

Food Fundamentals



BETTER HEALTH CO.

Food is more than fuel

Have you heard the saying 'food is fuel'? Well, it's actually a whole lot more.

All foods have a purpose whether it's convenience, culture, tradition, or nutrition. Being aware of these connections with food can be a powerful tool to help us nourish our bodies.

Food is also:

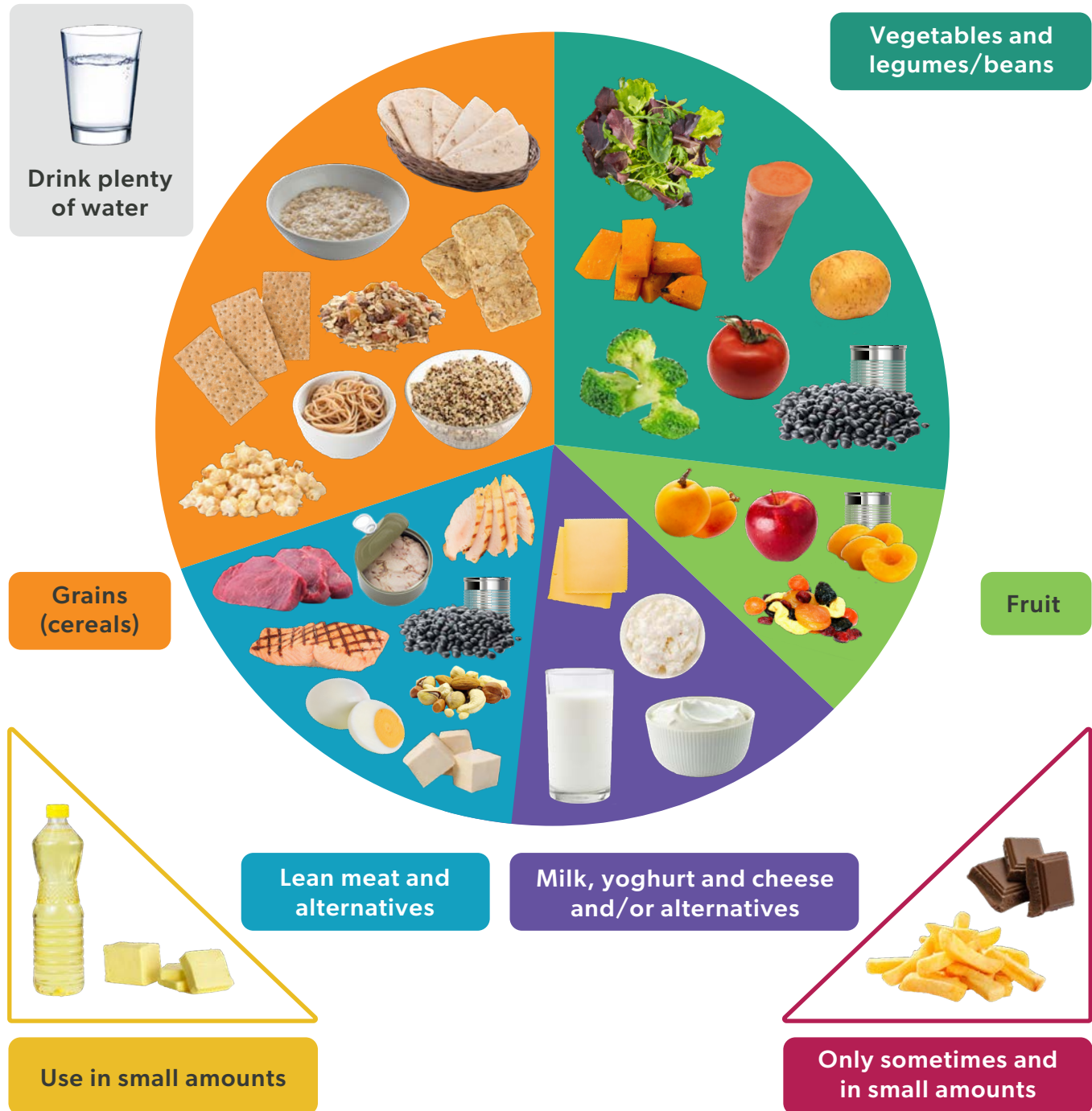
- Tradition
- Family
- Learning
- Connection
- Celebration
- Culture
- Memories
- Enjoyment



What does food mean to you? Write your ideas in the box below.

