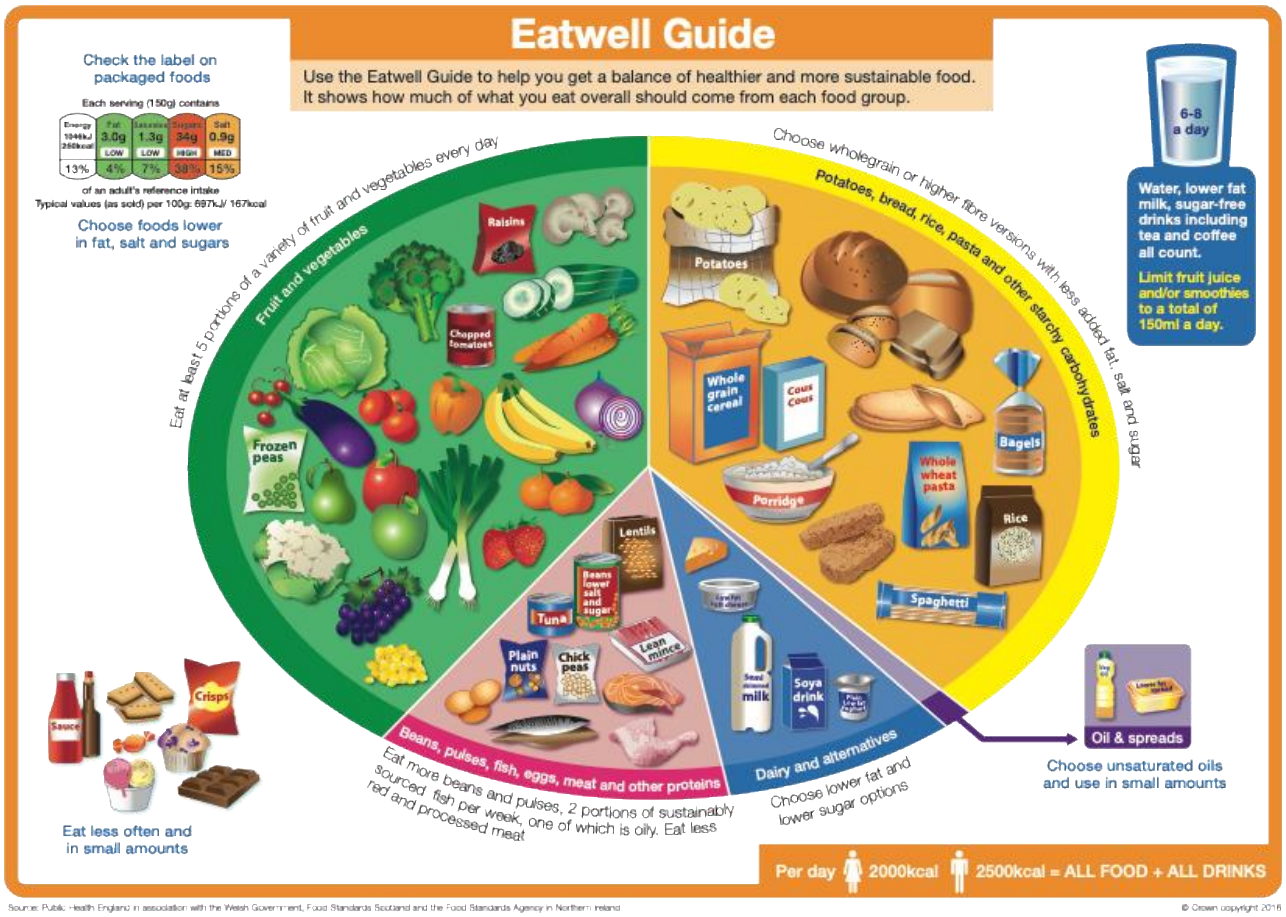
How can I help my child to be a healthier weight?

If your child is overweight, there are lots of ways you can help them to become a healthier weight as they grow. It is really important to promote a healthy relationship with food and build physical activity into your child's everyday life from a young age. We know that in order for children to maintain a healthy weight, a whole family approach is needed – children tend to follow the example set by their parents and siblings. Everyone in the family needs to be on board with a healthy approach to diet and exercise so that your child doesn't feel 'different' or 'singled out'.

Try to avoid negative language around food, such as 'bad foods' – all foods can be enjoyed as long as there is balance across your child's food intake as a whole. Concentrate on messages of 'healthy eating' rather than 'being on a diet' and don't make your child's weight an issue. Talk to them about the benefits of eating well and looking after their body. Health is not always a priority for children so try to focus on other issues that are important to them – e.g. being able to run faster or walking further without becoming out of breath.

If you are worried about your child's weight, you can speak to your health visitor, school nurse or GP and they may consider referring your child to see a dietitian.

What foods should I offer?



