



World
Cancer
Research
Fund

WEIGHT MATTERS

Keeping healthy in an unhealthy world

Dear supporter,

Thank you for choosing World Cancer Research Fund's guide, *Weight Matters: keeping healthy in an unhealthy world*.

You may have tried to lose weight before, or this may be your first time trying to lose weight. Or you simply might be trying to find ways to maintain your weight. Whatever your reason for picking up this guide, congratulate yourself on taking this first step to take control of your weight.

There is strong evidence that being overweight or obese increases the risk of at least 12 different types of cancer. Not only this, but it also increases the risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Today's modern food environment can make weight gain easier and weight loss harder, however, there are lots of positive things you can do to combat this. By following the practical tips and advice contained throughout this booklet, you will be on your way to a healthier you and will also be helping to make cancer less likely in the future.

I hope you find the information in this booklet useful, and that it helps motivate you to start making a few small, healthy changes to your diet and lifestyle today.

Help us spread our cancer prevention messages by sharing this booklet with your family and friends.

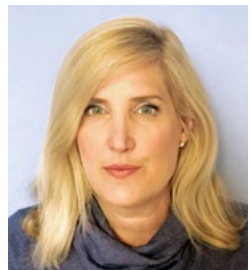
Yours faithfully,



Rachael Gormley

CEO

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Why does weight matter?

Around 63 per cent of the adult population in the UK are overweight or obese. The evidence is clear, being overweight or obese not only increases our risk of at least 12 cancers but also increases the risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Maintaining a healthy weight is a key step in helping to reduce your risk of these diseases.

As well as helping to reduce your risk of certain diseases, there is evidence to suggest that being a healthy weight might help with:

- ▶ Improving self-esteem
- ▶ Improving health-related quality of life
- ▶ Improving sleep
- ▶ Day-to-day energy

We know that losing weight – or just keeping the pounds from creeping on – can be hard. This can be shown with how much we spend each year on various ‘diet’ books.

We all probably know someone who has been on a diet, or perhaps we've tried a diet ourselves. In fact, a recent survey of 2,000 UK adults showed that almost two-thirds of us are on a diet most of the time.



Why is overweight and obesity becoming more common?

There are a wide range of factors that affect what we eat (and how much), for example, appetite, hunger, taste, cost, cooking skills, culture, family, stress and mood. These factors, among others, can contribute to weight gain over time.

Today's modern food environment makes managing a healthy weight harder. We are bombarded with 'junk food' advertising and special offers when out shopping, with numerous promotions for unhealthy food and drink. This can lead to us buying more, which means consuming more fat, sugar, salt and overall, more calories than planned.

We also now have 'fast food', for example, pizzas, burgers and chips available at the click of a button – we don't even need to leave the couch! And to add to this, we are also less active than we used to be.

We know that our risk of being overweight or obese is also influenced by our genetics.

However, this doesn't mean that if you are genetically more likely to be overweight or obese, you can't do anything about it.

The good news is that by following the tips and advice contained throughout this booklet, you will be on your way to helping manage your weight.

Our research shows that the following can help you keep a healthy weight:

- ▶ **Doing regular physical activity** such as brisk walking.
- ▶ **Eating food that contains dietary fibre** such as wholegrain food, fruit, vegetables and pulses.
- ▶ **Eating a 'Mediterranean type' diet** which is rich in vegetables, fruits, pulses, nuts, wholegrains, fish and unsaturated fats, such as olive oil. It's also usually low in meat and dairy food.



Keeping a healthy weight

Your weight is a balancing act between the energy you consume (your intake of calories from food and drink) and the energy you use (for normal functions, such as your heart beating and through physical activity).

There are a number of factors that influence our weight, but, put simply, if you consume more calories than your body needs, you will put on weight. The reverse is also true: if you regularly use more calories (for example, through being active) than you consume through food and drink, you will start to lose weight.

Equally, evidence shows that the following can lead to weight gain and being overweight or obese:

- ▶ **Too much screen time.**
- ▶ **Drinking sugary drinks** such as sweetened milk drinks, excess fruit juice and cola.
- ▶ **Eating 'fast food'** such as fried chicken, chips and high-calorie drinks (like milkshakes).
- ▶ **Eating a 'Western type' diet** which includes high amounts of sugars, meat and fat.



How do I know if I am a healthy weight?



Your BMI

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a simple way to check if you are a healthy weight for your height.

To calculate your BMI:

1. Measure your height in metres.
2. Weigh yourself in kilograms.
3. Divide your weight by your height. Then divide your answer by your height again to work out your BMI.

