

Eating well, feeling well

A practical guide for supporting
older adults



With all of us in mind

Enjoy your food

Eating healthily is about eating a variety of foods so you feel well, keep active and enjoy life.

Throughout your life the way you eat and what you enjoy may change but you can still eat a balanced diet. This booklet will give you some advice and tips on how to continue to eat well and feel well.

The eatwell plate is a guide to help you get the right balance of different foods. It encourages us to eat a variety of different foods each day including lots of fruit and vegetables and less sugar, fat and salt.

The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.

Fruit and vegetables



Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods



Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar

Milk and dairy foods

Department of Health in association with the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

Tips for eating well

- Serve a variety of different foods.
- It is important to eat regularly through the day and it is important to not miss meals. If you are eating smaller amounts at meal times try to include healthy nutritious snacks such as yoghurt, breakfast cereal with milk, cheese and crackers, a slice of toast, a milky drink, or a fruit smoothie, which will be more nutritious and filling than biscuits and sweets.
- Keeping active will help improve your appetite. If you can, get out for a walk during the day.
- Keep food to hand for when you want a quick snack, such as a small sandwich or boiled egg and toast.
- Iron rich foods should be a regular part of the diet as iron deficiency anaemia is common in older people.
- Consider including fruit, salad or vegetables with softer textures into your diet if you are struggling to eat firmer fruits. If chewing is a problem you could try fruit juices or vitamin C fortified cordials to make sure you are not missing out on those important vitamins.

Boost your bones

What we can do to keep our bones strong

Our bones reach their maximum density, or become strongest, around the age of 30. Bone strength naturally deteriorates as part of the ageing process. We can keep our bones strong by taking onboard the following points:

Sunshine

It is important to get enough vitamin D to build and maintain healthy bones. Most of our vitamin D comes from sunlight. Try to get about 15-20 minutes of sun exposure to your face and arms, three or four times each week during the summer to stock up on your vitamin D. This doesn't need to be bright sunshine, just summer daylight.

Remember – if you are out in the sun any longer you will need to apply sunscreen. If you are over 65, it is also recommended that you take a vitamin D supplement of 10 micrograms per day.

Calcium

To keep stocked up with 'calcium containing foods' try to have three portions of dairy foods each day. Low fat versions of things like custard or rice pudding have the same calcium content as full fat versions.

A portion could be:

- a glass of milk
- a small pot of yoghurt
- a matchbox size piece of cheese
- a small pot of custard or rice pudding

Keep active

Keep moving to help maintain strength and balance. Even a small amount of activity can help. To find out about activities happening in your area, contact the health and wellbeing development worker team on 01977 705473.

My appetite has changed

Not eating enough

Weight loss can be common among older people who are finding it difficult to eat well. Weight loss can also be triggered by illness or stressful situations.

It is therefore particularly important to look for signs of unintended weight loss. You may start to notice clothes and jewellery becoming looser and your appetite decreasing.

You can speak to your GP if you are worried about a poor appetite or unwanted weight loss.

“I don't have much of an appetite”

Not eating enough can make you feel tired and depressed. There are lots of reasons why you might not feel hungry but there are some things you can do to help. For example:

- Get up and about – increasing your activity levels can help stimulate appetite. Take a short walk or do some light housework.
- Think about how many sweet drinks such as sugary tea, coffee or fizzy drinks that you have, as these can dull your appetite. Aim to drink water and drinks without added sugar. We should be aiming for 6-8 drinks per day.
- Try having several small nutritious meals throughout the day rather than trying to eat a big main meal. For example, scrambled egg on toast, a bowl of soup with bread or a small jacket potato with a tasty filling.
- Make your snacks nutritious rather than relying on biscuits and sweets eg. a slice of toast and honey, a teacake, a few crackers with cheese, a crumpet with jam, a handful of dried fruit, a yoghurt, a piece of fresh fruit, a piece of fruit/malt loaf or a small bowl of fruit salad.

“I think I'm eating too much”

There are lots of reasons why people overeat. There is so much food available today and so many different kinds to choose from that it is easy to over eat. Other factors such as boredom and comfort eating can also be culprits.

Here are some tips which help:

- You may feel hungry when you are actually thirsty, so try having a drink first and aim to drink 6-8 glasses of fluid a day. This can be water, juice, tea or coffee – it all counts.
- If you think you might be eating because you are bored, distract yourself. If you still feel hungry after 20 minutes then have a healthy snack.
- Stick to three meals a day and if you do have snacks make them healthy ones like fruit, yoghurt, toast or crumpets.
- Plates seem to be bigger than they used to be, so if you have big dinner plates, don't fill them right up as you will be eating more food without realising.
- Eat a large portion of vegetables or salad with your meals to keep you fuller for longer.

