

Healthy Eating

Eating healthy helps

Staying physically healthy is important for everyone, but can be hard if someone has a mental health problem.

Symptoms of mental illness can include changes to sleep, changes to energy and changes to appetite.

Treatments for mental illness can also lead to difficulties with thirst, wanting sugary drinks, cravings for some types of foods and can make you feel like eating, even when you're not really hungry or when you are actually full.

While eating healthily can be tricky, it's worth it.

Not only does it reduce the risk of other health problems (like heart disease and diabetes), but it can also help you to improve energy levels, get a good night's sleep and generally feel good about yourself.

Some medications can lead to an increase in thirst and food cravings.

Your brain will work better if you feed it right.



The breakfast challenge

Don't feel like breakfast? Breakfast can give energy levels a boost, and help you get the right amount of different foods across the day. If you feel rushed, or don't have the right foods around, try having a piece of fruit, or a glass of low-fat milk to get you started.

Snack right

Lots of people keep their energy levels even by having three meals a day, and several smaller snacks inbetween. Making snacks healthy ones will help you keep your weight in balance.

Often



Less often



Plan what and when you eat

Try to have a plan for what you want to eat, how much of it you want to eat, and when you want to eat it. This can help you to get enough of the main food groups, and help you to keep track of the treats that you have. If you plan other things to do in your day, this can help you to avoid eating out of boredom (and might help you to feel good too!).



Become your own masterchef!

One of the ways you can keep better control of what you eat is to eat home cooked foods – foods like stir-fried veg and rice, spaghetti bolognese with lean beef, and chicken salads are easy, low-fat and low-cost recipes. If you or your family are interested in finding free recipe ideas, try searching for 'low-fat' and 'healthy' recipes on the internet, or try your local library for recipe books. Try to cook foods in the microwave or under the grill instead of frying them, and remove all fat from meat before you cook it.



Eating healthy things

Vegetables (especially fresh ones, but canned and frozen are ok) have lots of good vitamins, minerals and energy, and no bad fats or processed sugars – you can eat plenty of them! It's all about balance and being realistic – try to eat more of the good things to fill you up and save the junk food and sweet things for a treat.



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Take-away options

Use it as a treat – not a routine. Lots of fast food places have 'healthy choices'.

- Healthy options in your neighbourhood may include wraps, salads, sandwiches, rolls and stir-fried vegetables.
- Instead of chips, try salad with your fish.
- Avoid ordering 'extras' like garlic bread, chips or soft drinks.
- If you're getting a drink, get a diet or 'zero' option – or better still, water!
- Go grilled rather than fried.

Say no to upsizing

Do you really need seconds?

Wait for ten minutes to see if you are really hungry and need more.



Try using a smaller plate

Eating up everything from a large, full plate might mean you eat more than you need.



Drink two glasses of water before you eat

This will help you to feel full so you won't be tempted to eat too much, and it also makes sure you keep hydrated.



Eat slowly

If it takes you five minutes or less to eat a plate of food, you are probably eating too fast. Your body doesn't know when it's full and so you can overeat at every meal this way. Enjoy every mouthful.



Different people need different amounts of energy from food to stay healthy

These amounts vary from person to person depending on lots of different factors, like a person's age and sex, and how active their lifestyle is. Working with a dietician can help to get the balance right for you.

If you want to try to work out how much energy you are consuming each day, you can check the labels of things that you eat. A rough guide for a man is 2,500 calories per day and 2,000 calories per day for a woman made up of different food groups. You can find out more on the NHS Choices website which also has information on a healthy diet along with healthy recipes: www.nhs.uk/livewell/healthy-eating

Another good website is the British Dietetic Association:

www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/home which has some useful factsheets.

Don't miss out on pizza – make your own

Making your own health pizza is quick to make and a satisfying lunch or dinner.

