

SMALL CHANGES for BETTER HEALTH

HEALTHY EATING

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Healthy eating starts with one small change

For adults. This is general healthy-eating advice. Keep following any personal advice from your healthcare team.

Eating well gives your body the fuel and nutrients it needs. You do not need to change everything at once.

Choose one small change that fits your budget and daily life.

Build a balanced meal

Try to include:

- Vegetables or fruit.
- Potatoes, bread, rice or pasta. Choose wholegrain or higher-fibre options when you can.
- Beans, lentils, eggs, fish, meat or another source of protein.
- Some milk, yoghurt, cheese or a suitable dairy alternative.

For plant-based milk or yoghurt, choose unsweetened options with added calcium. Check the label.

You do not need every food group at every meal. Aim for balance across the day or week.

Start with one easy change

You could:

- Add vegetables to your evening meal.
- Try wholemeal bread instead of white bread.
- Add tinned beans or lentils to a soup or stew.
- Choose fruit for a snack.

Frozen and tinned foods can be useful, especially when shops are far away.

Make it work for you

Choose foods you enjoy, including familiar meals and foods from your own culture.

Keep following any special dietary advice. If you have kidney disease, food allergies or another condition affecting your diet, ask your practice team or dietitian how to adapt these suggestions.

If you take insulin or diabetes medicines such as gliclazide, ask your diabetes team before making large changes to meals. Missing meals or eating much less carbohydrate can cause low blood sugar.

My small change

This week, I will:

.....

Trusted advice

NHS Eatwell Guide

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/>

NHS dairy alternatives

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-types/milk-and-dairy-nutrition/>

NHS low blood sugar advice

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/low-blood-sugar-hypoglycaemia/>



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Add more fruit and vegetables

Aim for at least five portions of different fruit and vegetables each day. If you currently eat very little, start by adding one portion.

Fresh, frozen and tinned options all count.

What is one portion?

For an adult, examples include:

- One apple, banana, pear or orange.
- Two satsumas.
- Three heaped tablespoons of cooked carrots, peas or sweetcorn.
- Three heaped tablespoons of beans or lentils.

Beans and lentils count as a maximum of one portion a day, however much you eat. Potatoes are a useful starchy food, but do not count towards your five a day.

Try simple additions

- Breakfast: add a banana to porridge.
- Lunch: add tomatoes to a sandwich.
- Dinner: add frozen peas or mixed vegetables.
- Snack: choose a piece of fruit.

Keep useful options at home

Frozen vegetables let you use just what you need. Tinned tomatoes can go into soups, stews and pasta sauces.

Choose tinned vegetables without added salt where possible, and fruit in juice rather than syrup.

Limit fruit juice and smoothies to a combined total of 150ml a day. This counts as only one portion. Have them with a meal to help protect your teeth.

Eat safely

Wash fresh fruit and vegetables before preparing or eating them. Follow cooking instructions on frozen foods.

If you have been given advice about food texture or swallowing, keep following it.

Ask for an urgent GP appointment or call NHS 111 if you have difficulty swallowing, cough or choke while eating or drinking, or feel food sticking in your throat. Do not rely on changing foods yourself.

Call 999 immediately if someone is choking and cannot breathe, speak or cough.

My small change

I will add:

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To this meal:

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Trusted advice

NHS Five a Day portion sizes

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/5-a-day/portion-sizes/>

NHS swallowing problems advice

<https://www.nhs.uk/symptoms/swallowing-problems-dysphagia/>



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Eat well when shops are far away

Healthy eating does not have to mean daily shopping, expensive ingredients or cooking from scratch every day. Planning can help with cost, travel and food waste.

Before you shop

- Check your cupboards, fridge and freezer.
- Plan a few meals using what you have.
- Write a shopping list.
- Choose ingredients you can use in several meals.

Compare prices per kilogram or litre when possible. A bigger pack is only better value if you will use it.

Keep useful basics

Choose what fits your budget and storage space:

- Oats, pasta and tinned beans.
- Tinned tomatoes, lentils and fish.
- Frozen vegetables and bread.
- Eggs and long-life milk or a suitable alternative.

Once opened, long-life milk usually needs refrigeration. Follow the label.



Ask for practical help

If money, transport or preparing food is difficult, ask the practice team or local council about support.

Food Standards Agency food storage guidance

<https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/chilling>

Food Standards Agency food preparation guidance

<https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/cooking-your-food>

Try an easy meal

- Beans on wholemeal toast, with tomatoes.
- A jacket potato with beans and vegetables.
- An omelette with vegetables and bread.
- Pasta with tinned tomatoes, tinned lentils and vegetables.

Ready meals can help when energy or cooking facilities are limited. Compare labels and add vegetables if you can.

Store and reheat food safely

- Keep your fridge between 0°C and 5°C.
- Follow storage instructions and use-by dates.
- Divide cooked leftovers into small portions. Cool and refrigerate within two hours.
- Eat refrigerated leftovers within 48 hours, or freeze them promptly.
- Defrost in the fridge. Use within 24 hours of being fully defrosted..
- Reheat only once, until steaming hot throughout.

Rice needs extra care: cool quickly, ideally within one hour, refrigerate and use within 24 hours.

If you cannot store leftovers safely, cook only what you need.

My small change

Before my next shop, I will:

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Simple swaps that you can keep

Small swaps can help you eat less salt, sugar and saturated fat. Choose one that feels manageable.

Compare similar foods

Some packets use traffic-light colours

- Green means low.
- Amber means medium.
- Red means high.

Choose more greens and ambers when you can. A red label does not mean a food is banned. Think about how often you eat it and how much you have.

Use the 'per 100g' information to compare similar products.

Try one swap

- Choose lower-salt soup or baked beans.
- Use herbs, pepper or lemon instead of adding salt.
- Choose plain yoghurt with fruit.
- Replace some butter with a small amount of olive or rapeseed oil.
- Choose water or a sugar-free drink instead of a sugary drink.

ENJOY
FAVOURITE
FOODS



Have foods high in salt, sugar or saturated fat less often and in smaller amounts.

NHS food labels

www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/how-to-read-food-labels/

NHS dehydration advice

www.nhs.uk/conditions/dehydration/

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Drink regularly

Water is a good everyday choice. Keep a drink within reach, especially in hot weather.

If you have been told to limit fluids, follow your own advice.

Know when to ask for help

Contact the practice team if:

- Your appetite stays poor.
- You are losing weight without trying.
- Problems with your teeth or mouth make eating difficult.
- Worries about food, eating or weight affect daily life.

If you are underweight or losing weight, you may need more energy from food. Ask for advice before choosing smaller portions or lower-fat foods.

Ask for an urgent GP appointment or call NHS 111 if you are passing less urine than usual, have dark yellow urine, or feel dizzy when standing and it does not go away. Call 999 if someone suddenly becomes confused or is difficult to wake.

My plan

I will:

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Start date:.....

Review date:

Trusted advice

For help without internet access, contact the practice team. September 2026



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