Keeping hydrated

Water makes up two thirds of our body and it is vital we drink enough fluid to maintain a healthy balance. Most people get dehydrated by not drinking enough fluids or by losing fluids and not replacing them. We should be aiming for at least 6-8 drinks per day, and any fluid except alcohol counts towards this.

Keeping hydrated can assist in preventing or treating headaches, constipation, urinary tract infections and much more – the key is to keep drinking regularly throughout the day.

Malnutrition

Malnutrition is when a person is not eating enough of the right foods. This means they don't get all the nutrients they need. You can be malnourished and not look underweight. Being malnourished can make you ill as your body does not work as well as usual.

A common problem in older people can be iron deficiency which results in anaemia. Being ill can also lead to malnutrition as this can often result in poor eating habits.

Can you get food easily?

If you are having difficulty getting food, why not try:

- Sharing meals with others
- Attending local café/ pub lunches/ visiting voluntary, community or faith organisations with luncheon clubs
- Sharing transport with friends to the supermarket or to a lunch club
- Using online supermarket home delivery services
- Using Age UK's supermarket shopping service

If you need any advice or further information about the points above, contact the health and wellbeing development worker team on 01977 705473.

Practical aids to help people with eating and drinking

If you or someone you know is finding it physically difficult to eat there are a number of practical aids that family, friends and support staff can use to help older people independently eat and drink more effectively. These include:

- Specially shaped cups, with one or two handles
- Cutlery of different shapes, sizes, depths and materials. Short handle cutlery is easier to manage, and handgrips or specially shaped handles may help some people to use a utensil
- Plates and bowls which do not slip, have higher sides to prevent spillage, or are angled to make access to food easier
- Insulated crockery which keeps food hot if mealtimes are lengthy
- Non-slip mats which support crockery
- Special straws which can help those with a weaker suck, or 'nosey cups' to prevent the head from tilting too far back.

An occupational therapist can advise on practical aids and which would best suit individual circumstances.

Food safety

Fridge storage

Some foods need to be kept in the fridge to help stop bacteria growing. These include foods with a 'use by' date, cooked foods and ready-to-eat foods such as desserts and cooked meats.

Here's how to prevent bacteria from growing:

- Keep your fridge temperature below 5 degrees C.
- When preparing food, keep it out of the fridge for the shortest time possible.
- If you're having a buffet, keep the food refrigerated until you're ready to serve it.
- Cool leftovers as quickly as possible (within 90 minutes) and store them in the fridge. Eat them within two days.
- Store eggs in their box in the fridge.
- Never put open cans in the fridge as the metal from the can may transfer to the can's contents. Transfer the contents into a storage container or covered bowl.

Freezing and defrosting

It is safe to freeze meat and fish as long as you:

- Freeze it before the use-by date.
- Defrost meat and fish thoroughly before cooking. Lots of liquid will come out as meat thaws, so stand it in a bowl to stop bacteria in the juice spreading to other things.
- Defrost in a microwave if you intend to cook straightaway. Otherwise, put it in the fridge to thaw so that it doesn't get too warm.
- Cook food until it's piping hot all the way through.

'Best before' and 'use by'

- Food with a 'use by' date goes off quite quickly. It can be dangerous to eat after this date.
- Food with a 'best before' date is longer-lasting. It should be safe to eat but may not be at its best quality after this date.

Storing meat

It is especially important to store meat safely in the fridge to stop bacteria from spreading, and to avoid food poisoning.

- Store raw meat and poultry in clean, sealed containers on the bottom shelf of the fridge, so it can't touch or drip onto other food.
- Follow any storage instructions on the label and don't eat meat after its 'use-by' date.
- Keep cooked meat separate from raw meat.

Microwaves

Microwave cooking is a quick and healthy way to cook food and can be particularly useful for small amounts of food and cooking for one.

Cooking vegetables – place vegetables in a microwavable container with a little water and cover over. Your vegetables will steam cook which retains vitamins and flavour.

Ready meals – always follow the instructions on the packet and make sure the food is piping hot, even if you need to allow it to cool before eating.

Remember to stir food – microwaves don't cook food evenly and some spots may be hotter than others.