- Use pitta bread or tortilla for the base
- Go easy on the cheese, and go low-fat
- Swap the fatty salami and have either ham, turkey or chicken
- Top with your favourite vegetables e.g. mushrooms, peppers
- Spice it up a bit if you like chilli or herbs



Food quiz!

1. Eating just 1 or 2 types of fruit and veg a day is sufficient

True False

2. Milk is fattening and I should avoid it if I am trying to lose weight

True False

3. Crash dieting is not the most effective way of losing weight

True False

4. Fruit juice and cola contain about the same amount of sugar

True False

5. Skipping breakfast is the most effective way of losing weight

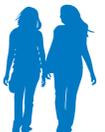
True False

6. Low fat foods always have less calories

True False

7. The amount of alcohol you drink doesn't affect your weight

True False



Healthy Eating

What you drink matters too



Get in the habit of taking a water bottle with you. When you are finished, fill it from the tap and reuse it.



Don't like the taste of water? Try adding some low calorie cordial or even some lemon or lime juice. It's cheap and tastes great! Especially if you put it in the fridge the night before.

Soft drinks can sneak a lot of sugar into your body without you even realising it. Try cutting down on your intake by replacing one soft drink each day with water, or trying a diet version.

Fruit juices can be full of sugar too. Lots of fruit juices contain plenty of sugar and energy – so keep to the occasional glass.



Do you really need that third sugar in your tea/coffee? Try reducing the sugar by a teaspoon, your tastebuds will soon get used to the challenge.

Alcohol and some drugs (such as cannabis) can stimulate your appetite and lead you to eat more than you need to.

Lots of beer, wine and mixers can lead to rapid weight gain because they contain lots of calories – so drinking less will help you stay in good physical shape. Try diet mixers in your drinks, or swap to low-calorie beer or cider, but be sensible. Visit www.drinkaware.co.uk for safe drinking guidelines.



Be careful! Alcoholic drinks increase your calorie intake!

At the supermarket

Don't shop when you are hungry!



Try to make a list beforehand and stick to it. This will help you to budget, but also to keep track of the fatty and sugary foods that you're buying, and not to buy more impulsively or accidentally.

Small, pre-packed salads and fruits can be convenient, as you can eat them right away, before they go off.

Remember that fresh products will go off, so don't buy more than you think you will eat, or if you have too much, put some things in the freezer for later.

If you're buying meat look for cuts without lots of fat, or plan to trim the fat and skin off before you cook it.

Try: Low fat versions of dairy products like cheese and yoghurt instead of the regular version. Rice crackers instead of crisps.

Watch out for impulse buying and tempting treats at the checkout aisle.

Read labels to help you know which option might be better. The food label on the front of a pack has information on parts of the food that are important to health – see example below:

Energy is listed as kilojoules (kJ) – this measurement is used in Europe, or kilocalories (kcal) – which we know as calories.

Fat is important to our health, all types of fat contain the same amount of energy.

Saturates – these are found in foods such as lard, butter, fats on meat and meat products, pasties, cakes, biscuits, take-away meals etc. This type of fat causes a rise in cholesterol levels linked to heart disease.

Sugars – this covers all types of sugars including added sugar and sugars that are a natural part of a food e.g. lactose (milk sugar) and fructose (fruit sugar).

Salt – salt is found naturally in many foods like meat and vegetables, but is also added to foods to improve taste and shelf-life. Adults should eat no more than 6g of salt a day.

Take care – labels refer to a portion size that may be smaller than you are eating! Try to choose foods that show green or amber for the majority of the 'front of pack' nutrients. If a food contains a red label, such as in the example above, try to limit the number of times you eat this food.

The actual ingredients in a food are listed according to how much is in the food – the biggest ingredient is listed first, the second next and so on.

Ref: British Dietetic Association, Food Labelling fact sheet. www.bda.uk; NHS Choices, www.nhs.uk/Livewell
Ack: Orygen Youth Health wellbeing leaflet, 2011



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