Or use our online BMI calculator:
wcrf-uk.org/bmi-calculator

| BMI | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Less than 18.5 | Underweight |
| 18.5 - 24.9 | Healthy weight |
| 25 - 29.9 | Overweight |
| 30 or more | Obese |



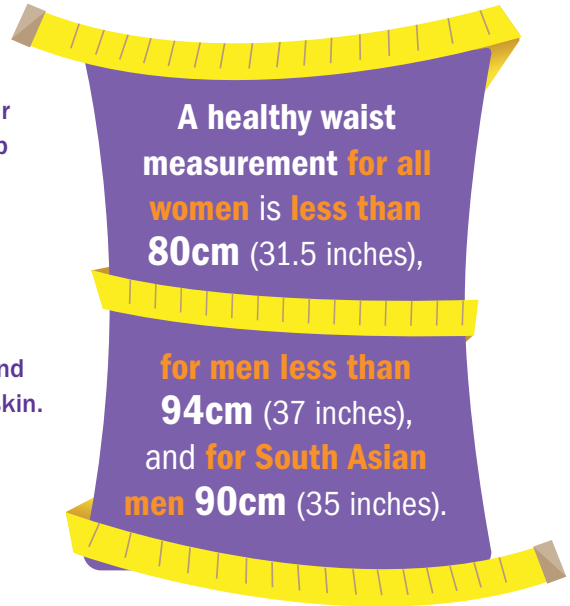
The use of BMI might not be an accurate indicator for some people, such as the elderly, women who are pregnant, athletes (especially those with a high amount of muscle), and those less than 1.5m/5ft tall. If your BMI is below 18.5, this puts you in the underweight range. Being underweight isn't good for your health. Please speak to your GP as they can offer help and advice.

Your waist measurement

Where we store our fat is important. In fact, carrying too much fat around the waist is linked to a greater risk of cancer, and also increases our risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes, so measuring your waist is a good way of checking if you are a healthy shape.

To measure your waist:

- 1. Place the tape measure around your waist, halfway between your lowest rib and the top of your hip bone.** If you have trouble finding this point, then lean to one side and see where the skin folds. This is the point where you can measure your waist.
- 2. Make sure the tape is straight and snug but isn't digging into your skin.**
- 3. Breathe normally, and measure after you have breathed out.**



A healthy way to lose weight

If you set yourself the goal of losing weight or maintaining your current weight, try to eat healthily rather than following a 'fad' diet or being too restrictive. This type of eating can't often be healthily followed for a long period of time, and typically, when you return to your usual way of eating, the weight can easily return.

Instead, it's best to eat in a healthy way that suits you and your individual lifestyle, and importantly something that you can stick to for the long-term. Focusing on the

quality of the food (the healthiness) rather than on the number of calories you are consuming can be an important first step.

Aim to gradually lose weight by making healthy changes to your diet and adding more activity into your day: **losing around 0.5–1kg (1–2lbs) a week is a realistic goal** and one that you can achieve healthily. Once you have achieved your target weight loss goal, it's important to continue eating healthily and being active to help you maintain a healthy weight.



Getting active

While life can often get in the way of us staying active, making time for physical activity is important. In the UK, the weekly physical activity guidelines for adults are:

- ▶ At least **150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity** such as brisk walking or cycling
- ▶ or **75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity** such as running
- ▶ or even **shorter durations of very vigorous-intensity activity** such as sprinting or stair climbing
- ▶ or a **combination of moderate, vigorous and very vigorous-intensity activity.**

It is also recommended that adults do muscle-strengthening activities at least two days per week to increase bone and muscle strength.

It is also a good idea to incorporate balance and flexibility exercises such as yoga, Pilates and stretching.



As well as moving more, it's important to **limit the time spent being sedentary** – this means not sitting or lying down more than necessary, when not sleeping. There is strong evidence that excess screen time such as watching television or using a computer is a cause of weight gain.

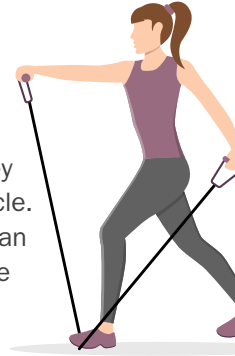
Muscle-strengthening activities

These include things such as lifting weights, exercises using your own bodyweight such as push-ups and squats, working with resistance bands and heavy gardening such as shovelling and digging.

These type of exercises help to maintain (and increase) strength and bone health. You may also find

that they help to make your day-to-day tasks feel easier.

Another benefit is that they help to maintain your muscle. This is important as you can lose muscle when you lose weight. Muscle also burns more calories than fat.



How physical activity helps

As we increase our physical activity levels, we increase the number of calories our body uses and (providing we don't compensate by eating more) you can start to see a reduction in weight. Another benefit is that when you have achieved your goal weight, keeping physically active can help you maintain the weight you have lost.

Any type of activity can help. Try to swap one of your sedentary activities for a more active one, like walking whilst on the phone, doing squats during advert breaks or setting a time limit when using the computer and taking walking breaks. If you find yourself sitting down for long periods of time, set yourself a reminder to get up and move every hour.

