Healthy eating can help you to achieve and maintain a healthy weight whilst making sure you eat the right foods to keep you well.

This leaflet gives you some ideas for putting healthy eating advice into practice by choosing quick and easy meals.

It includes suggestions for breakfasts, main meals, snack meals, desserts and snacks.

Use The Eatwell Guide below to help you get the right balance of foods in your diet.

Notice the information on checking the label of packaged foods – this is often called the traffic light labelling. Choosing foods that are green for salt, fat and sugar are generally the healthier options. Try to limit foods that are red for salt, fat and sugar.
### IDEAS FOR BREAKFAST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Best choices</th>
<th>Tips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>Porridge, wheat biscuits, Shredded Wheat, no added sugar muesli, bran flakes</td>
<td>Look for those low in sugar (green)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use skimmed, 1% or semi-skimmed milk, unsweetened dairy alternatives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. soya or almond milk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yogurt</td>
<td>Low fat natural, 0% Greek yogurt, diet varieties</td>
<td>Add your own fruit, nuts, seeds, no-added sugar muesli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread / toast / bagels / English muffins</td>
<td>Granary, wholemeal or seeded varieties.</td>
<td>Have with grilled tomatoes, mushrooms, poached, scrambled or boiled eggs, baked beans. Go for olive/ vegetable oil based spreads. Use jam, marmalade, honey, Bovril and Marmite sparingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoothies / Juices</td>
<td>Homemade smoothies – look for different recipes that use vegetables as well as fruits.</td>
<td>Fruit juices and smoothies can contain a lot of sugar, so have just a little (up to 150ml a day).</td>
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### IDEAS FOR LIGHT MEALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Best choices</th>
<th>Tips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sandwiches / cobs / rolls / pittas / wraps / crackers / crispbreads</td>
<td>Granary, wholemeal or seeded varieties. For some healthy ideas for fillings see below.</td>
<td>If buying shop bought try to find ones without added mayonnaise. Add extra salad in or with it e.g. cherry tomatoes, lettuce, cucumber, peppers. If using a moist filling avoid using spread too.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salads</td>
<td>Contain a mixture of salad items and some protein rich food (e.g. tuna, egg, nuts, cheese, pulses, chicken, lean meat)</td>
<td>Go easy with dressings / mayonnaise / salad cream. See over page for healthy dressing recipes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacket potato</td>
<td>Not too big! The skin contains lots of fibre so try to eat this. See healthy filling ideas below.</td>
<td>If the filling is moist don’t use butter or spread too and watch for fillings with lots of mayonnaise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soups</td>
<td>Fresh soups either homemade or shop bought. Look for ones containing pulses (e.g. peas, lentils, chick peas)</td>
<td>Check the label of shop bought ones to help make healthy choices – see label information above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of healthy fillings / toppings for sandwiches, jacket potatoes and salads:

- If using a spread, choose one based on olive or sunflower oil and use sparingly. If using a moist filling try not to use a spread.
- Add the filling of your choice, some examples include:
  - Lean beef or ham (with a thin spread of mustard or horseradish if liked) & salad
  - Grated reduced fat cheese / a little mature cheddar / Edam with tomato
  - Grated reduced fat cheese, chopped celery with a little low fat salad dressing
  - Brie and sliced grapes and / or salad
  - Low fat cottage cheese or light cream cheese with pineapple / herbs & salad
  - Salmon and cucumber
  - Prawns with a little low fat dressing
  - Egg and tomato / cress
  - Chicken tikka with salad
  - Smoked mackerel and a little low fat mustard mayonnaise
  - Hummus and salad or grated carrot
  - Tuna mixed with low fat natural yogurt or salad dressing and salad
  - Baked beans
  - Scrambled or poached eggs
  - Pilchards/sardines (tinned in tomato sauce or spring water).
  - Tuna and sweetcorn / peppers

Examples of healthy salad dressings

- Serve salads without dressings if possible or try one of the following suggestions:
  - Low fat yogurt is a versatile dressing on its own or low fat mayonnaise can be mixed with yogurt. Suitable flavourings include mustard, herbs, onion, crushed garlic, capers, olives, balsamic or wine vinegar.
  - Try a small amount of fruit juice for a different light dressing, e.g. a squeeze of lemon or lime juice.
  - Many ready made dressings are now available in a fat reduced or ‘light’ version. These are a healthier choice but limit the quantity you use as they still contain some fat.

