vegetables is:

- 1 slice of large fruit eg. Melon or pineapple
- 1 medium sized fruit eg. Pear, banana or apple
- 2 small fruits eg. Kiwi, mandarin oranges or plums
- 3 heaped tablespoons of fruit salad or tinned fruit
- 1 handful of very small fruit eg. Grapes or strawberries
- 1 glass of fruit juice and/or smoothie (150ml) \*
- 3 heaped tablespoons of cooked vegetables
- 1 dessert bowl of salad
- 1 heaped tablespoon of dried fruit\* (best taken at mealtimes and not between meals, to protect teeth)
- 3 tablespoons of beans or pulses. \*

\* Can only be counted as one portion a day even if more than this is consumed.

Keep fruit juice and smoothies to a combined total of 150ml daily and try to have with a meal.

**Tip:** Try to include at least one portion of fruits or vegetables at every meal. Fresh, frozen, dried and tinned (in own juice or water) all count!



## 4. Eat less fat

There are 2 main types of fat:

**Saturated fats** can increase cholesterol in the blood. This increases the risk of heart disease. These are found in: butter, lard, coconut oil, ghee and cream. They are also found in meats, dairy foods, cakes and buns.

**Unsaturated fats** are healthier fats that are usually from plant sources.

There are 2 types -

- **Monounsaturated fats:** Olive oil, rapeseed oil and spreads made from them. They are also found in avocados.
- **Polyunsaturated fats:** Sunflower oil, corn oil, safflower oil, soya oil and spreads made from them.

Cut down on the total amount of fat you eat and aim to swap saturated fats for unsaturated fats.

- Trim visible fat, remove skin from chicken and turkey and drain off fat from cooked meat
- Buy leaner cuts of meat eg. 5% fat mince, chicken or turkey without skin
- Grill, boil, bake, stew, steam or microwave food instead of frying. Limit fried foods such as chips, sauté potatoes and fried meats
- Use as little fat and oil as possible. Avoid adding fats to foods, eg. Avoid adding butter/spread to vegetables or potatoes and use sparingly on bread
- Choose a spread or cooking oil labelled 'high in monounsaturates' eg. Rapeseed or olive oil, or 'high in polyunsaturates' eg. Sunflower, soya or corn oil



# Eat less fat

- Use lower fat versions, eg. Skimmed or semi-skimmed milk and lower fat cheeses such as cottage cheese, edam, or reduced fat cheddar
- Eat fewer high fat foods eg. Pastry, pies, cream, cakes, biscuits, chocolate, as well as salad cream, mayonnaise, coleslaw, creamy sauces and processed meat products like sausage rolls, sausages
- Include fish at least twice a week and make one of these an oily fish, eg. Mackerel, herring, sardines or salmon.

## IMPORTANT

Cutting down on fat will reduce your calorie intake and help you lose weight. If you don't need to lose weight, eat extra bread, potatoes, pasta and rice to make up for the reduced calories.





## 5. Eat less sugar

Too much sugar and sugary foods can lead to weight gain and tooth decay.

- Eat less sugary snacks such as cakes, biscuits and sweetened drinks. If having these, have in small amounts and limit them to mealtimes, instead of between meals, to protect teeth
- Choose lower sugar snacks instead, for example; fruit, rice cakes topped with tomato, bread sticks with humous, plain popcorn, natural or diet/light yogurt, a bowl of wholegrain cereal
- Have tea or coffee without sugar. If necessary, use a sweetener such as Hermesetas, Canderel or Sweetex
- Water, lower fat milk, tea and coffee without sugar are ideal drinks between meals. Fruit juices, fizzy drinks and squashes are acidic and can cause dental erosion. If you choose to drink these, its best to limit them to mealtimes and dilute squash well. Water is best!
- Fruits and vegetables contain natural sugars, but have many other health benefits too, so do not need to be cut out of the diet. Juicing or making smoothies releases the sugars, therefore try to eat fruit and vegetables whole most of the time and limit juices/smoothies to no more than 150ml per day
- Reading food labels can help you make heallthier choices. See 'Tip 8' for more information on this.

**Tip:** Try using the **Change4life Sugar Smart App** to see how many sugar cubes are in your foods.



## 6. Avoid salt and salty foods

Eating too much salt can cause high blood pressure, which can increase your risk of heart disease. Adults should have no more than 6 grams of salt daily.