Other benefits of being active

Aside from the positive effects of physical activity on our waistlines, there are much wider benefits such as:

- ▶ Improvements in overall health.
- ▶ Improvements in quality of life.
- ▶ Helps manage stress and anxiety.
- ▶ Reduces your chance of certain cancers, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and heart disease.
- ▶ Helps to protect against and manage depression.
- ▶ Improvements in sleep.
- ▶ Reduces your chance of falls.
- ▶ Reduces your chance of joint and back pain.





Challenge yourself to get active

Aim to do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity every week. If that sounds like a lot, remember, it all adds up – **even doing smaller chunks of activity at a time will benefit your health.** Finding an activity that you enjoy will mean you will be more likely to stick to it.

If you are at risk of putting on weight you should ideally build up to 45–60 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most days to help manage your weight.

- ▶ **Moderate-intensity activities** include things such as brisk walking, cycling, swimming, and gardening.
- ▶ **Vigorous-intensity activities** include things such as running, squash, football, Zumba and fast cycling. These types of activities can make us feel more out of breath so build up slowly.

Remember that something is better than nothing, start small and build up gradually. Make a start today – it's never too late!



If you're new to exercise or haven't exercised for a while, it's a good idea to see your GP for a check-up before getting started.

Being active in your daily life



Start small

Starting to get more physically active can be daunting to some, but by starting slowly, and gradually increasing how much you do, it doesn't need to be. While small amounts of physical activity can be tiring for some, the good news is that as your fitness increases, it will get easier, and will inspire you to carry on.

Getting more active doesn't have to take massive chunks out of your day or require you to fork out on an expensive gym membership or equipment.

Take a look at your day-to-day life and see where you could fit more physical activity in. It's about making a few small changes, for example, using the stairs instead of the lift or escalator, making journeys by foot instead of by car or bus – it's these little changes that add up over time.



Keeping active at work

If you often find yourself sitting at your desk for hours, there's plenty you can do to be more active in your working day.

Try to take a break from your desk every hour. If you're making a drink, go to the furthest kitchen. Or try using a toilet on a different floor.

Why not get your colleagues involved in being more active too? If you have a meeting, you could suggest standing rather than sitting.

If you work from home, it's even more important to keep active during the day, especially as we tend to work longer hours. **Schedule some time for regular breaks.** If you are on the phone, try walking and talking.



Active transport

For short journeys, you could walk, jog or cycle rather than drive or use public transport. If it's not practical to walk the whole way, you can still add in some activity by parking further away from the shops or work. Or, you could get off the bus earlier and walk the rest of the way.

Walking up the stairs or escalator at stations is another way to get more activity into your day – plus it helps to strengthen your leg muscles.



Keep it fun

If going to the gym isn't for you, try and experiment and find an activity you do enjoy like team sports, dancing or a solo run. **Being active with someone you know can help keep it fun.**



Turn chores into a workout

Don't let housework feel like a chore – turn it into a calorie-burning workout. Polishing and mopping are great for the arms. **Put some upbeat music on and you have a free exercise class – and a clean home!**



Lunch break

Whether you work in an office or at home, use your lunch break to get active.

Maybe you have a gym nearby where you can go for a swim or attend a class? Or simply put on your trainers and go for a jog or brisk walk.

Bringing in your lunch gives you more time to be active in your lunch break and will help save you money.

more tips >>



Partner up

If you'd like to start a new exercise or activity **try joining forces with others**. It's a great way to stay motivated, make new friends and can help give you that extra push.

Sign up to an exercise or dance class – **sometimes knowing you need to be somewhere at an agreed time can be all you need to stick with a fitness routine**.



Give yourself a reminder

Use your phone to give you a reminder to move

– for example, maybe it's to go for a walk after lunch. The act of writing it down can help you to stick to it.

Put your trainers and exercise clothes in clear sight. This is a gentle reminder to yourself to stick to that planned brisk walk. It's these little tips that help to keep us moving more.



How many calories can you burn?

These are some examples of the number of calories you can burn in 30 minutes*

DANCING
280 calories



CYCLING
273 calories



JOGGING
255 calories



SWIMMING
218 calories



GARDENING
138 calories



WALKING
127 calories



* Based on the average UK adult woman, weighing 72.8kg (11 stone 4lbs).
The number of calories burned will also vary depending upon your intensity of effort.