Allow to stand – microwave cooked food needs to stand after cooking to complete the cooking process.

Store cupboard and freezer essentials



Starchy foods

Tinned potatoes (Just warm up or use for mash)
Dried pasta
Rice
Cream crackers
Breakfast cereals
Oatcakes
Bake your own bread mix
Pizza bases

Fruit and vegetables

Tinned vegetables eg. carrots, peas, sweetcorn
Tinned tomatoes (for sauces)
Baked beans
Tinned fruit
Dried fruit
Frozen vegetables – there are a huge range available these days, peas, carrots, peppers, beans, mushrooms, even onions.



Meat, fish and other protein foods

Tinned fish eg. tuna, salmon, sardines
Corned beef
Tinned ham
Tinned meat eg. mince and onions, chicken in white sauce
Frozen meat or Quorn – mince, chicken pieces
Frozen fish – fillets of plain fish or fish in sauce

Milk and dairy foods

UHT or dried milk
Tinned or individual pots of custard
Tinned or individual pots of rice pudding
Cheese (this can be frozen at home)

Other useful store cupboard items

Stock cubes
Worcestershire sauce
Tomato puree
Vegetable or sunflower oil
Dried mixed herbs and spices

Meal delivery services

Home delivery services are run throughout the UK, which can deliver frozen meals to people in their home. You can order by phone, post, online or call to order a brochure of foods available.

Oakhouse Foods **01756 796336**

Wiltshire Farm Foods **0800 678060**

WRVS **01977 696840**

Alternatively you could get a small stock of ready made meals from your usual supermarket and keep them in your freezer for an emergency.

Most supermarkets now offer home delivery services as well. This could be more convenient for you – ask in store for more details on your next visit.

You could also try asking at your local café or pub as many now offer meal delivery services.

Meal ideas using store cupboard and freezer ingredients

Shepherds pie

Mince and onions, tinned tomatoes, stock cube, tinned potato, tinned or frozen vegetables.

Fish pie

Frozen fish in parsley sauce, tinned potato, peas and carrots.

Fishcakes

Tinned salmon or tuna, tinned potato, plus an egg or milk to bind. Serve with tinned or frozen vegetables.

Pasta bolognaise

Dried pasta, tinned tomatoes, mixed herbs, tomato puree, frozen mince.

Tuna pasta

Dried pasta, tinned tomatoes, mixed herbs, tomato puree, tinned tuna, frozen peppers.

Corned beef hash

Corned beef, frozen onions, tinned vegetables, stock cube, tinned tomatoes, tinned potatoes.

Pizza

Pizza base, tinned tomatoes, tinned ham, tinned pineapple, frozen mushrooms, peppers.

Savoury mince

Tinned mince and onions, tinned potato, tinned or frozen vegetables.

Chilli and rice

Tinned or frozen mince, tinned tomatoes, tomato puree, tinned kidney beans, rice.

Chicken pie

Tinned chicken in white sauce, tinned potato, tinned or frozen carrots.

Ready meals – making a healthy choice

Ready meals may not always be the healthiest choice but if you are short of time, can't get out, or are finding it difficult to prepare meals they can be a good idea.

There are some things you can do to make a "ready meal" a healthier choice.

- Remember to buy some vegetables to go with your meal. As well as fresh vegetables, there are large ranges of frozen and tinned vegetables available, so keep some in for emergencies.
- Look at the labels – pick meals which are lower in fat, sugar and salt. Different ranges can vary greatly and surprisingly the "value" products are sometimes healthier.
- Some products use the "traffic light" label system. This shows you whether items are high (red) medium (amber) or low (green) in calories, sugar, fat and salt. When shopping mainly choose meals with green and amber labels and only have those with red labels occasionally.
- Try to select meals that already contain some vegetables or meals with vegetable based sauces eg. tomato rather than creamy or cheesy sauces.
- Be wary of healthy looking packaging. Meals marketed as diet or healthy choices aren't always healthier than the ordinary version and are often more expensive.
- When picking ready made puddings go for things such as rice pudding, yogurts, mousse, ice cream, frozen or tinned fruits, rather than things like trifles and gateaux which you could have more as an occasional treat.