The Eatwell Guide – www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide

Breakfast cereals, bread, wraps, chapatti, crackers, rice, potatoes, pasta, noodles and other starchy carbohydrates

- Provide a good source of energy, vitamins/minerals and fibre
- Offer a portion of starchy carbohydrate at each mealtime

Meat, fish, eggs, soya, beans/pulses/ lentils, nuts and other sources of protein

- Important for growth and muscle development
- Offer 2-3 servings per day – choose lean options
- Try to include 1-2 servings of oily fish per week
- Avoid whole nuts under 5 years of age

Dairy and calcium-fortified dairy alternatives, e.g. soya or oat milk, soya/coconut yogurts

- Provide the body with calcium, essential for strong bones and teeth
- Offer 3 servings every day, opt for skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, low-fat yogurts and low-fat cheese

Fruits and vegetables

- Provide essential vitamins/minerals and fibre
- Offer with every meal and as snacks
- Include at least 5 portions every day – offering a 'rainbow' of colours
- Fruit/vegetables can be purchased fresh, frozen or canned

Healthy lifestyle tips for the whole family

- Offer regular meals containing a source of starchy carbohydrate, protein and at least 1 portion of fruit/vegetables. Never skip meals. Ensure that at least 1/3 of your plate is made up of vegetables/salad and no more than 1/3 is made up of starchy carbohydrate.
- Always start your day with breakfast – this gives you energy for the day ahead and helps with concentration.
- Boost your fruit and vegetable intake by adding salad to sandwiches and fruit to breakfast cereals. Add extra vegetables/pulses to pasta sauces, soups, stews and curries.
- Include a protein source at each meal to help keep you feeling full between meals – e.g. yogurt, meat, fish, eggs, Quorn, tofu, beans or chickpeas.
- Children may feel hungry between meals – offer a drink first as they may confuse hunger with thirst. Are they snacking through boredom – could they be distracted by playing a game with the rest of the family or going for a walk? If they still feel hungry, offer a healthy snack and aim to limit snacks to no more than 2 per day.
- Reduce fat intake by opting for reduced fat cheese/mayonnaise, limiting butter/oil added to meals and removing skin from meat. Avoid fried foods/pastries/creamy sauces as part of your regular diet. Choose leaner cuts of meat – e.g. chicken breast in place of chicken legs or 5% fat minced beef in place of 20% fat mince. Grill or oven bake foods, dry fry or use light cooking spray rather than adding oil to cooking.
- Opt for higher fibre options – e.g. wholemeal bread, pasta and rice. Choose higher fibre breakfast cereals to keep you feeling fuller for longer – e.g. Weetabix, bran flakes or oat
- See our 'More information' section at the end of this leaflet for practical portion size guides for children of different ages. Use different plate sizes to help guide portion sizes – for teenagers and older children use a 25cm plate (the plate will be less full for older children
- compared to teenagers), for children aged 1-4 years use a smaller 20cm plate and for children under 12 months old use a 13cm bowl.
- Fruit portion sizes depend on a child's age and size. As a rough guide, one portion of fruit is the amount a child can fit into the palm of their hand.

- Foods high in sugar and/or fat can be eaten in moderation, as a treat – e.g. 1 standard-sized bag of crisps or 1 mini chocolate bar.
- Swap takeaways for 'fakeaways' – e.g. grilled chicken burger and oven chips, pizza with lean toppings, reduced fat curry with seasoned boiled rice, or grilled lamb kebabs with low-fat minted yoghurt, pitta bread and salad. There are lots of recipes available online for reduced fat, homemade versions of your favourite takeaways.
- Make sure you keep hydrated – aim to drink 6-8 cups of water/sugar free fluids throughout the day to help with concentration and healthy bowel habits.
- Eat together as a family where possible. Avoid watching TV/electronic devices while eating – this helps children to learn to recognise when they are feeling full.
- Never tell children off or punish them for being overweight; this can lead to feelings of low self-esteem and promote an unhealthy relationship with food/eating.

Example meal plan

Breakfast

- Low sugar breakfast cereal (e.g. Weetabix/Shreddies/cornflakes/porridge) with skimmed/semi-skimmed milk and fruit
- Pancakes (cooked using light cooking spray) with raspberries/blueberries and a light drizzle of honey
- Boiled or scrambled egg with wholemeal toast soldiers or chapatti
- Breakfast smoothie – blend skimmed/semi-skimmed milk, low fat yogurt, frozen berries and 1 tablespoon oats
- Crumpet or wholemeal toast with thin spreading of peanut butter

Lunch

- Jacket potato with baked beans/tuna and sweetcorn – avoid mayonnaise and butter
- Wrap/sandwich with ham/chicken and salad
- Dhal or vegetable/meat curry (use light cooking spray) with boiled rice
- Wholemeal toast with ½ tin baked beans
- Vegetable soup with wholemeal bread roll
- Omelette with sliced potato, ham and mushrooms