To check out how many calories your favourite exercise burns, visit:
wcrf-uk.org/exercise-calculator

Your environment



When it comes to our lifestyles there are many factors influencing how we think, feel and behave around food. For example, here are some of the influences on why someone might get fast food for dinner:

Individual

- ▶ Enjoy the taste of fast food
- ▶ Feel comforted by fast food
- ▶ Don't know (or ignore) the negative health effects
- ▶ Don't feel confident cooking
- ▶ Don't have time to cook

Social/Cultural

- ▶ Tradition to get fast food on a Friday/weekend with friends/family
- ▶ Influenced by someone else wanting fast food
- ▶ Grown up from childhood eating fast food

Environment

- ▶ Travelled past a fast food restaurant and liked the smell
- ▶ Fast food is cheap, or there was a special offer
- ▶ It's easy to order fast food on your phone
- ▶ Saw an advert on the TV, on a billboard or online



How many of those influences have affected your decisions? Can you think of other things that might influence how you eat?

It's important not to feel bad about some of the decisions you make. But, just being aware of these influences can help you make healthier choices instead.

Shape your food environment

Sometimes it feels like our environment is against us when we're trying to be healthy or lose weight. When it comes to food, temptation is around every corner, with fast food and junk food advertising, half price offers on high sugar and fat food and drink, and numerous fast food restaurants selling not so healthy food. So, don't get down if you feel like you don't always have the willpower to resist – the food industry is clever at persuading you to buy their product!

It's important, however, to try and shape the environment that is in our control. Here are some helpful ideas to try and regain control of your food environment – try some out and find out what works for you.

Take back control...

When you shop

- ✓ **Avoid going shopping when you're hungry** – you may be more likely to buy high-calorie/nutrient-poor food and drink.
- ✓ **Write shopping lists** – and stick to them! It's a good way to stick to a meal plan and not get swayed by deals. If we pre-plan our food we are more likely to stick to it.
- ✓ **Read food labels.** Traffic light labels are a good way of seeing if a food or drink is a healthier choice. Choose food and drink with green labels and some orange. If it has a red label we should cut down on that food or drink and have it less often.



In the kitchen

- ▶ **If you've bought higher calorie snack food, put them out of sight** such as in a top cupboard where you won't notice them every time you open the cupboard. Out of sight out of mind!
- ▶ **When putting food away in the fridge, put healthier food at eye level** or at the front of the shelf.
- ▶ **Keep fruit out in a bowl** rather than in the bottom of the fridge so it's easier to grab when you're hungry.
- ▶ **If you have time, pre-cut veg** into sticks or batons (or buy pre-cut) such as celery, red pepper and carrots as a quick snack when you're hungry.
- ▶ **If you have a blender keep it out on the kitchen counter** rather than tucked away in a cupboard. You'll be more likely to use it for a breakfast smoothie or for blending up soups.



When you eat

- ▶ **Practice 'mindful' eating** – try not to eat watching TV or something on your phone. This can lead to mindless eating where you don't recognise when you're full, so you may eat more than planned.
- ▶ **Using a smaller plate or bowl at mealtimes** can help reduce the amount you eat. Alternatively, try filling most of your plate with salad or vegetables first.

Making healthy choices



So far, we've talked about how we can shape our environment so that making healthier choices is easier. But what does a healthy choice really look like? Which foods should we be trying to eat more of, and which should we try to cut back on to lose or to maintain your weight?

A balanced diet is...

Having a balance of different food groups in your diet, such as:

- ▶ **Wholegrain carbohydrates**, for example wholemeal bread, brown rice, wholewheat pasta, and oats
 - ▶ **Dairy and alternatives**
 - ▶ **Protein containing foods** such as pulses, fish, eggs, lean meat, poultry and other proteins such as Quorn, tofu and soya
 - ▶ A wide variety of **fruit and vegetables**
- ✔ It is also **not eating too much fast food and other processed food** high in fat, starches or sugar.
- ✔ **Eating a wide variety of food** (in the right quantities) to get all the nutrients you need for good health.

A balanced diet isn't...

- ▶ **Taking a multivitamin and mineral supplement** to 'compensate' for not eating a healthy diet.
- ▶ **Eating what you like because you're active.** While our weight is a balancing act between the calories we consume and the calories we use, often we aren't aware of how much activity we would need to do to 'balance' what we have eaten, and we may overestimate how active we are.

Boosting your fibre intake

Adding in more fibre-rich food such as wholegrains (like brown rice, wholemeal bread and wholewheat pasta), pulses, vegetables and fruit helps to keep you feeling fuller for longer on fewer calories, which can help you maintain a healthy weight. Wholegrain food provides a good source of fibre, and there is strong evidence that eating a fibre-rich diet can help protect against weight gain, overweight and obesity. In addition, these foods can help to reduce the risk of bowel cancer.



