

Nutrition, Hydration & Salt Awareness



Nutrition:

Understanding what is healthy eating?

It's a good idea to remind ourselves about healthy eating! Here are a few simple guidelines:

1. **Base your diet on protein** - Protein found in lean meat, eggs, fish, & nuts builds muscle fibre and will help you to feel full for longer. Try having some protein for breakfast, like a boiled egg.
2. **Eat the right sort of carbohydrates** - The basic rule of thumb is to avoid simple carbohydrates like sugar (which has no nutritional value at all) and highly processed carbs like chips and crisps. What you can eat is wholegrain breads, oats, pasta, potatoes and rice (in moderate quantities). The other point to remember is that cooking carbohydrates healthily - boiling, steaming or baking rather than frying - can make all the difference.
3. **Fruit and vegetables are a staple of any healthy diet** - All fruits are good but the super-fruits include blackberries, blueberries, kiwi fruit, cranberries, raspberries, lemons and strawberries. Apples are great but watch the sugar content and one banana a day will suffice. As for vegetables, spinach, broccoli, pak choi, and sprouts are particularly good but pretty much all vegetables are healthy options. One thing you should think about is crunching on a carrot when you hit a hunger pang rather than reaching for a processed snack. And don't forget - you should be eating 5 portions of fruit and veg every day!
4. **What about the meat?** - Protein-rich lean meat, chicken and fish will make you feel fuller faster than fattier cuts and so curb your appetite faster.
5. **Eat less fat** - You'll probably eat some foods containing fat every day, such as margarine, butter, cooking oils, oil-based salad dressings and mayonnaise, but keep these to small amounts and choose low-fat varieties where possible. And there's no escaping the fact that you should keep cakes, biscuits, crisps, pastries and ice cream to a minimum!
6. **If you need to nibble, go nuts!** - Although they contain some fat, almonds, walnuts and Brazil nuts in particular are all great sources of protein (which, as we have already said, makes you feel fuller faster). Pub nuts like salted peanuts and cashews are less healthy. Seeds are also a very good nibbling option - you can buy them in handy packets now.
7. **Salads and soups are great options for those on a diet** - Starting a meal with a low calorie soup is helpful because it fills you up and salads are also an obvious low calorie option for the main or as an alternative starter. Just make sure that you watch the dressings, which are often very high in calories. Use low-fat dressings whenever possible.

Balance good Nutrition with busy lives:

When work is hectic it can be hard to make healthy food choices, but by making a few easy changes you can eat healthily and fit better nutrition into even the busiest schedule. Stressful jobs, long hours and shift work can mean healthy eating becomes a low priority and may cause you to grab the nearest thing to eat. But with a little preparation and planning, you can still eat well. Take a look at these tips:

1. **Eat regular light meals or snacks** - They're less likely to cause drowsiness or affect alertness than a single heavy meal. Avoid large meals one to two hours before bed.
2. **Prepare food in advance** - Try to make your food for the day ahead before you leave in the morning. If time is short in the morning, prepare a healthy packed lunch the night before and set aside time over the weekend to prepare meals for the week.
3. **Take snacks with you** - Think about which healthy snacks you'd like at work and buy them when you do your shopping. Consider things like apples, clementines, pears, satsumas, or carrot or celery sticks with reduced-fat hummus.
4. **Choose healthy filling foods** - Nutrient-dense foods are a good source of energy and fibre and will release glucose relatively slowly into the bloodstream. Good choices include baked potatoes, beans, lentils or chickpeas.
5. **Stay hydrated** - Drinking lots of fluid is important as dehydration can make you feel tired and affect your concentration. Tap water is a healthy, environmentally friendly, economical and calorie-free choice for quenching your thirst.
6. **Choose healthy options when eating out** - Choose grilled instead of fried food and try to get your 5 A DAY by ordering a side vegetable or salad. You could also have a salad as your main course and ask for a lower-fat dressing.