Five food groups

The Australian Dietary Guidelines recommend everyone should aim to eat a variety of foods from the five food groups each day. This will give your body the energy and the different essential nutrients it needs to function, like vitamins and minerals.



! **Have you noticed some of the food groups are bigger than others?**
This is because we need more nutrients from some food groups compared to others. Grains (cereals) and vegetables and legumes/beans are the biggest food groups, so we should aim to eat foods from these groups the most.

Benefits of the five food groups

Grains (cereals)

Grains are the biggest food group. They provide carbohydrates, the main source of energy needed to fuel our bodies.

This includes:

- Bread, wraps, pita, lavash, naan, focaccia, damper
- Crispbreads and crackers
- Breakfast cereals like oats, rice porridge, untoasted muesli, wholewheat biscuits
- Pasta
- Rice
- Couscous, bulgur, quinoa
- Plain popcorn



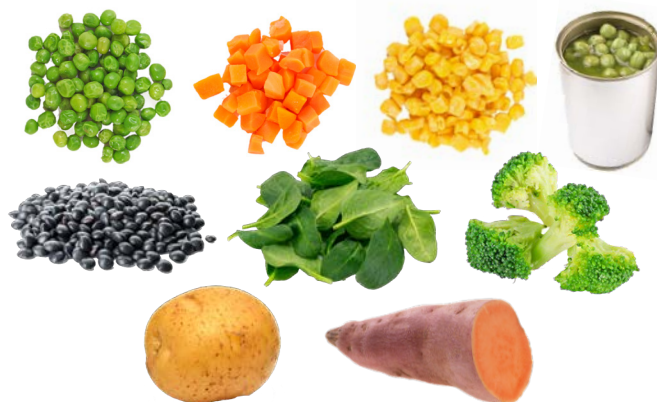
Go for wholegrain: Aim to choose wholemeal or wholegrain options most of the time. Wholegrain foods are high in fibre and are digested slowly. These foods help us to feel fuller for longer.

Vegetables and legumes/beans

Vegetables are the second biggest food group. They're packed with loads of vitamins, minerals and fibre. This keeps us fuller for longer, keeps our digestive systems healthy and boosts our immune systems.

This includes:

- Fresh or frozen vegetables
- Canned vegetables (no added salt)
- Legumes/beans
- Salad vegetables
- Leafy green vegetables
- Potatoes and root vegetables



Tip: Eat the rainbow. Different coloured vegetables have different vitamins and minerals.

Fruit

Fruit is packed with loads of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Fruits help to keep us feeling fuller for longer, and boost our digestive health and immune system too. Fruit also has naturally occurring sugars, another source of energy that helps our bodies function.

This includes:

- Fresh fruit
- Canned fruit in natural juice
- Frozen fruit
- Dried fruit
- 100% fruit juice



Tip: Colour is key when it comes to fruit, the more variety the better.

Milk, yoghurt and cheese and/or alternatives

Dairy foods have more than 10 essential nutrients. This includes calcium, which is important for strong bones and teeth. Anyone above the age of 2 years should aim to choose mostly reduced fat milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives.