Reshape your plate

3/4 (or more) **wholegrains, pulses, vegetables, and fruit**

1/4 (or less) **lean meat and poultry, fish** (white and oily), and **plant-based protein sources** such as Quorn and tofu

Wholegrains, pulses, vegetables and fruit

- ▶ **Vegetables** (excluding potatoes) **and fruit** – fresh, frozen, dried and canned in water or natural juices all count towards your 5 A DAY.
- ▶ **Pulses** – lentils, peas and beans also count towards your 5 A DAY (only counts as one portion a day no matter how much you have).
- ▶ **Wholegrains** – such as brown rice, wholewheat pasta, wholemeal bread, oats and certain breakfast cereals such as wheat biscuits (like Weetabix). These are also all high in fibre so more likely to help keep you fuller for longer.
- ▶ **Starchy vegetables** – such as sweet potatoes, butternut squash and yam. Have boiled, steamed or roasted rather than fried in oil or butter.

Meat and other protein foods

- ▶ **Red meat** – eating no more than three portions a week, or about 350–500g of cooked meat, and little, if any, processed meat (this includes meats such as bacon, ham, chorizo and salami) can help reduce the risk of bowel cancer.
- ▶ **Pulses** – such as beans, peas and lentils (fresh, frozen and canned all count).
- ▶ **Poultry** – such as skinless chicken and turkey.
- ▶ **Non-oily fish** – such as cod and canned tuna in spring water (fresh, frozen and canned all count).
- ▶ **Oily fish** – such as salmon, trout, sardines and mackerel (fresh, frozen and canned all count).
- ▶ **Eggs, dairy and dairy alternatives** – such as milk, yoghurt, cheese. Choose reduced-fat, unsweetened varieties where possible.
- ▶ **Nuts** – such as Brazil nuts and hazelnuts.
- ▶ **Meat-substitutes** – such as tofu, tempeh and Quorn.

Calories in food

If you're trying to lose weight or stop the pounds from creeping on, you may try to eat less. However, this can leave you feeling hungry and may lead to more snacking. A better way can be to focus on changing what you eat rather than the amount.

Fast food and junk food such as burgers, chips, fried chicken, pizza, chocolate, crisps and biscuits are often higher in calories because they are typically higher in fat and/or sugar (and salt). They also provide little in the way of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Though these are hard to resist sometimes it's important to try not to have these as part of your everyday diet.

Some high-calorie food, like oily fish, avocado, nuts and seeds contain good fats and are a good source of certain vitamins and minerals, meaning they can be eaten in moderation as part of a healthy diet.

The number of calories (energy) that different food and drink contain can vary greatly.

For example, there are **41 calories** in **100g of carrots**, but **530 calories** in **100g of milk chocolate** – that's **13 times more!**



A guide to calories:

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HIGH-CALORIE | Food containing more than about 225 calories (kcal) per 100g Examples: snack food, like chocolate, crisps and biscuits, and food that is high in fat like burgers, pastries, chips and other fried food. | A collection of illustrations representing high-calorie foods: a red cup of french fries, a burger with a blue bun, a golden croissant, and several golden crisps. |
| MEDIUM-CALORIE | Food containing about 100–225 kcal per 100g Examples: cooked brown rice and wholewheat pasta, wholemeal bread, lean meat, poultry, and fish. | A collection of illustrations representing medium-calorie foods: a piece of wholemeal bread, a piece of pasta, and some meat. |
| LOW-CALORIE | Food containing about 100 kcal or less per 100g Examples: vegetables, fruit, and cooked pulses, like lentils and beans. | A collection of illustrations representing low-calorie foods: a bunch of purple grapes, a red bell pepper, and some red lentils. |

Using food labels to help you make healthier choices

In the UK, adults have a recommended maximum amount of nutrients and energy that they should have in a day. This is called our 'reference intakes'.

On average, **women need about 2,000 calories (kcal) a day** and **men need about 2,500 calories (kcal) a day**. Children and older adults tend to need less, but teenagers and very active people may need more. These are averages across the population and individual calorie requirements will vary; however, this can be a useful guide.



Checking food labels

Looking at front-of-pack labels is the easiest way to see whether a food or drink is the healthier choice. Colour-coded nutritional information tells you if a food or drink has high, medium or low amounts of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt.

Front-of-pack nutrition label (example):

Each serving (30g) of cereal contains

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ENERGY 460kJ 110kcal 6% | FAT 0.7g LOW 2% | SATURATES 0.1g LOW 1% | SUGARS 5.1g HIGH 6% | SALT 0.2g MED 4% |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|

% of adult's reference intake.
Typical values per 100g: Energy 1530kJ/360kcal

Always remember to check the serving size these values are for. They may not be for the amount you usually eat or drink.



Green – eat regularly

If a food has all or mostly greens, it's likely to be a healthier choice and you can eat it more often or in larger amounts.



Amber – eat quite often

Amber means a food is neither especially high nor low in a nutrient (fat, saturates, sugar or salt) so you can eat food with all, or mostly, ambers quite often.



Red – eat occasionally

The more reds on a front-of-pack label, the less healthy the food or drink may be. Try to eat these foods less frequently or only in small amounts.

