

All About Healthy Eating



Eating well is really important for keeping our bodies healthy. A balanced diet provides all the **nutrients** your body needs to work and stay healthy. Different food groups contain different nutrients that are needed by our bodies in different amounts. A healthy diet includes a variety of foods from all the food groups. This balance looks different for everyone because we all have different likes and dislikes. In addition to this, some people may have **allergies** or choose not to eat some foods for personal or religious reasons. Luckily, all the nutrients we need are found in many different foods in the five main food groups.



Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the main source of energy for your body. They provide glucose, which is the fuel that your body uses. Foods such as bread, rice, pasta and potatoes are good sources of carbohydrates. Wholegrain versions of foods are also good sources of fibre, such as wholegrain bread, breakfast cereals and potatoes with their skin on.



Fats

Fats are needed in small amounts for healthy skin and hair and to provide energy. Foods such as nuts, seeds, olive oil and avocados are examples of healthy fats. All oils and spreads contain lots of fat and should be eaten in moderation as part of a balanced diet.



Proteins

Proteins are important for building and repairing your body **tissues**. Foods such as meat, fish, eggs, beans and lentils are rich in protein. Protein is contained in every cell in the human body. Protein is especially beneficial in a child's diet. It helps to build new tissues including muscles.



Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables are packed with vitamins, minerals and fibre. They help to keep your body healthy and protect against illness. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables of different colours ensures that you get all the different nutrients. Fruits and vegetables provide **fibre** that helps us go to the toilet regularly.

In Moderation

Eating too much sugar and salt is not good for our bodies. Sugary drinks, sweets and cakes should be eaten sparingly. Sugar in moderation gives short bursts of energy but too much sugar can contribute to problems, such as tooth decay. Salt is found naturally in some foods but most is found in processed foods, ready meals and snacks. Salt in our diet helps with nerve and muscle health but too much in your diet over a long period of time can be harmful.

A balanced diet should include a variety of foods from all the food groups in the right amount to keep your body healthy. It is also important to drink plenty of water to keep your body hydrated.



Milk and Dairy

Milk and dairy foods provide calcium.

Calcium is essential for healthy bones and teeth. Milk, cheese and yoghurt are good sources of calcium. Interestingly, babies and children especially benefit from milk and dairy as this food group encourages the development of strong and healthy bones and teeth.

Glossary

allergies: A medical condition that causes you to react badly or feel ill when you eat or touch a particular substance.

fibre: The part of food that helps to keep a person healthy by keeping the bowels working.

nutrients: A substance that is needed to keep a living thing alive and to help it to grow.

tissues: collections of cells that form the different parts of all living things.

Questions

1. Which of these foods should you eat for healthy teeth? Tick one.

- ☐ sugar
- ☐ potatoes
- ☐ cheese
- ☐ pasta

2. Draw **four** lines and match the benefit to the food group.

healthy skin and hair	protein
helps us heal	carbohydrate
gives us energy	milk and dairy
high in calcium	fat

3. Look at the paragraph called **Proteins**.

Why are proteins especially good for children?

4. Fill in the missing words.

Salt is found _____ in some foods but most is found in ready meals and snacks. Salt in our diet helps with nerves and _____ health but too much in your diet over a long period of time can be harmful.

5. Look at the paragraph called **Carbohydrates**.

Which carbohydrates are richest in fibre?

6. Look at the section called **Fats**.

Which foods containing fat do you think are the most healthy?

7. Which food group do you think is the most beneficial to us?

8. Explain what 'in moderation' means.