This includes:

- Milk (fresh, evaporated, powdered or UHT)
- Plant-based alternatives made from soy, almond, oats or rice with added calcium
- Cheese (including hard cheese such as cheddar, and soft cheese such as ricotta)
- Yoghurt (no added sugars)



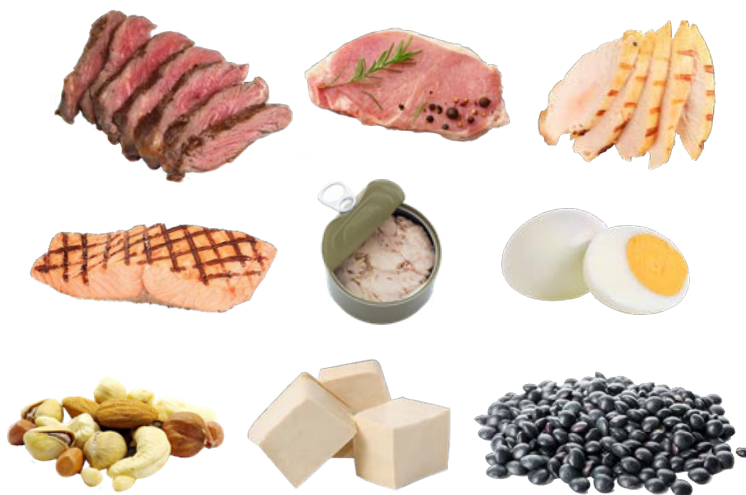
Tip: If choosing a plant-based alternative, make sure there is added calcium (at least 100mg of calcium per 100g). Almonds, sardines, salmon, and firm tofu are also great sources of calcium.

Lean meat and alternatives

Lean meat and alternatives provide protein, the essential building blocks required for growth and muscle functioning. Protein also helps us feel fuller for longer, and is important for healthy skin, hair, and nails. Aim to choose lean or reduced fat meat and alternatives.

This includes:

- Lean cuts of red meat (beef, lamb, veal, pork, kangaroo)
- Poultry (chicken, turkey)
- Fish and seafood (fresh, frozen, canned)
- Eggs
- Legumes and beans
- Tofu and tempeh
- Nuts and seeds



Tip: Try to include plant-based protein foods in your meals each week such as, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds and tofu. These foods also provide energy and fibre to help us feel fuller for longer.



Have you noticed some foods are missing from the five food groups? There are some foods that don't quite fit! There are two other groups that sit outside of the five food groups.

Use in small amounts

This includes fats and oils. Fats and oils help our bodies absorb vitamins, make new cells and hormones, and even keep our heart healthy. They also keep your eyes, brain, and skin healthy too. We need to eat fats every day, in small amounts.

This includes:

- Unsaturated oils and spreads (like margarine) made from olive, canola, or sunflower.



Only sometimes and in small amounts

This includes foods that are usually very processed. They have large amounts of fat, sugar and salt added to them when they are made. They don't give our bodies many essential nutrients, but remember, no foods are forbidden. When you enjoy these foods, aim to eat them sometimes and in small amounts.

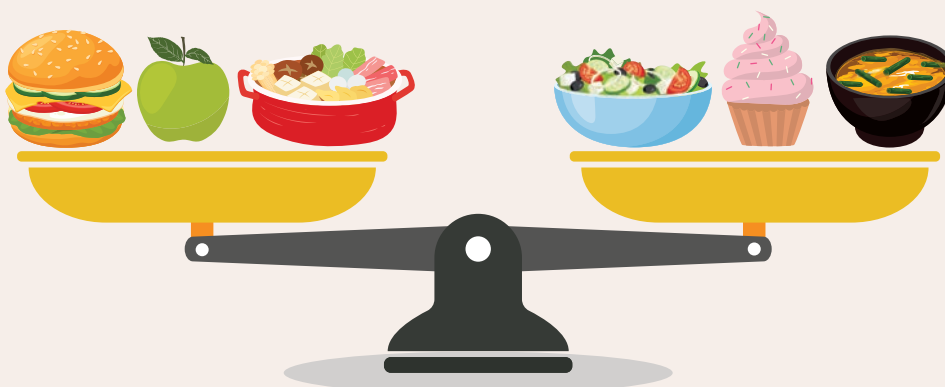
This includes:

