

You must be able to know and understand the principles of a balanced diet.

You should be able to explain the various current dietary guidelines and recommendations for a healthy diet, demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how consumers make food choices and demonstrate knowledge of how lifestyle can affect food choice and diet.



Key words: Balanced diet, Eatwell Guide, hydration, food choices, under-nutrition, over-nutrition.

Dietary guidelines have been produced by the government and health experts. We are recommended to follow the following guidelines that provide a healthy, balanced diet which gives us the essential nutrients for our body to function perfectly such as:

The Eatwell Guide, The Five-a-day Campaign and Eight tips for healthy living, The Food Strategy for Wales.

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

The four food groups are:

- potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates
- fruit and vegetables
- dairy and alternatives
- beans, pulses, fish and other protein foods.

Hydration is clearly important, with a glass of water on the outside of the guide recommending 6-8 glasses per day which can include tea, coffee and milk etc. but limits fruit juice to 150 ml a day. There is a fifth segment (purple) which is oils and spreads. This is a tiny section in order to reflect the small proportion that should be eaten daily. The diet should be based on starchy food alongside fruit and vegetables. Foods from these two groups should make up two-thirds of the food we eat. The remaining one-third of the diet should be made up of milk and alternatives. The guide presents a nutritional label including the average energy requirements for men and women. The green and yellow sections of the guide include food that contains all the essential nutrients and are low in fat and sugar. Foods high in fat, salt and sugars are placed on the outside of the guide. These foods are not needed in the diet and so, if included, should only be eaten infrequently and in small amounts. Food and drinks high in fat and sugar contain a lot of calories and limited nutritional value.

Eight tips for healthy eating

- base your meals on starchy foods
- eat lots of fruit and veg
- eat more fish
- cut down on saturated fat and sugar
- eat less salt
- get active and be a healthy weight
- drink plenty of water
- don't skip breakfast.

Reasons for eating five fruits and vegetables a day

- Fruit and vegetables are a good source of vitamins and minerals, including folate, vitamin C and potassium.
- They're an excellent source of dietary fibre, which can help to maintain a healthy gut and prevent constipation and other digestion problems. A diet high in fibre can also reduce your risk of bowel cancer.
- They can help to reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke and some types of cancer.
- Fruit and vegetables contribute to a healthy, balanced diet.
- Fruit and vegetables taste delicious and there's so much variety to choose from.
- Fruit and vegetables are also usually low in fat and calories (provided you don't fry them or roast them in lots of oil). That's why eating them can help you maintain a healthy weight and keep your heart healthy.

How do people make food choices?

Food choices for a balanced diet depend on many factors, such as: individual energy and nutrient needs; health concerns; cultural or religious practices; cost; food availability; food preferences; social considerations; environmental considerations; advertising and other point of sale information.

Factors affecting food choice

Availability	Not everyone has the same availability of food, types of shops - they may live in the country and have no access to shops.
Cost	Cost of food is a particularly important factor for people with low income. Food prepared at home is often cheaper than eating out or buying take-aways.
Culture	Customs and social behaviour of a group of people, meal patterns.
Religious beliefs	Judaism, Hinduism and Islam restrict certain types of food.
Ethical food choices	Organic, free range, red tractor genetically modified food, fair trade, vegan, etc.
Medical conditions	Allergies, intolerances, diabetes, anaemia, coeliac.
Marketing and advertising	Pester power encouraging consumer interest.
Food labelling	Consumers are informed of nutritional content allergies, food miles, storage etc. - all of which can help them make an informed choice.