For more information on understanding food labels, visit: wcrf-uk.org/food-labels









Getting portion sizes right

As well as getting the balance of food right, it is important to eat the right amounts of food and drink. However this can be difficult, especially as there are more and more 'sharing size' products available, and portion sizes in restaurants and takeaways are typically bigger than what we would have at home. Eating more than a healthy portion of higher-calorie food and drink can contribute to weight gain.











A 'healthy portion size' depends on the type of food. For example, a portion of vegetables or fruit weighs 80g. However, as they are low in calories and rich in fibre, eating more than 80g will help fill you up on fewer calories, which can help you maintain a healthy weight. Eating bigger portions of higher-calorie food and drink is what we have to watch out for.

What does a healthy portion look like?

Here are some examples of what a healthy portion size looks like for an average adult woman.*

| At least 5 portions a day | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FRUIT & VEG | VEGETABLES eg. 1 whole carrot or onion, or 3-4 heaped tablespoons of peas  | FRUIT eg. 2 satsumas, or 1 banana  | DRIED FRUIT eg. 30g or about one heaped tablespoon of raisins, or three prunes  | FRUIT JUICE & SMOOTHIES 1 small glass (about 150ml)  | |
| | Eat 3-4 portions a day | | | | |
| | STARCHY FOOD | Choose wholegrain varieties where possible – eg. wholemeal bread and pasta, brown rice | | | |
| | | RICE & PASTA 75g or 2 handfuls (dried)  | BAKED POTATO About the size of your fist (220g)  | BREAD 2 medium slices  | BREAKFAST CEREAL About 3 handfuls (40g)  |

* The number of portions you should have may vary depending on your age, gender and how active you are.

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DAIRY FOOD | Eat 2-3 portions a day Choose low-fat, unsweetened varieties where possible | | |
| | CHEESE About the size of two thumbs (30g)  | YOGHURT 1 small pot or about 4 tablespoons (120-150g)  | MILK 1 glass (200ml)  |
| | Eat 2-3 portions a day Choose lean meat and aim for no more than three portions of red meat a week (about 350-500g cooked meat). Eat little, if any, processed meat, eg. bacon, ham and pepperoni | | |
| PROTEIN FOODS | CHICKEN BREAST About the size of half your hand (160g raw weight)  | WHITE & OILY FISH About half the size of your hand (140-195g raw weight)  | PULSES (peas, beans & lentils) About 6 tablespoons (120g, cooked)  |
| | TOFU Use the size of pack as a guide (80g)  | EGGS 2 eggs  | |
| SNACKS | Limit to two snacks a day around 150 calories or less, for example: | | |
| | 2 OATCAKES with a light spreading of low-fat soft cheese  | UNSALTED NUTS & SEEDS (20g or about the amount that fits in your palm)  | |

Top tips for keeping your portion sizes healthy



- ▶ **Read food labels** to find out what the suggested serving size is.
- ▶ **Weigh out a portion of the food you eat regularly**, like breakfast cereal, pasta and rice, to see what the suggested portion size actually looks like.
- ▶ **Wait a few minutes before going back for seconds.** It can take a while for your brain to realise you're full. Any leftovers can be chilled and kept for the next day.
- ▶ **Don't be afraid to ask for less;** whether that's avoiding the bread basket or having a serving of vegetables or salad instead of chips when out.

Cooking from scratch

The easiest way to control what's in your food and what you eat is to cook from scratch. Some people might find that they don't have the time or may find this overwhelming. But swapping even one meal, where you may usually buy pre-made food, can be an important first step to eating better. You can also save yourself some money in the process!

When starting to cook from scratch, you may find having some of the food listed below useful to have at home.

Food for the cupboard:

- ▶ Tinned tomatoes
- ▶ Tinned tuna (in water)
- ▶ Herbs and spices
- ▶ Tinned pulses (beans, peas and lentils)
- ▶ Sunflower, rapeseed or olive oil
- ▶ Tinned fruit (in juice)
- ▶ Potatoes (regular or sweet potato)
- ▶ Wholewheat pasta and noodles
- ▶ Wholemeal bread
- ▶ Brown rice
- ▶ Reduced-salt stock cubes

Food for the fridge:

- ▶ Onions
- ▶ Carrots
- ▶ Salad vegetables (like cucumber, tomatoes, lettuce and peppers)
- ▶ Eggs
- ▶ Low or reduced-fat milk and unsweetened yoghurt



Food for the freezer:


- ▶ Frozen fruit and vegetables
- ▶ Frozen reduced-fat mince or soya mince
- ▶ Frozen pulses





Tips for cooking: trim the fat

- ▶ Choose **lean cuts** of red meat or skinless poultry (such as chicken and turkey).
- ▶ Cut down on the red meat (and fat) by adding in pulses or meat substitutes such as **Quorn**, **tofu** and **soya**.
- ▶ Choose **lower-fat** or **reduced-fat dairy** like low-fat natural yoghurt and reduced-fat cheese.
- ▶ Swap butter or ghee for smaller amounts of **olive**, **sunflower** or **rapeseed oil** and lighter spreads.
- ▶ Choose cooking methods which don't include a lot of oil or fat such as **baking**, **steaming**, **poaching** or **grilling**. Or, you can measure the oil into a teaspoon, or use an oil spray.