- Biscuits
- Chocolate
- Cakes
- Pastries
- Ice cream
- Lollies
- Soft drinks
- Hot chips and fries
- Potato crisps
- Fried chicken
- Cordial and fruit drinks with added sugar
- Butter
- Fast foods e.g. burgers and pizza
- Deep fried foods
- Sausage rolls and pies
- Processed meats e.g. salami and bacon



It's important to remember, no food should ever be forbidden. Foods are not simply "good" or "bad", "everyday" or "sometimes", "healthy" or "unhealthy", "super foods" or "junk".

Some foods are filled with more nutrition than others, but, what we eat doesn't need to be perfect at every mealtime, every day. Healthy eating is about consuming a variety of foods we enjoy eating, in a relaxed environment. How it averages out in the long term is more important.



Water

Water is the best drink. In fact, our body is made of up to 50 - 80% water! Without water, our bodies can't function.

The amount of water we need to drink depends on our age.



How much water should you aim to drink each day?

Age (years)	Average intake (L/day)	Average intake (cups)
0 - 1	0.7 – 0.8 from breast milk, formula, or plain water	
1 - 8	1.2 – 1.4	About 4 - 5 cups
9 - 13	1.4 – 1.6	About 5 – 6 cups
14 - 18	1.6 – 1.9	About 6 - 8 cups
19 +	2.1 – 2.6	About 8 - 10 cups
Pregnant or breastfeeding	2.3 – 2.6	About 9 - 10 cups



Remember 1 cup of water is equal to 250ml.

Tips for drinking more water

- Try flavouring it with fruit and herbs.
- Add a splash of 100% fruit juice.
- Try adding ice or refrigerating water rather than drinking it at room temperature.
- Carry a water bottle when out.
- Serve water at the table with every meal.
- Have a glass of water before each meal and snack.
- Set reminders to drink water.
- Look for drinking taps in public areas.

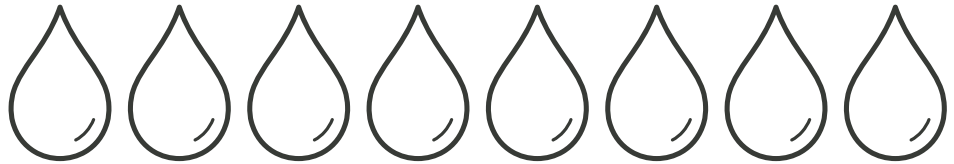


Water tracker

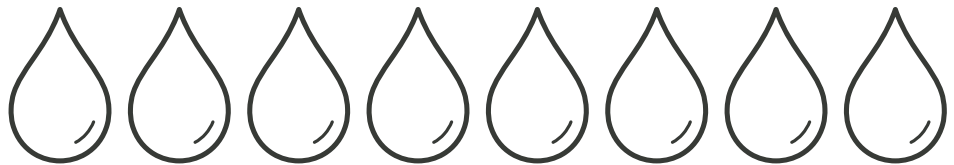


Keep track of how many cups of water you or a family member drink each day by ticking off or colouring in the drops of water below. Work towards meeting the recommended daily amount for your age.

