

South Warwickshire



NHS Foundation Trust

Warwickshire Dietetic Service

Recommended Intake and Portion Sizes for Children

This leaflet is intended for parents or carers of children and contains information on healthy eating and appropriate portion sizes for children and young people. It is a first-line advice sheet which may be issued by doctors, nurses, and other professionals.

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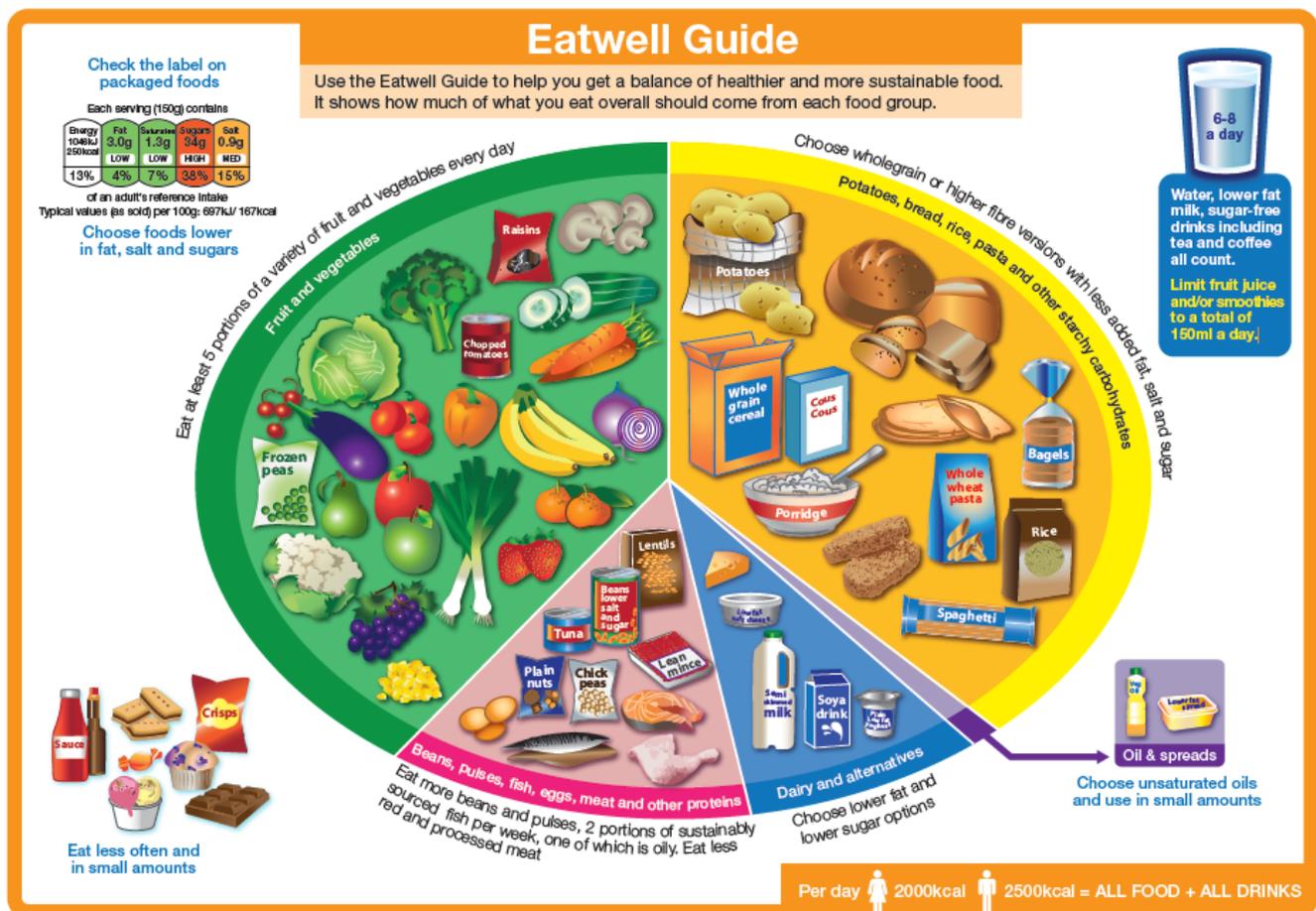
Introduction

Children require a varied and balanced diet to provide energy and nutrients for growth, development and activity.

The Eatwell Guide below represents a balanced diet and it is applicable to children over 5 years, adolescents and adults. It does not apply to children under 2 as they have different nutritional needs. From the age of 2 children should gradually move to the same foods as the rest of the family and so by the age of 5 they are eating foods in proportions as in the Eatwell guide.

This leaflet provides information on portion sizes for ages 1-14 to ensure a balanced diet.

A routine is very important. A child should be offered regular meals and snacks, rather than giving food whenever they ask.



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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NOTE: the Eatwell Guide above shows adult energy requirements in the margins, children's values differ.