We've created lots of easy, healthy, and most importantly, tasty recipes for you to follow.

They can be found on our Real Recipes website:
wcrf-uk.org/recipes

You can also buy or download a range of cookbooks for free, from Light Bites to British Favourites – we have something for all.

You can view all of our cookbooks here:

wcrf-uk.org/cookbooks



Think about what you drink

Swap soft drinks

It's easy to forget about the calories we drink. Evidence has shown that sugary drinks such as cola, lemonade, and flavoured milks (with added sugar) can contribute to weight gain if consumed regularly or in large amounts. It's also easy to drink a lot as they don't fill you up as much as food.

Swapping sugary drinks for water or lower-calorie alternatives like low-calorie soft drinks, or unsweetened tea and coffee with a small amount of milk can help you to keep a healthy weight.

Did you know? A 500ml bottle of cola contains **over 13 teaspoons of sugar**. Imagine putting that in your cup of tea.



Top tips for healthier drinking:

- ▶ **Swap sugary soft drinks for low-calorie versions** or, better still, sparkling mineral water with a slice of lemon, lime or cucumber.
- ▶ **Compare food labels** and opt for drinks that are lower in sugar – if a drink contains less than 2.5g of sugar per 100ml it is low in sugar. Look for drinks that contain no added sugar.
- ▶ Instead of a large glass of fruit juice, **pour a small portion and dilute the juice** with sparkling mineral water.
- ▶ Rather than regular lattes, **opt for lower fat and sugar versions of less milky coffees** like Americanos or cappuccinos (without chocolate) to cut the calories.
- ▶ If having fruit juice, vegetable juice or a smoothie, **try to drink no more than 150ml** (a small glass) – while they count as one of your 5 A DAY, they only count once.
- ▶ **Try a herbal or fruit tea** – they come in a range of flavours and most are sugar-free.



Alcohol

Alcohol can also be surprisingly high in calories and offers very little of the nutrients your body needs.

A large (250ml) glass of wine contains about 190 calories – similar to seven chocolate-coated biscuit fingers.

Drinking alcohol can also cause us to be tempted by higher fat and salt food – leading us to make unhealthy choices.

Furthermore, we have strong evidence that drinking alcohol increases your risk of **six types of cancer**. That is why, **for cancer prevention, we recommend not to drink alcohol**. If you choose to drink, the UK guideline is to drink **no more than 14 units a week**, spread over at least three days, and to have some alcohol-free days.

What is a unit?

One unit contains 10ml or 8g of pure alcohol.

One bottle of lager/beer/cider (330ml, 5% ABV) is 1.6 units



One 25ml measure of spirits such as vodka or whisky is 1 unit



One small (125ml) glass of wine (12% ABV) is 1.5 units



To find out how many calories are in alcoholic drinks, visit: wcrf-uk.org/alcohol-calculator

How can I drink less alcohol?

- ▶ **Have a drink of water first** to reduce your thirst.
- ▶ **Dilute your drinks** – for example, opt for a small wine spritzer with soda water rather than a large glass of wine.
- ▶ **Alternate alcoholic drinks** with water or non-alcoholic drinks.
- ▶ Keep a few **alcohol-free days** each week.
- ▶ **Finish your drink before topping up** your glass.
- ▶ **Avoid eating salty snacks** – they can make you thirsty and encourage you to drink more.



Putting healthy habits into place for long-term success

Trying to lose weight or maintaining your current weight is about building more healthy habits into your everyday life, for example, getting more physical activity into your day. While we may want to change everything straight away, the key to success is starting small. Small changes add up over time and it is more likely you will stick to them as well.

Write down what habits you want to change, for example cutting down on your alcohol intake. Once written down you can then commit to them.



Habits I want to change:

1.
2.
3.

Pick one habit today you want to change and focus on that first. Which habit are you going to focus on first?

Find what motivates you

It's also important to have a reason why you want to lose weight or maintain your weight in the first place. For example, it might be to have more energy for your children or grandchildren, or to help make cancer less likely in your future. Write down what your motivation will be.



My motivation is:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Set yourself a goal

It is also a good idea to set goals. Your goals should be achievable and realistic, and have specific deadlines to achieve them by. Having goals and a clear reason for wanting to lose weight or maintain your weight can help to keep you motivated and can help to keep you on track.