- Try to break the habit of adding salt at the table and use sparingly during cooking. This includes sea salt, Pink Himalayan Salt, Kosher Salt etc.
- Avoid salt substitutes such as Lo Salt, So-Low or Tesco reduced sodium salt as they still increase blood pressure
- Use pepper, herbs, garlic, lemon juice and spices to flavour food instead of salt
- Soy sauce, chilli sauce and brown sauce can also be high in salt so try to avoid using too much of these
- Eat fewer crisps, salted nuts, cured or smoked meats and fish, tinned and packet foods
- Check the labels of common foods such as bread, breakfast cereals and tinned foods – choose reduced salt varieties or those with the lowest amounts
- Cook food at home rather than relying on ready meals or takeaways.



**TIP:** After about 6 weeks your taste buds will adapt to having less salt.

## 7. Keep alcohol intake within recommended limits

Regular heavy drinking can damage the liver, heart, brain and stomach. It can also increase the risk of some cancers eg. mouth, throat, liver, stomach and breast cancers. Alcohol is high in calories so cutting down could help you control your weight.

Recommended limits of alcohol for men and women: **14 units per week.**

You should also include at least 2 alcohol free days each week.

If you regularly drink as much as 14 units a week, this should be spread over 3 or more days.

Did you know? Drinking 5 pints per week over a year adds up to over 40,000 calories!

If you have 1-2 heavy drinking sessions a week, you increase your risk of death from long term illness or injuries.

Pregnant women are advised to NOT drink alcohol as it can harm the baby.



# Keep alcohol intake within recommended limits

A rough guide to the units of alcohol in drinks:

- Pint of lager (4% ABV) = 2.3 units
- Pint of premium lager (5% ABV) = 2.8 units
- 1 pint cider (4.5% ABV) = 2.6 units
- Northern Ireland pub measure of spirits (37.5%) = 1.3 units
- 1 small glass of wine (125mls, 11% ABV) = 1.4 units
- Alco-pops/ready mixed drink (275ml 4% ABV) = 1.1 units
- Bottle of lager (330ml 5% ABV) = 1.5 units
- Pint of stout (4% ABV) = 2.3 units
- Can of extra strong lager (440ml 7% ABV) = 3.1 units
- Small bottle of wine (187ml 13%) = 2.4 units
- Bottle of wine (12%) = 9 units.



Visit [alcoholandyouni.com](http://alcoholandyouni.com) to learn more about managing your alcohol intake. You can also download their 'unit counter app'.



# 8. Read food labels

Checking food labels can help you make smart choices about the foods you eat. Traffic light labelling can help you make that choice quickly and easily.



Use this easy guide to make healthier choices while shopping:-

What the colours mean:

**RED** means HIGH, meaning the food is high in fat, sugars or salt. We should try to eat these foods less often and in small.

**AMBER** means MEDIUM, making it an ok choice. Eat in moderation. Going green is even better!

**GREEN** means LOW, which makes it a healthier choice.

Per 100g	Fat	Saturated Fat	Sugar	Salt
Low	3g or less	1.5g or less	5g or less	0.3g or less
Medium	3.1g to 17.5g	1.6 to 5g	5.1g to 22.5g	0.31g to 1.5g
High	Over 17.5g	Over 5g	Over 22.5	Over 1.5g

**Tip:** The 'Change4life' food scanner app tells you how much saturated fat, sugar and salt is really in your food and translates this into the traffic light colours - all you have to do is scan the barcode!

# Sample meal plan

## Breakfast

- Fruit or unsweetened fruit juice
- High fibre cereal or porridge with skimmed or semi-skimmed milk
- Wholemeal/wholegrain toast or bread with a little unsaturated spread or mashed banana



## Mid-morning

- Tea or coffee

## Light meal

- Vegetable soup with bread/sandwich/potato
- Wholegrain/wholemeal bread sandwich, wrap or pitta with lean meat/chicken/fish/egg/reduced fat cheese and salad
- Salad including pasta/couscous/baked potato and chicken/fish/eggs
- Toast with eggs/beans/banana
- Fruit, low fat yoghurt or fromage frais
- Glass of water



## Mid-afternoon

- Tea or coffee

## Main meal

- Some protein eg. lean meat/chicken/fish/reduced fat cheese/egg/pulses served with vegetables/salad and wholemeal/wholegrain bread/boiled/baked potatoes/wholegrain pasta/rice
- Fruit, low fat yogurt or fromage frais
- Glass of water



## Bedtime

- Tea or coffee

## Suitable snacks and drinks

- Fruit, vegetable sticks, bread, toast, bowl of unsweetened wholegrain cereal, plain popcorn, natural or diet/light yoghurt
- Tea or coffee with skimmed or semi-skimmed milk
- Water or well diluted squash or fruit juice



## 9. Take regular physical activity



This can help:

- Control weight
- Lower blood pressure
- Protect us from serious conditions such as heart disease, stroke, osteoporosis, diabetes and some cancers
- Improve self-confidence, making us look and feel better
- Reduce stress, anxiety and depression.