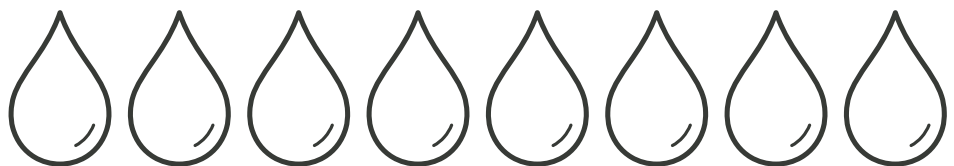
Monday



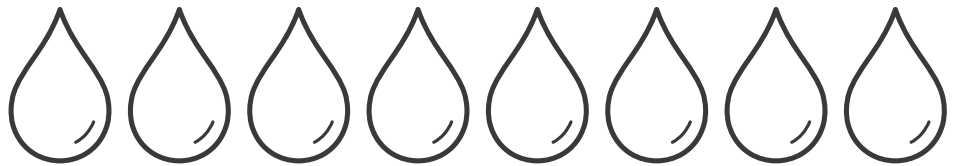
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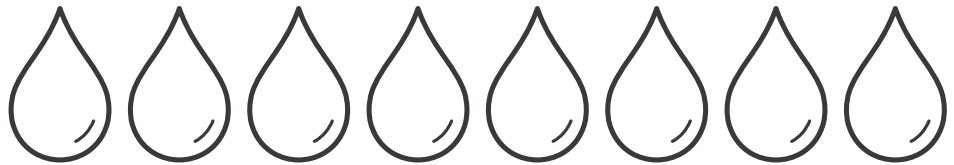
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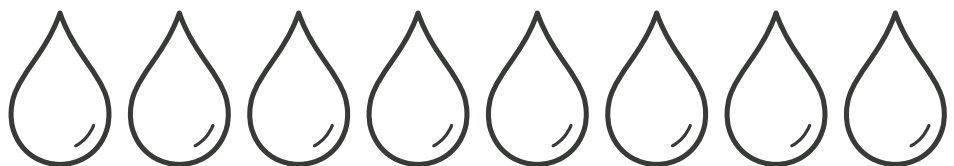
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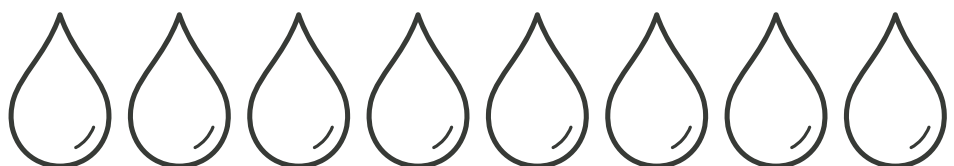
Friday



Saturday



Sunday



Other drinks



Milk

Milk is from the dairy food group. It's a great source of calcium, which is important for strong bones and teeth. For anyone 2 years old and above, reduced fat plain milk is recommended.

If choosing a plant-based milk alternative, like soy, almond or oat milk, make sure it has added calcium (at least 100 mg of calcium per 100 ml). You can check the nutrition information panel to find this information.



Juice

Fruit juice and smoothies can be a great source of energy. But whole pieces of fruit provide more fibre, making us feel fuller for longer.

When having fruit juice, aim for no more than ½ a cup of 100% fruit juice with no added sugar a day. Or make homemade smoothies and bulk it up with other foods like oats, seeds, milk and leafy greens to make it even more nutritious!



Sugary drinks

Soft drinks, cordials and flavoured milks have sugar added to them when they are made. Having these drinks often and in large amounts may cause dental problems and lead to other health issues, like diabetes. You don't need to avoid these drinks completely, but aim to have water instead most often.



Diet or 'sugar free' drinks.

These often have artificial sweeteners in them. Unlike sugar, artificial sweeteners don't have any energy but still taste sweet. The research about the effect artificial sweeteners can have on our health is not clear. We do know the acidity in these drinks may still cause dental problems.

You don't have to avoid them completely, but aim to have water instead most often.



Tea and coffee

Tea and coffee both contain caffeine which keeps us awake! Some sports drinks and energy drinks do too. **These drinks are not suitable for children.** When we have them often and in large amounts, they can cause headaches, and affect our sleep.

Some studies have suggested that **adults** can have 400 mg of caffeine per day, which equals approximately:

- Up to four espresso shots (or four coffee pods), **or**
- Up to five cups of instant coffee, **or**
- Up to seven cups of tea a day



If you choose to drink tea or coffee, try to avoid adding sugar, syrups or sweeteners.