Evening meal

- Spaghetti bolognese with a side of salad/corn on the cob
- Grilled chicken skewers or falafel with salad and pitta bread or vegetable rice
- Beef stew with potatoes and vegetables
- Vegetable stir fry with added strips of chicken or tofu and noodles
- Baked salmon with new potatoes and broccoli
- Fish fingers with home-made potato wedges and baked beans or peas
- Make your own pizza – cover a plain pizza base with tomato passata and add lean toppings such as chicken/ham/tuna/Quorn pieces and sweetcorn/peppers/cherry tomatoes. Top with a small amount of grated cheese (avoid high fat toppings such as pepperoni and large amounts of cheese)

Healthy snacks

- Piece of fruit – e.g. small banana, apple, pear
- Glass of skimmed or semi skimmed milk
- Small pot of yogurt
- Vegetable sticks e.g. cucumber/carrot/peppers with hummus or salsa

- Rice cakes with reduced fat cream cheese
- Small cereal bar
- Snack box of raisins
- Individual bag of sweet or salted popcorn
- 2 plain biscuits

Puddings
- Mixed fruit salad
- Bananas and custard made with skimmed milk
- Yogurt with blueberries
- 1 scoop ice cream with chopped strawberries
- 1 scoop fruit sorbet
- Ice lolly
- Sugar-free jelly

Healthy packed lunches – choose one food from each section
- Sandwich/pitta/bread roll/wrap/bread sticks with tuna/ham/chicken/reduced-fat grated cheese or boiled egg
- Carrot sticks/cherry tomatoes/cucumber pieces/pepper sticks
- Piece of fruit or low-fat yogurt/custard pot or sugar-free jelly
- Once or twice per week – malt loaf or bag of crisps or small chocolate biscuit or chocolate mousse
- Drink: sugar-free squash or water

School meals
If your child prefers school dinners, find out what is on the menu at school/college and talk to them about the healthier options they could choose. For example:
- Jacket potato with baked beans or tuna and salad
- Soup and a sandwich
- Pasta with a tomato-based sauce (avoid cream-based or cheesy sauces)
- Meat/vegetable curry and rice
- Desserts: opt for fruit, yoghurt or sugar-free jelly

Vitamins and minerals

- It is recommended that all children under the age of 5 years take a daily multivitamin supplement containing vitamins A, C and D
- You may be eligible for free Healthy Start vitamins – for more information see: www.healthystart.nhs.uk
- If your child is older than 5 years but has a restrictive diet, it is a good idea that they also take a suitable daily multivitamin
- Avoid using more than one supplement at a time, as you may give your child more than the recommended daily allowance of vitamins/minerals

Physical activity

- Being active helps to control your weight but that isn't the only benefit – exercise is also good for your heart, lungs and muscles, and helps to boost your mood and reduce stress.
- Exercise is more fun as a family – it should be encouraged and integrated into everyday family life, e.g. walking to school each day, family bike rides or swimming.

- If you aren't very active at the moment, try starting with a 10 minute walk every day and building up.
- Aim to be physically active for 60 minutes every day – try taking part in a school sports team or an after-school activity club. If you don't like sport, don't worry – all types of exercise count – try walking to the shops, running/playing in the park, swimming, riding your bike, rounders, dancing or trampolining.
- If it's a rainy day – try some of the 'Indoor activities for kids' on the NHS Change4Life website.
- You may wish to divide your daily 60 minutes of activity into 10-15 minute sessions throughout the day to make it more manageable.
- Agree on a limit of time spent in sedentary activities each day – e.g. 60 minutes spent on computer games/watching TV/using electronic devices.

Setting goals

Start off with 3 small changes:

1) .....

.....

2) .....

.....

3) .....

.....

More information

Healthy eating and activity
www.nhs.uk/change4life – food facts, recipes and activity ideas
www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide – government recommendations for achieving a balanced diet
www.solihullactive.co.uk/losing-weight-children-eat-well-move-more/ – free healthy eating/exercise support programme available to patients with a Solihull GP
bhx.maximusuk.co.uk/beezeefamilies – programme available to patients with a Birmingham GP

Portion sizes
First Steps Nutrition (7-12 months, 1-4 years, 5-11 years and 12-18 years) –

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59f75004f09ca48694070f3b/t/5a5a322fc83025fbb01f413a/1515860551067/Eating_well_recipe_book_july_2014.pdf
British Dietetic Association (teenagers) – www.bda.uk.com/resource/food-facts-portion-sizes.html

Accessibility

To view this information in a different language or use text-to-speech reader visit **www.uhb.nhs.uk,** click the yellow and black circular icon in the bottom right of the web page to open the ReachDeck toolbar and then use the search bar to search by the name of the leaflet. If you require this information in another format such as braille, please email **interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk**.

How did we do? ☺😐☹

If you have recently used our services we'd love to hear about your experience. Please scan the QR code or follow the link to share your feedback to help us improve our services. **Thank you. www.uhb.nhs.uk/fft**