

- ✓ How to eat healthily
- ✓ How to get more exercise
- ✓ Help everyone in your family feel better



# How to eat well and **stay healthy**

# AT A GLANCE



## Healthy living – it's easier than you may think

- A healthy diet includes lots of different food like fruit and vegetables, plenty of starchy foods and some meat, fish and dairy products.
- Healthy eating doesn't have to cost a lot.
- Feeding your children well when they're young helps them to become healthy grown-ups.
- Eating healthily yourself is one of the best ways to get your child to do the same.
- Regular exercise, like playing sport or cycling, is part of a healthy life for everyone.

## Did you know?

**Children are getting fatter, which is bad for them now and in the future. Eating healthy foods and being more active can make a real difference.**

# Why is it so important?

Healthy eating is all about getting the right balance of foods and not eating too much fat, sugar and salt. That means eating plenty of fruit and vegetables and trying not to eat too many foods such as crisps, chocolate, biscuits and cakes. You don't have to cut these foods out completely, but just enjoy them as a very occasional treat. When kids eat well, they get the fuel they need for healthy growth and development. It can also help them do better at school.

Eating well is good for the whole family, and it's even better if you exercise regularly too. Everyone has more energy. They feel better and are less likely to get serious diseases later in life. But what if your children don't want to go anywhere near a vegetable? And what if you find day-to-day cooking a grind? This booklet will help you to:

- understand what a healthy diet is
- learn about the best foods for your family
- get your kids eating fruit and veg
- find out what school meals your children should get – and any free meals they may be able to have
- find out about activities that can help keep your family fit and healthy.

# What makes a healthy diet?

Eating well is not hard to do. Try thinking about how it will benefit your family – it's really worth making an effort to change the way you all eat. And it doesn't have to cost a lot. You may even find that eating more pasta, rice, fruit and vegetables means you spend less on food.

Here are eight tips for eating well from the Food Standards Agency:

- Base your meals on starchy foods, such as whole grain bread, potatoes, rice or pasta.
- Eat lots of fruit and veg.
- Try to eat at least two portions of fish a week and include one portion of oily fish, such as mackerel.
- Cut down on saturated fat and sugar.
- Try to eat less salt – 6g is the daily max for adults.
- Drink plenty of water or other fluids.
- Get active and try to be a healthy weight.
- Don't skip breakfast!

**Eating more fruit and vegetables can help to reduce the risk of some types of cancer and can also help protect against heart disease. Fruit and veg are also generally low in calories and fat, making them a very healthy snack.**

## Which foods are high in saturated fat?

These foods are high in saturated fat, so try not to eat too much:

- Meat pies, sausages and meat with visible white fat.
- Hard cheese.
- Butter and lard.
- Pastry, cakes and biscuits.
- Cream, soured cream and crème fraiche.
- Coconut oil, coconut cream and palm oil.

Having too much saturated fat can increase the amount of cholesterol in the blood, which increases the chance of developing heart disease.

## Practical tips

- Children sometimes like raw veggies better, so cut up a selection of carrots, peppers, celery, cucumber and cherry tomatoes to have with dips, like houmous.
- Create a vegetable sauce for pasta that has carrots, mushrooms and red pepper blended in. What children can't see, they can't pick out!
- Make tasty soup with leftover vegetables and stock.

## Get your 5 a day

You don't have to be on 'Ready Steady Cook' to get your family eating more fruit and vegetables. Aim for at least five portions a day (a portion is 80g or roughly a handful). Fresh, frozen, chilled, juiced, canned and dried fruit and vegetables all count. The important thing is to eat different types of fruit and veg every day.

### One portion is:

- one apple, banana, pear, orange
- two satsumas or plums
- 12–15 cherries or grapes
- one tablespoon of dried fruit, such as raisins or apricots
- three heaped tablespoons of cooked carrots, peas or sweetcorn
- one onion
- seven cherry tomatoes
- one cereal bowl of mixed salad
- one glass of fruit juice (but juice can only count as one portion a day).

