



Eating Well: How to build a healthy meal

A healthy meal is not just a plate of lettuce!

A healthy well balanced meal should contain all of the nutrients our bodies need to function.

The Eatwell Guide advises us to base meals on a starchy carbohydrate such as wholemeal pasta, brown rice, wholemeal bread or potatoes.

Once we have our carbohydrate base we can add a lean protein like meat, fish, a vegan alternative such as plant based mince, lentils, pulses or tofu.

Next we add our fruits and vegetables, these should make up roughly half of your plate. Fresh, frozen and canned varieties are all great but dried fruit, shop bought smoothies and fruit juices should be eaten in smaller amounts due to the amount of sugar they contain.



Dairy or dairy alternatives make up part of a healthy balanced diet, try having eggs for breakfast, a cheese stick into your lunch box or some carrot sticks and cream cheese for a snack.

Our bodies also need healthy fats to function properly. Monounsaturated/polyunsaturated fats such as olive oil, avocado or peanut butter are good examples of healthy fats. Try to avoid trans/saturated fats such as lard, vegetable shortening or palm oil which can be found in premade bakery items, confectionary, full

fat dairy and meat products. Reduce your intake by using reduced fat dairy products, cutting visible fat off meats and eating sweet treats in moderation!

Fibre is also important in your diet, it reduces the risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and bowel cancer. It helps food move through the digestive system reducing the risk of constipation. Children between 5 and 11 should eat 20 grams of fibre a day, adults 30 grams. Try swapping to wholegrain cereals or wholemeal bread to boost your fibre intake.



On the next page we have included a handy chart of meal components. Try mixing and matching these items together to help you plan your meals, we've included some ideas to get you started. Try involving the kids with planning and cooking meals as they are more likely to eat something they have helped to prepare.