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Getting the Balance Right

Food Group	Foods included	Main nutrients supplied	Recommended frequency
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates.	Bread, chapatti, breakfast cereals, rice, couscous, pasta, millet, potatoes, yam and foods made with flour such as pizza bases, buns, pancakes.	Carbohydrate B vitamins Fibre Some iron, zinc and calcium	Serve at each meal and snack if required Note: If excessive weight gain is a concern then snacks may need to be limited
Fruit and vegetables	Fresh, frozen, tinned and dried fruits and vegetables, unsweetened fruit juice	Vitamin C Phytochemicals Fibre Carotenes	Offer a variety at each meal Aim for 5 servings per day Note: Fruit juice can be counted as a portion once per day. For under 5's this should be diluted 1 part juice to 10 parts water
Dairy and alternatives	Breast milk, formula milk, cow's milk, yoghurts, cheese, calcium enriched soya, oat, nut and rice milks, tofu Note: Rice milk is not suitable for children under 5 years	Calcium Protein Iodine Riboflavin	3 servings per day. Note: Semi-skimmed milk can be used after 2 years and skimmed milk can be used after 5 years if growth is good.
Beans, pulses, fish, egg, meat and other proteins	Pulses, dhal, nuts, seeds, meat, fish, eggs, Quorn	Protein Iron Zinc Magnesium B vitamins Vitamin A Omega 3 long chain fatty acids: EPA and DHA from oily fish	2-3 servings per day Fish should ideally be offered twice per week (at least one serving should be oily fish) Note: Vitamin C helps the body absorb iron from foods, so ensure that some fruit or vegetables are included with these foods
Oils and Spreads	Butter, margarines, cooking oils	Vitamin D & E, omega 3 fatty acids	Use these sparingly. Note: Unsaturated fats are healthier fats and include vegetable, rapeseed, olive and sunflower oils.

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Food Group	Foods included	Main nutrients supplied	Recommended frequency
Fluid	All drinks including water, milk and milk substitutes, squashes, juices and hot drinks	Water Fluoride in areas with fluoridated tap water	6-8 drinks per day and more in hot weather or after extra physical activity Note: Sugary drinks should be discouraged from both a healthy eating and dental health aspect. Soft drinks containing artificial sweeteners should be limited to meal times as the acid in them can cause dental erosion. All squash and juice should be well-diluted for under 5's e.g. 1 part squash to 10 parts water
Vitamin and mineral supplements	<p>Nutritional content depends on product.</p> <p>A vitamin A, C & D supplement is recommended routinely up to 5 years of age – from 6 months of age in breastfed children or when the child is having less than 500ml formula milk per day.</p> <p>Children who have a limited diet may benefit from an age-appropriate over-the-counter multivitamin and mineral supplement to ensure that they meet their micronutrient requirements.</p> <p>Folic acid is recommended for adolescent girls who could become pregnant. Vitamin D is recommended for pregnant teenagers.</p>		

Foods high in fat, salt and sugar such as cream, salad oils, mayonnaise, chocolate, confectionary, cakes, biscuits, jam, sugar, syrup, ice-cream, crisps and other high fat savoury snacks are not essential and so should be eaten less often and in small amounts.

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Food Groups and Number of Portions per Day

– see individual age reference sheets for pictures / information re: portion sizes

Food Group	Age 1-3 years	Age 4-6 years	Age 7-10 years	Age 11-14 years
Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods	6	6	6	7
Fruit and Vegetables	5	5	5	5
Milk and alternatives	3	3	3	3
Beans, Pulses, Meat, Fish, Eggs and other sources of protein	2	2	3	3
Oils and spreads	3	3	3	3

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Portions

Although the principles of healthy eating are similar for adults and children, children do not require the same size portions as adults. They have smaller bodies and stomachs and their portions should reflect this. At different ages, children will require different amounts of food to meet changing energy and nutrient requirements. They may eat varying amounts from day-to-day, particularly younger children, but this is normal behavior. As long as they are having a varied diet and growing well, it is likely that they will be meeting requirements.

Tips for controlling portions

- Be careful of pre-packaged portions. Most processed foods are sold as adult portions so a child will not need the full portion.
- Try using a smaller plate or bowl for your child. This will make it easier to offer “child-size” portions.
- Try to have regular meal and snack times. If a child says they are hungry in between these e.g. whilst you are cooking a meal, try giving them a glass of water rather than an extra snack to keep them going until the mealtime. This will help to fill them up for a short time. It will also stop them overeating and prevent them ruining their appetite for the meal.
- Give your child less rather than more to start with – they can always ask for second helpings. This way you’ll have less waste and they won’t eat too much.
- As it takes approximately 20 minutes for the brain to send signals that you are full, it is a good idea to encourage your children to eat slowly as this will allow them to recognise when they are full.
- Try to have mealtimes without distractions such as television, computer, electronic games and smart phones. These can distract them and they may not notice the signals telling them they are full.
- Never force your child to clear their plate. If they say they’re full, they probably are full!

Recommended portions

The appendices linked with this resource are a rough guide for portion sizes at different ages. They are based on average requirements for a specific age range. If your child is at the younger end of the range you may need to offer slightly smaller portions and similarly if they are at the higher end of the age range, you may need to offer slightly larger portions. Also if your child is underweight or overweight, the portion sizes may need to be increased or reduced accordingly.

Equality Statement

At South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust we are fully committed to equality and diversity, both as an employer and as a service provider. We have a policy statement in our Equality Strategy that clearly outlines our commitment to equality for service users, patients and staff:

You and your family have the right to be treated fairly and be routinely involved in decisions about your treatment and care. You can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. You will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

You have a responsibility to treat other service users, patients and our staff with dignity and respect.

Our information for patients can also be made available in other languages, Braille, audio tape, disc or in large print.

PALS

We offer a Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS). This is a confidential service for families to help with any questions or concerns about local health services.

You can contact the service by the direct telephone line on 01926 600 054 by email:

Pals@swft.nhs.uk or by calling in person to the PALS Office which is located in the Lakin Road Entrance to the hospital.

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