**Watch out for 'Healthy Start' a new food scheme for pregnant women and families on certain benefits that's coming soon. You might be entitled to vouchers to buy fresh fruit and vegetables, milk or infant formula.**

## Just for kids

Healthy eating should start in infancy. Try to breastfeed your baby for the first six months. Most babies are ready to start solids at that age. You should then introduce your baby gradually to a wide range of foods with different tastes and textures. Try to give your baby a variety of foods so that they are getting the balance of nutrients. It's important not to add salt and sugar to baby food. Avoid sugary drinks, too, and stick to water or milk.



When children go to a nursery or school, they should have a healthy, balanced diet made up of the four main food groups:

- fruit and vegetables
- starchy foods, such as bread, breakfast cereals, potatoes, pasta and rice
- meat, fish and other sources of protein such as eggs and pulses
- milk and dairy foods.

## What's in your child's lunchbox?

If your children take packed lunches to school, try to make them healthy and a bit different each day. Here are some suggestions:

- Make sandwiches with wholemeal bread, rolls or pitta bread.
- Try having sandwiches without – or with very little – butter, spread, mayonnaise or other dressing, especially if the filling is moist. If you do have mayonnaise, choose a low-fat variety when you can.
- Choose lower-fat fillings, such as lean meats like ham or turkey, tuna, cottage cheese, Edam or mozzarella cheese. Add some salad or try sliced banana.
- Add fruit, such as apples, bananas, grapes, melon pieces, raisins, chopped fresh fruit salad or a mini tin of fruit (with no added sugar).

- Vegetables are also good, including carrot, cucumber, celery, cherry tomatoes and peppers.
- Go for unsweetened fruit juice or water rather than fizzy colas or 'juice drinks'.
- Replace cakes and crisps with plain popcorn, breadsticks, scones, currant buns and fruit bread.

## Free school meals – can your children have them?

If you receive one of the following benefits, your children could have free school meals:

- Income Support (IS)
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA)
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided you don't receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income less than £13,910
- Guarantee Element Of State Pension Credit.

Children who receive IS or IBJSA in their own right can also have free school meals.

## Get moving!

You need to eat well to be healthy, but exercise is important too. Parents and schools can help by encouraging children to get moving. Active kids are less likely to get fat and it sets a pattern for a healthy life in the future.

That is how the Asda Partnership Project came to be. This scheme is aimed at getting 75% of young people doing at least two hours of physical education (PE) and school sport each week by 2006 and 85% by 2008. Asda is supporting the Government in its efforts to:

- create a network of 400 sports colleges
- set up a network of school sport partnerships. These are groups of schools that work together to improve the amount and range of sports played at school. Already over 50% of schools in the country are involved in the programme, and every school will be by September 2006.

**Over 3,000 schools are benefiting directly from £581 million of Lottery money, which is being used to improve sports facilities in England. All the new facilities must be opened up and shared with other schools and the local community.**

## How to get involved

You can become involved at your child's school by:

- running an after-school club, either with teachers or other parents
- coaching a sport—and earning a coaching qualification as you do it
- going to a sports workshop with your child
- helping the school to create an out-of-school-hours programme
- becoming the parent representative on the board of governors of your child's school
- organising a family activity with other children and parents using the school's facilities.



## Want to find out more?

If you would like to know more about healthy foods for your family, check out these websites:

[www.surestart.gov.uk](http://www.surestart.gov.uk)

[www.5aday.nhs.uk](http://www.5aday.nhs.uk)

[www.food.gov.uk/eatwell](http://www.food.gov.uk/eatwell)

[www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)

To find out what you can expect from school lunches, look at:

[www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches)

[www.surestart.gov.uk/ensuringquality](http://www.surestart.gov.uk/ensuringquality)

[www.foodinschools.org](http://www.foodinschools.org)

[www.parentscentre.gov.uk/healthyeatinghealthyliving](http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/healthyeatinghealthyliving)

Find out more about school sport by looking at:

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/pe](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/pe)

## Can't get onto the internet at home?

Visit your local library which will have computers and internet access.

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