Alcohol

The World Health Organisation recommends no level of alcohol consumption is safe for our health. For adults who choose to drink alcohol, limit your intake. To reduce the risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury, healthy men and women should drink no more than 10 standard drinks a week and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day. The less you drink, the lower your risk of harm from alcohol. **Alcohol is not safe for those under 18 years or pregnant.**

One standard drink of alcohol equals:



These portions are small, a single drink purchased or poured at home may be more than one standard drink.

Drinks calculator

You can do this activity for yourself or another family member.



For each question, select what and how much you drink over a typical day. Work through each question, then you'll have a tally of the drinks you consume over a typical day at the end.

Q1. How much water do you drink each day?



Standard cup
(250ml) = 1 cup



750ml drink
bottle = 3 cups

0 cups	1/2 cup	1 cup	2 cups	3 cups	4 cups	5 cups	6+ cups
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Q2. How much plain (unflavoured) milk do you drink each day? (Not including the milk you may put in your tea or coffee)



Standard drinking glass = 1 cup

0 cups	1/2 cup	1 cup	2 cups	3 cups	4 cups	5 cups	6+ cups
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Q3. How many cups of juice and/or smoothies do you drink each day?



Half a standard
glass = 1/2 cup



Juice box
= 1 cup



Full standard glass
= 1 cup

0 cups	1/2 cup	1 cup	2 cups	3 cups	4 cups	5 cups	6+ cups
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Q4. How many cups of sugar drinks do you drink each day? (Not including any 'diet' or sugar free drinks)



Standard glass = 1 cup
 375ml can = about 1 1/2 cups
 600ml bottle = about 2 1/2 cups



Full Standard glass = 1 cup



750ml bottle = 3 cups

- 0
cups
- 1/2
cup
- 1
cup
- 2
cups
- 3
cups
- 4
cups
- 5
cups
- 6+
cups

Q5. How many cups of diet or 'sugar free' drinks do you drink each day?



375ml can = about 1 1/2 cups



600ml bottle = about 2 1/2 cups



Standard glass = 1 cup

- 0
cups
- 1/2
cup
- 1
cup
- 2
cups
- 3
cups
- 4
cups
- 5
cups
- 6+
cups

Q6. How many cups of caffeine drinks do you drink each day?



Small = about 1 cups
 Medium = about 1 1/2 cups
 Large = about 2 cups



250ml mug = 1 cup



250ml can = 1 cup

- 0
cups
- 1/2
cup
- 1
cup
- 2
cups
- 3
cups
- 4
cups
- 5
cups
- 6+
cups



Are you drinking enough water?

Remember, water should be your main drink of choice. If you're having lots of other types of drinks, think about how you can swap these for water. Try to stick to drinking water between meals and snacks too. This can help you regulate your appetite.

Types of fats

Fats are essential for good health. They help our bodies absorb vitamins, make new cells and hormones, and keep our heart, eyes, brain, and skin healthy. We need to eat fats every day, in small amounts. There are two main types of fat in the foods we eat; unsaturated and saturated.

Unsaturated fats

This type of fat is mainly found in plant foods and oily fish.

This type of fat is important to:

- Keep our heart healthy (and help reduce cholesterol).
- Provide us with energy.
- Help our nerves and brain function.

We should aim to eat these in small amounts every day.

There are two main types – monounsaturated and polyunsaturated.

Foods that contain unsaturated fats include:

- Avocado.
- Unsalted nuts and nut spreads (e.g. almonds, cashews, peanuts).
- Seeds (e.g. sunflower, flax, chia).
- Unsaturated oils (e.g. olive, canola, peanut, sunflower, soybean, sesame, safflower).
- Spreads made from unsaturated oils (e.g. margarine).
- Oily fish (e.g. salmon, tuna, sardines, mackerel).



Saturated fats

This type of fat is mainly found in food and drinks from animals, or fried and processed foods.