Make a record of your goals and how and when you are going to achieve them by:

GOAL 1



Blank writing area for Goal 1 with horizontal dotted lines.

GOAL 2



Blank writing area for Goal 2 with horizontal dotted lines.

GOAL 3



Blank writing area for Goal 3 with horizontal dotted lines.



How to stick to your healthy habits

If weight loss is your goal, remember that it may take time to see results, and that's ok. Focus on incorporating more physical activity into your day and eating and drinking more healthily rather than what the scales read, as these are health-improving habits on their own.

It's also important to celebrate your day-to-day accomplishments, no matter how big or small, whether that's cooking your first meal from scratch or taking the stairs instead of the lift. All these things matter.

We can also build new healthy habits or change a bad habit more easily by modifying our environment.



Want to **avoid snacking** on biscuits in the evening? Try not to have them in the house and put healthier alternatives such as fruit out on the table.

If you don't want to get swayed by all the special offers on junk food when out shopping, try **making a list** of what you need in advance and don't go shopping on an empty stomach.



Or try **doing your shopping online**. Interestingly, a study from a few years ago found that those who shopped online actually bought even more healthier food.



Look for patterns in your behaviour and **what triggers the unhealthy habits** you want to change. Maybe you eat too much while watching TV? You may find that you don't eat as much with the TV off.

Want to avoid the trap of **snacking on unhealthy food at work**? Try taking in some of your own healthier snacks.




Remember when you are building new habits, it's going to take time for them to become automatic. But, you will find that with each day your healthy habit will become as automatic as brushing your teeth!

We are all human so we can slip up. But one slip-up doesn't have to mean going back to your old habits, just re-focus and give yourself a gentle reminder of why you are making those changes in the first place. Good luck!

Food diary

Use this planner to record your food intake for the week. Record your drinks as well – it's often easy to forget about the calories we drink.



|  | BREAKFAST | LUNCH | DINNER | Additional snacks (if applicable) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------|--------|--------------------------------------|
| MONDAY | | | | |
| TUESDAY | | | | |
| WEDNESDAY | | | | |
| THURSDAY | | | | |
| FRIDAY | | | | |
| SATURDAY | | | | |
| SUNDAY | | | | |

Physical activity diary

Use this diary to record any activity you did this week (eg. walking, jogging, housework) and for how many minutes.



| | ACTIVITY | DURATION |
|-----------|----------|----------|
| MONDAY | | |
| TUESDAY | | |
| WEDNESDAY | | |
| THURSDAY | | |
| FRIDAY | | |
| SATURDAY | | |
| SUNDAY | | |

Cancer Prevention Recommendations



Be a healthy weight

Keep your weight within the healthy range and avoid weight gain in adult life



Be physically active

Be physically active as part of everyday life – walk more and sit less



Eat a diet rich in wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and beans

Make wholegrains, vegetables, fruit, and pulses (legumes) such as beans and lentils a major part of your usual daily diet



Limit consumption of 'fast foods' and other processed foods high in fat, starches or sugars

Limiting these foods helps control calorie intake and maintain a healthy weight



Limit consumption of red and processed meat

Eat no more than moderate amounts of red meat, such as beef, pork and lamb. Eat little, if any, processed meat



Limit consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks

Drink mostly water and unsweetened drinks



Limit alcohol consumption

For cancer prevention, it's best not to drink alcohol



Do not use supplements for cancer prevention

Aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone



For mothers: breastfeed your baby, if you can

Breastfeeding is good for both mother and baby



After a cancer diagnosis: follow our Recommendations, if you can

Check with your health professional what is right for you

Not smoking and avoiding other exposure to tobacco and excess sun are also important in reducing cancer risk.

Following these Recommendations is likely to reduce intakes of salt, saturated and trans fats, which together will help prevent other non-communicable diseases.

About World Cancer Research Fund

World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) is one of the world's leading cancer prevention charities, and the only UK charity solely dedicated to funding life-changing research into the prevention and survival of cancer through diet and lifestyle. We champion the latest and most authoritative global scientific research on cancer prevention and survival through diet, weight and physical activity, helping people to make fully informed lifestyle choices to reduce their cancer risk.

We know that around four in ten – or 40 per cent – of cancer cases are preventable. That's around 147,000 people every year in the UK. We want a world where no one gets a preventable cancer.

By following our Cancer Prevention Recommendations, choosing not to smoke (or giving up smoking) and being safe in the sun, you will have the best chance of living a life free from the disease. Find out more:

wcrf-uk.org/our-research

Contact us

We're always looking for ways to improve the information we provide.

If you have any comments or suggestions about any aspect of this booklet or our other health information, please contact us at resources@wcrf.org with your feedback.

For any enquiries or to request the information in large print, please contact us.

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