Lentil and vegetable soup

Old favourite: warm and comforting

Ingredients

1 large onion, chopped
2 leeks, sliced
2 large carrots, diced
1 small swede, diced
80g red split lentils
2 stock cubes
A pinch of dried parsley
Pepper

Method

1. Rinse the lentils under cold water.
2. Chop or dice all the vegetables.
3. Put the vegetables in a pan.
4. Crumble stock cubes over the vegetables and lentils and cover with hot water.
5. Add the parsley.
6. Bring to the boil and then simmer until the vegetables and lentils are soft (15-20 minutes). Keep an eye on the water level and top up as necessary.
7. Add pepper to taste. The soup can be left chunky or blended for a smoother texture.

Salmon fishcake

Easy peasy: store cupboard staple

Ingredients

Makes 8 fishcakes

(can be frozen)

400g can of salmon
300g peas, drained
500g potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks (or use tinned potatoes)
1 egg, beaten
Breadcrumbs for coating
Seasoning

Method

1. Boil the potatoes until soft, drain, mash and season.
2. Place the salmon in a large bowl. Remove any bones and skin.
3. Add the peas and potato, mix well.
4. Divide into 8 portions and shape into fish cakes.
5. Brush the fishcake with egg and coat well with breadcrumbs.
6. Place on a baking tray and bake in the oven for about 20 minutes or until golden brown.
7. Try serving with tartare sauce or sweet chilli sauce.

The fish cakes can be frozen for a later date before the cooking stage.

Turkey and ginger stir fry

"Try something new" "try something different"

Serves 4

Ingredients

450g turkey fillets, cut into strips

1 medium onion, finely sliced

1 red pepper, seeded and sliced

1 courgette, sliced

A handful of mushrooms, sliced

2 teaspoons fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped

1 tablespoon light soy sauce

1 tablespoon runny honey

2 teaspoons chilli sauce

Method

1. Heat a non stick wok or frying pan, add the turkey strips and dry fry for 5-6 minutes or until just cooked.
2. Add the onions, red peppers, courgettes, mushroom and any remaining vegetables of your choice to the heat and stir.
3. Mix together the soy sauce, honey and chilli and add to the pan coating the meat and vegetables. Stir fry combining all the ingredients until the meat is fully cooked.
4. Serve immediately on a bed of noodles or rice (which will have been cooked according to the instructions on the packet).

Stir fry is a quick and easy way to eat healthily – and the best bit is that you can use whatever vegetable and meat combinations you like.

Sausage and butterbean casserole

Winter favourite: quick and easy

Serves 4

Ingredients

6 reduced fat sausages

2 teaspoons of olive oil

1 large onion, chopped

4 mushrooms, chopped

1 carrot, chopped finely

1 teaspoon dried sage (or mixed herbs)

2 tins chopped tomatoes

1 tin butter beans, drained and rinsed

Ground black pepper

Method

1. Grill (or dry fry) the sausages under a medium heat for 1-2 minutes or until lightly browned. Transfer to a plate, cut into pieces and set aside.
2. Put the olive oil in a pan and fry the onion, carrot and sage gently for about 10 minutes until the onion is soft but not coloured.
3. Add the mushrooms and tomatoes and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring until thickened. Season with pepper.
4. Stir in the butter beans and add the sausages.
5. Bake in the oven at 180C/Gas 4 for 15-20 minutes until bubbling and the sausages are cooked all the way through. (Or cook on the hob for 15-20 minutes).
6. Serve with rice or vegetables.

This booklet has been produced to provide practical information and advice for older people regarding eating well and feeling well. It has not been designed to provide medical advice, and the first port of call for any medical assistance or advice should always be your GP. We hope you find this booklet a useful resource.

Who to contact for more information?

The health and wellbeing team provide information, advice and support to help adults over 50 and all adults with a physical disability and/or sensory impairment, to maintain their health and independence.

There are many things that can affect a person's ability to feel healthy, both physically and mentally, and to remain independent. We understand this and can help with a variety of queries and issues.

If you need help and don't know who to go to, give us a call and we will try our best to provide the information you need or point you in the right direction.

Contact us on 01977 705473

Alternatively you can contact the community food and health team

The community food and health team work across the Wakefield District delivering healthy eating activities, training sessions and the eatwell plate model to all communities within the area. They aim to raise awareness of the health benefits of eating a balanced diet and eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

For more information you can contact the community food and health team on **01924 361212 ext 228**

Your feedback is welcome

We invite you to share any comments, compliments, concerns or complaints you have about the Trust. Please speak to a member of staff or contact our Customer Services team on 0800 587 2108.

If you would like help understanding this information, please contact 0800 587 2108.

Produced by the health and wellbeing development worker team in partnership with the community food and health team.





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