This type of fat provides energy, but eating too much of these fats can:

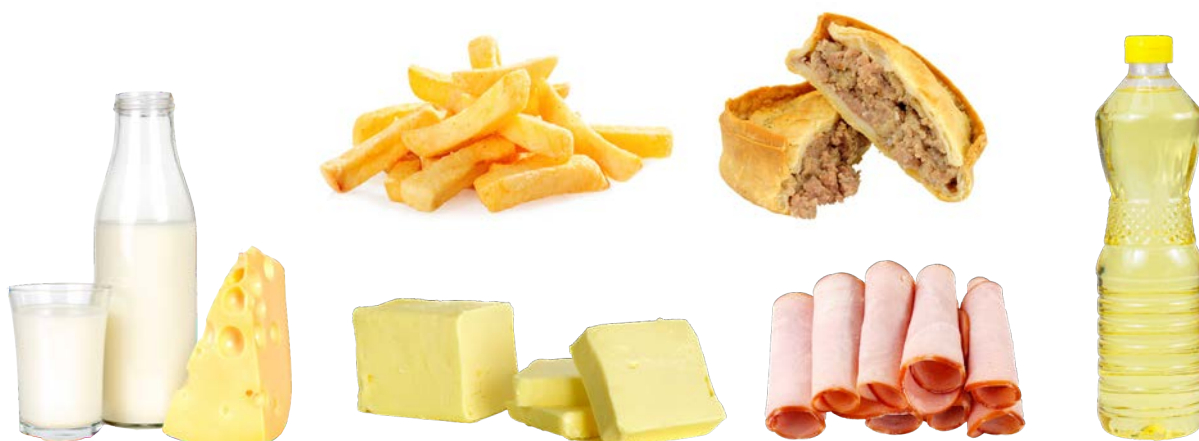
- Make our heart unhealthy (and raise our cholesterol).
- Increase the risk of developing heart disease and other health conditions.

We should aim to have these fats less often.

Trans fats are another type of fat that are like saturated fats and have the same effect on our bodies. They are also found in fried and processed foods.

Foods that contain saturated and trans fats include:

- Full fat dairy foods - milk, yoghurt, cheese and butter.
- Fatty cuts of meat (e.g. beef, lamb, chicken, turkey).
- Processed meats (e.g. sausages, bacon, deli meats).
- Processed baked goods (e.g. sausage rolls, pies, pastries, cakes and biscuits).
- Deep fried foods (e.g. hot chips and spring rolls).
- Coconut and palm oils.



MYTH BUST!

Coconut oil is 80-95% saturated fat. Butter and ghee are also sources of saturated fat. Try to have these less often!

It's not necessarily about how much fat you're having, it's about the type of fat.



Fat food swaps

It's not necessarily about how much fat your eating, it's the type of fat! Here are some food swaps to try.



Full cream milk



Reduced fat milk



Pastry



Wholegrain toast with nut butter



Butter



Avocado



Sausage roll



Wholegrain wrap with salad



Lard or ghee



Olive Oil



Fried chips



Home made roast potatoes



Flavoured yoghurt



Reduced fat, natural yoghurt



Fried chicken



Lean chicken



Fried fish



Grilled salmon



Fatty cuts of meat



Lean meat

Types of sugar

There are different types of sugar in the food that we eat. Knowing which foods have which type of sugar, can help us to make more food informed choices.



Naturally occurring sugar

Naturally occurring sugar is naturally found in certain food and drinks.

There are two types of naturally occurring sugar.

Fructose - this is found in fruit (fresh, canned, pureed, dried, 100% fruit juice, and smoothies).

Lactose - this is found in dairy foods (milk, cheese, and yoghurt).

While fruit and dairy have naturally occurring sugar, they also have important vitamins, minerals and fibre.



Added sugar

Added sugar is the sugar that have been added to foods and drinks when they are being made or processed.

There are two types of added sugar.

Glucose – added to sweeten foods like lollies, cakes, biscuits, pastries, soft drinks, and chocolates.

