

What is Good Nutrition for Children?

Nutrition for children is based on the same core principles as nutrition for adults. The key is a healthy and appropriate balance of diet and exercise, as well as a conducive lifestyle. The five main food groups include carbohydrates, dairy, protein and fruit and vegetables.

Using the Eatwell Plate is generally a good starting point for any nutritious diet. The portions of each respective food group will depend heavily on age, genetic makeup, and physical activity. It is important to understand each food group to develop a well-balanced and nutritious diet for your child.



The Eatwell Guide



The Eatwell Guide shows how much of what we eat overall should come from each food group to achieve a healthy, balanced diet.

You do not need to achieve this balance with every meal, but try to get the balance right over a day or even a week.

Fruit and vegetables

Most of us still are not eating enough fruit and vegetables. They should make up over a third of the food we eat each day.

Aim to eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and veg each day. Choose from fresh, frozen, tinned, dried or juiced.

Remember that fruit juices and smoothies should be limited to no more than a combined total of 150ml a day.

Fruit and vegetables are a good source of vitamins, minerals and fibre.



Fats

Choose unsaturated oils and spreads, and eat in small amounts.

Unsaturated fats are healthier fats and include vegetable, rapeseed, olive and sunflower oils.

Remember all types of fat are high in energy and should be eaten sparingly.



Sugar



Eat foods high in fat, salt and sugar less often and in small amounts.

These foods include chocolate, cakes, biscuits, sugary soft drinks, butter, ghee and ice cream. They are not needed in our diet, so should be eaten less often and in smaller amounts.

Water

Drink plenty of fluids - the government recommends 6 to 8 cups or glasses a day.

Water, lower-fat milks and lower-sugar or sugar-free drinks all count.

Fruit juice and smoothies also count towards your fluid consumption, but they contain free sugars that can damage teeth, so limit these drinks to a combined total of 150ml a day.