Being more active is easier than you think. Begin by putting a little extra effort into things you do every day, eg. park the car further away, use the stairs more often.

Ideally everyone should take at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity per week. One approach could be to do 30 minutes on 5 or more days of the week. There are now specific guidelines for young people, adults and older people. Please see link below for further information.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/start-active-stay-active-infographics-on-physical-activity](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/start-active-stay-active-infographics-on-physical-activity)

Choose an activity that you enjoy and is convenient for you, eg.

- Walking, dancing, exercising at home to a DVD, cycling, swimming or aqua aerobics
- ‘Outdoor gyms’ are found in many public places and are free to use
- Walking groups and Park Runs meet weekly in a range of areas
- ‘One You’ produced by Public Health England has a walking tracker and couch to 5K app which could help get you started and keep you motivated!
- Healthwise – a 12 week tailored exercise programme delivered through leisure centres. Ask your GP or practice nurse for more information
- If you find it difficult to be active because of health problems, why not try chair based activity sessions?

For some top tips, visit:

[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/sitting-exercises-for-older-people.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/sitting-exercises-for-older-people.aspx)

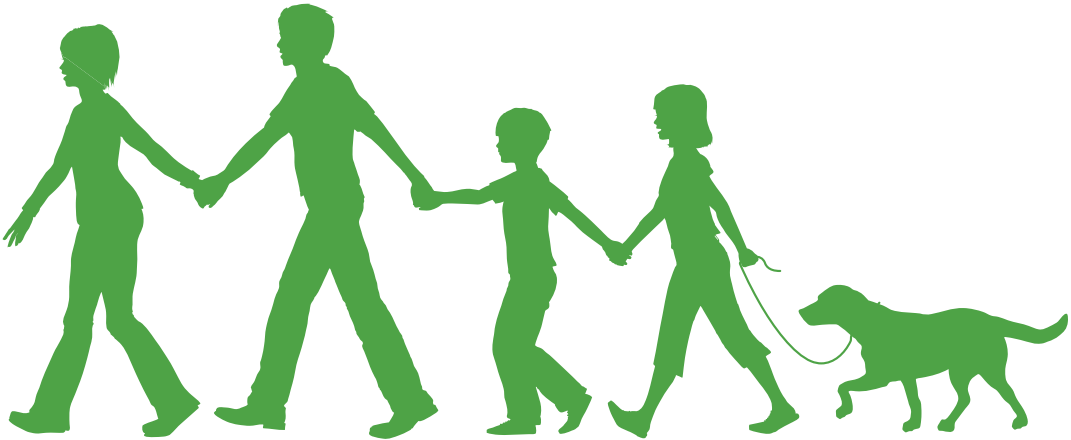


# Take regular physical activity

- Ask a friend or family member to join you. Support and encouragement can help keep you motivated
- The Change4Life website has some great ideas for activities you can do as a family.

If you have a health problem or any worries about starting a new activity, check with your GP first.

For more information about keeping active, including local walking groups, contact the Health Improvement Department in your Health and Social Care Trust.





# 10. Do not smoke, get help to stop

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to put you in touch with a local 'stop smoking' service.

For free advice and to order your free 'Quit Kit' visit:

[www.want2stop.info](http://www.want2stop.info)



Or text 'QUIT' to 7004 for SMS support \*standard network charges apply.

Or why not try the NHS 'Smoke Free' app?

All HSC Buildings and grounds are smoke free.



# Goals

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# Useful Websites and Information

HSC Public Health Agency

[www.enjoyhealthyeating.info](http://www.enjoyhealthyeating.info)

NI Direct

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/eatwell-guide](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/eatwell-guide)

Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

[www.food.gov.uk/northern-ireland](http://www.food.gov.uk/northern-ireland)

British Dietetic Association

[www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/home](http://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/home)

NHS Choices

[www.nhs.uk/livewell/goodfood](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/goodfood)

Choose to Live Better

[www.choosetolivebetter.com](http://www.choosetolivebetter.com)



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