Hydration

The importance of Hydration:

Water is one of the most essential components of the human body, yet many people do not understand the importance of a well-hydrated body nor how much water is lost during the day.

Water regulates the body's temperature, cushions and protects vital organs, and aids the digestive system. And, because water composes more than half of the human body, it is impossible to sustain life for more than a week without it.

Your body is nearly two-thirds water so it's really important that you drink enough fluid to stay hydrated and healthy. If you don't get enough fluid you may feel tired, get headaches, be unable to think clearly, have poor concentration, not perform at your best, or worse still, suffer from heat-stroke.

Water Loss - Necessary to the healthy function of all internal organs, water must be consumed to replace the amount lost each day during basic activities. Water not only composes 75 percent of all muscle tissue and 25 percent of fatty tissue, it also acts within each cell to transport nutrients and dispel waste. Water also regulates the body's temperature, allowing heat to evaporate from the body in the form of sweat. If there is not enough water for the body to cool itself through perspiration, the body enters a state of dehydration.

Dehydration - In a dehydrated state the body is unable to cool itself, leading to heat exhaustion and possibly heat stroke. Without an adequate supply of water the body will lack energy and muscles may develop cramps.

Fluid Balance and Replenishment - It is important to drink even before signs of thirst appear. Thirst is a signal that your body is already on the way to dehydration. It is important to drink more than thirst demands and to continue to drink throughout the day. One way to check your hydration level is to check the colour of your urine. The colour should be light to clear unless you are taking supplements, which will darken the colour for several hours after consumption. And remember - not all fluid has to come from pure water. Other choices include fruits, juices, soups and vegetables. It is easy to prevent dehydration with pure, healthy, refreshing water, so drink up!

How much do you need - The amount of fluid you need depends on many things including the weather, how much physical activity you do and your age. As a guide, you should aim to drink 6 to 8 glasses (1.2 litres) of water per day. When taking into account water from foods, this adds up to between 1.5 and 2 litres of fluid.

Hydration Tips:

- Drink one to two cups of fluid at least one hour before the start of exercise.
- Drink eight ounces of fluid 20 to 30 minutes prior to exercising.
- Drink four to eight ounces of fluid every 10 to 15 minutes or so during exercise.
- Drink an additional eight ounces of fluid within 30 minutes after exercising.
- Drink two cups of fluid for every pound of body weight lost after exercise.
- Both caffeine and alcohol can have a diuretic effect, so be sure to compensate for this additional water loss.

Salt Awareness

Ways to help you cut down:

The recommended maximum amount of salt for adults is **6g a day** – which is about a teaspoon. Most people don't realise how much salt they're having and go over this limit.

Eating too much salt can increase your risk of high blood pressure, and this increases your chance of developing coronary heart disease. So to keep your heart healthy, it's important that you don't eat too much salt each day.

Remember that all types of salt count including sea salt, flakes, crystals and garlic salt, and it's not just about the salt that you add to your food yourself! Most of the salt we eat is **'hidden'** in foods. Foods high in salt include soups, sauces, cheese, savoury snacks, biscuits pizza, ready meals and fast foods. There can also be a lot of salt in everyday foods like bread and breakfast cereals.

Check the labels - It's important to check food labels to see how much salt there is in the food you're buying. Try and choose the products with the least amount of salt in them. As it's the sodium in salt that contributes to high blood pressure, some food labels give figures for sodium rather than salt. To convert sodium into salt you need to multiply the number by 2.5. For example, 0.5g sodium = 1.25g salt. So, remember: salt = (sodium) x 2.5.

Variety is the spice - Low salt food doesn't need to be tasteless or bland; there are lots of ways to add flavour to your meals without having to compromise on healthy eating. Try adding fresh or dried herbs and spices for both colour and flavour. You'll be surprised at all the tasty combinations you can try when you ditch the salt! Don't forget to use other flavourings too like lemon, garlic, ginger, chilli or a grind of black pepper. Avoid ready-made mixed seasonings though as many of these include a lot of salt.