Sucrose – also known as table sugar. It's the sugar we buy in a packet at the supermarket. It's usually added to tea, coffee, and in baking.

Added sugar give us short bursts of energy, then often leave us feeling tired or hungry shortly afterwards.

We should aim to have added sugar less often. Eating too much foods and drinks with added sugar can cause problems with our teeth, and may cause other health issues, like diabetes.



Honey

Honey is a tricky one. Even though honey is made 'naturally', it isn't found naturally in any of the foods we eat. We add it to foods to make them taste sweeter. This means we eat it as an added sugar. Did you know honey is mainly a mix of the sugars called fructose and glucose?



Sugar food swaps

You may be wondering how we can eat more foods that have naturally occurring sugars instead of added sugars? Here are some food swaps to try.



Sugary cereal



Fresh fruit on oats or untoasted muesli



flavoured milk



Home made fruit smoothie



Fruit lollies or roll up



Fresh fruit



Sweet biscuits



Wholegrain crackers with fruit



Tinned fruit in syrup



Tinned fruit in natural juices



Sugary drink



Water with fruit and herbs



Ice cream



Natural yoghurt with fruit



Muesli bar



Unsalted nuts



Toast with sweet spread



Wholemeal toast with nut butter and banana



Sugar in tea or coffee



Tea or coffee without added sugar

Salty foods and swaps

Sodium (salt)

Salt contains a mineral called sodium.

Too much sodium over a long time can increase the risk of developing health problems like high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and kidney problems.

Examples of foods that are typically high in salt include:

- Salty snacks - potato chips, pretzels and salted nuts
- Hot chips
- Frozen and ready-made meals
- Pizza, pies and sausage rolls
- Tinned food - vegetables, soups, baked beans and spaghetti
- Processed meat - bacon, ham, salami and sausages
- Flavour sachets for noodles and packet soup
- Anchovies
- Sauces - pasta sauce, soy sauce, fish sauce and fish paste
- Stock cubes
- Capers, olives and other pickled foods



You may be wondering if there are other things, we can do to have less salt in our diets? Here are some ideas you can try.

- Try to add less salt to your cooking.
- Try different spices and herbs to flavour your meals.
- Be careful with spice mixes as they can be high in salt, always read the label.
- Try not to put salt on the table. You can then better control how much salt you have.
- Try to cut down salt slowly until your family doesn't want to use salt any more - this does happen!
- Try to buy reduced salt products e.g. reduced-salt soy sauce, reduced-salt baked beans, 'no added salt' canned vegetables.



Putting this into practice

Below is a list of suggested SMART goals that you may choose to work on.



Tick ✓ the goals you would like to work on right now and cross ✗ the goals you don't need to work on right now. Then, select two to three goals to work on at a time. Or write your own goals in the section below. Remember, goals can be adapted to be easier or harder, so they are suitable for you and your current situation.

SMART Goal suggestions

- Serve vegetables in at least 3 meals or snacks each day, this week.
- Have fruit as a snack every day this week.
- Serve grain foods like wholemeal bread, crackers, rice and pasta every day this week
- Swap white grain foods with wholemeal or brown options where possible, this week.
- Serve protein (lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans) every day this week.
- Serve (milk, yoghurt, cheese or alternatives, mostly reduced fat) every day this week.
- Serve wholegrain breakfast cereal e.g. weetbix or oats, every day this week.
- Cook with vegetable oils instead of butter or lard, every day this week.
- Drink the recommended amount of water (based on age) every day this week.
- Serve oily fish (tuna, salmon, mackerel) 2 – 3 times this week.
- Swap a food or drink with added sugars for a food or drink with naturally occurring sugars this week.
- Swap a food or drink with saturated fat for a food or drink with unsaturated fat.
- Use herbs and spices instead of salt in cooking every day this week.
- Serve a glass of water with each meal and snack, every day this week.

My goals to work on are: