BDA The Association of UK Dietitians

Food Fact Sheet

Healthy eating

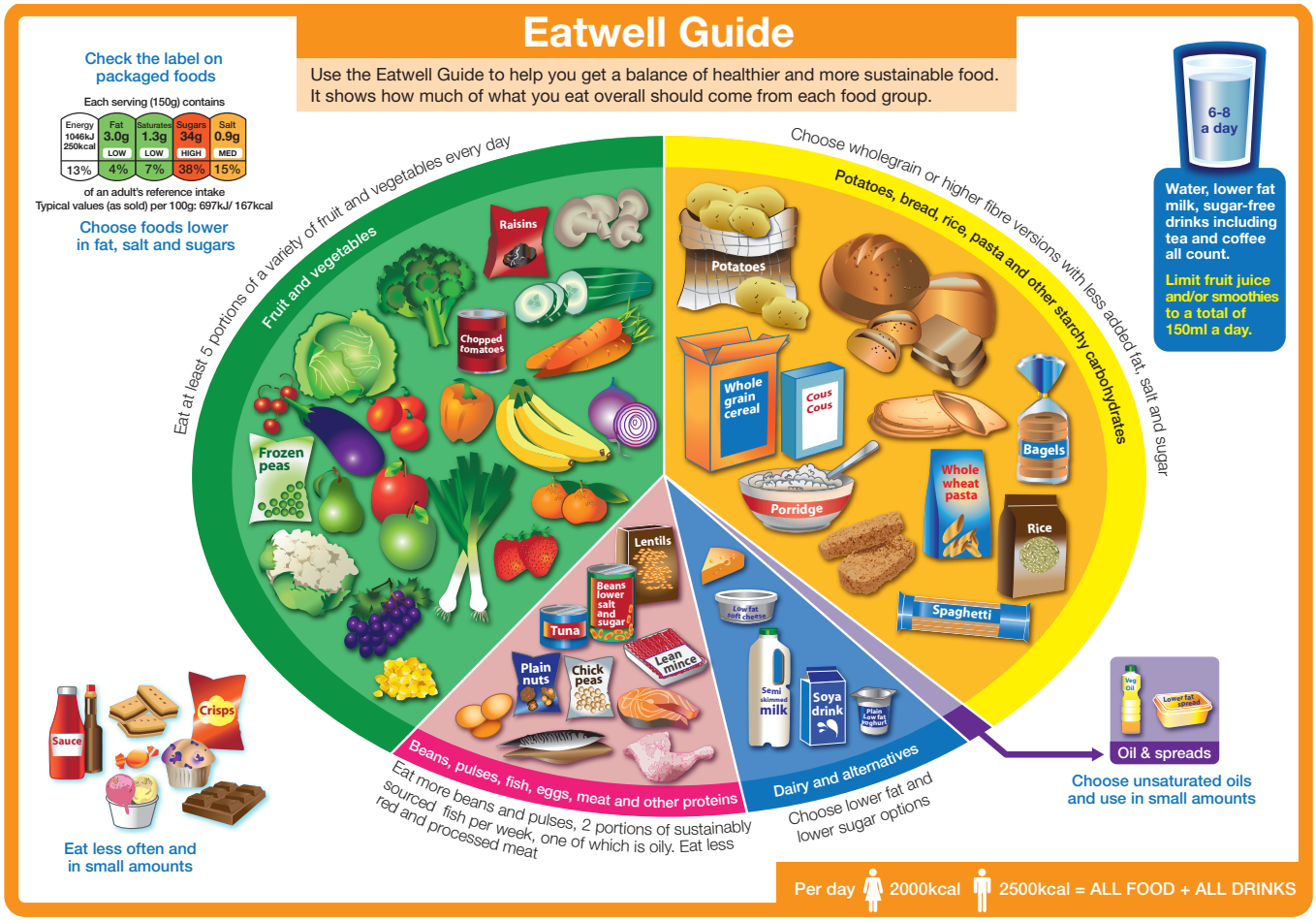
A good diet is important for good health. Eating a variety of foods can improve general wellbeing, reduce the risk of conditions including heart disease, stroke, some cancers, diabetes and osteoporosis (thin bones) and help you manage your weight. You need to eat sensibly, choosing a varied diet from a range of foods, not smoking and keeping active are all great ways to boost your health.

Different types of food

The Eatwell Guide can help you to understand the different types of food that make up a healthy diet. It also shows how much of these foods you should eat to have a well-balanced and healthy diet. It's a good idea to try to get this balance right throughout the week.

The Eatwell Guide is made up of five food groups – fruit and vegetables; bread, rice, potatoes and other starchy foods; meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein; milk and dairy foods; and oil and spreads. If you choose a variety of foods from the groups you can easily achieve this healthy balance.

Foods high in fat, salt and sugars are not needed in the diet, so if you do choose to include them then try to have them less often and in smaller amounts. Read on for some useful tips.



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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1. Five portions of fruit and vegetables each day

and remember, fresh, frozen, dried and canned all count towards your total 5-a-day. Don't forget to include the vegetables you add to cooked dishes, for example onions in a stew or casserole, tomatoes in a pasta sauce or vegetable soup are included.

2. Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates -

include starchy foods such as chapattis, breakfast cereals, noodles and oats as part of your meals/ snacks. Aim to include one food from this group at each meal time and eat regularly. Try and opt for wholegrains where possible.

3. Variety -

choose a variety of different types and colours of fruit and vegetables. As well as providing vitamins, minerals and fibre, the natural colours and flavours of plants add powerful anti-oxidants to our diet.

4. Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins -

choose lean meat or remove excess fat and remove the skin from chicken. Avoid frying where possible. Try to include two portions of fish each week, one of which should be an oily fish (darker skinned), for example: mackerel, trout, sardines, kippers or fresh tuna.

5. Dairy and alternatives -

with dairy foods providing the richest and best absorbed source of dietary calcium, try for three portions a day to meet most calcium needs.
A portion is:

- a small pot of yoghurt
- 1/3 pint of milk
- a small matchbox size piece of cheese.

Try to choose reduced fat versions where you can, for example semi-skimmed milk or low fat yoghurt.

6. Oils and Spreads -

try to choose low-fat spreads and use a small amount. Opt for one that is low in saturated fat and made from olive, sunflower, rapeseed or vegetable oils. Saturated fat increases the low density lipoproteins (LDL) or 'bad' cholesterol in your blood which can lead to heart disease.

Saturated fat (avoid)	Unsaturated fat (alternative)
• butter • ghee • lard • coconut oil • palm oils *and foods made from these.* • pastries • cakes • biscuits *and other foods made from hydrogenated fats.*	**Polyunsaturated fat** *Polyunsaturated fat, oils, soft spreads and margarines including:* • *sunflower* • *soya* • *corn* • *linseed (flaxseed)* • *safflower* • *fish oil.* **Monounsaturated fat** • olive oil • rapeseed oil

Choosing mono-unsaturated spreads (such as those made from olive or rapeseed oils) help to lower blood levels of harmful LDL cholesterol, and boost levels of 'good' high density lipoproteins (HDL) cholesterol.

It is important to remember that all types of fat are high in energy and should be limited in the diet.

7. Sugar and fat -

are high in calories, so try to cut down on foods and drinks with lots of sugar/fat in such as sweets, cakes, crisps and sugary soft drinks. Choose low-fat or reduced sugar foods where possible.

Summary

Eat a range of foods from the main food groups to make sure you have a balanced diet. Eat the right amount of food for how active you are.
Most of all – enjoy your food!

Further information: Food Fact Sheets on other topics including Fruit and Veg – how to get 5-a-day, Cholesterol, Fats and Fluid and Drinks can be downloaded at **bda.uk.com/foodfacts**

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