HEALTHY SNACK IDEAS

- Savoury biscuits, e.g. oat cakes, wheat crackers, rice cakes, pretzels, bread sticks, crispbreads
- Fresh fruit – keep to one piece at a time
- Dried fruit – keep to 1 tablespoon e.g. small packet of raisins or 3-4 dried apricots
- Semi sweet biscuits, e.g. 1-2 rich tea, morning coffee, digestives, arrowroot
- Small teacake, fruit bun or a slice of malt loaf
- Low sugar / low fat yogurts and fromage frais
- Plain popcorn
- Vegetable sticks with or without a low fat dip
- Bag of baked crisps
- Nuts – keep to about 1 tablespoon
IDEAS FOR MAIN MEALS

Whatever meal you have try to aim for the following amounts on your plate as shown by the picture below:
1. At least a third of your plate to be vegetables / salad
2. Some starchy food (e.g. potatoes, rice, pasta)
3. Some protein rich food (e.g. pulses, fish, meat, vegetarian alternatives)

Main meal ideas

- Spaghetti or other pasta shapes with meat, mixed bean or vegetable sauce, and a mixed salad.
  - A simple sauce can be made from onions, garlic, chopped tinned tomatoes, a pinch of dried mixed herbs and freshly ground pepper. Simmer until all the ingredients are cooked and mix in with cooked pasta.
- Grilled or poached fish, potato and a choice of vegetables.
- Casseroled meat or chicken with rice or potato and vegetables.
- Curried meat or vegetables, mixed salad and boiled rice or a small chapatti.
- Bean and vegetable hot pot with potato or pasta.
- Grilled reduced fat sausages with grilled or tinned tomatoes and mashed potatoes.
- Roast or grilled lean meat or chicken with boiled, mashed or jacket potato and vegetables.
- Omelette (with filling of your choice e.g. onion, peppers, mushrooms), crusty bread and peas / tomatoes / green salad.
- Beef or lentil chilli con carne, salad and wholemeal pitta bread, rice or tortilla wraps.
- Shepherd’s pie made with minced meat or lentils, choice of vegetables.
- Cauliflower cheese, crusty bread and carrots.
Tips for preparing meals and changing recipes to make them healthier

• Avoid adding excess fat or oil when cooking – 1 tablespoon oil should be sufficient for four servings or more.
• Drain off any excess fat after cooking mince and opt for the extra lean versions of meat when possible
• Try to serve a variety of vegetables and / or salad.
• Aim to include at least two different coloured vegetables or salad items at each meal time.
• Consider the size of the dinner plate you are using. Try reducing the size of your plate so that a healthy portion fills it.
• If buying a ready meal try adding extra veg / salad to it
• Use extra pepper, herbs, vinegar and spices instead of salt
• Use the traffic light labelling to help you make healthy choices
• Avoid using butter, ghee or lard, use a little olive oil or vegetable oil if needed
• Remove skin from chicken
• Replace some or all of the meat with pulses (e.g. chick peas, lentil, kidney beans
• Keep skins on potatoes
• Swap salt for other seasonings
• Use wholewheat or brown pasta

DESSERT IDEAS

• Fresh fruit – choose fruit in season when it is usually cheaper. Try making your own fruit salad, without adding sugar.
• Stewed or poached fruit, sweetened with an artificial sweetener if needed. Dried fruits such as apricots and prunes can be included.
• Baked cooking apples, cored and stuffed with a little dried fruit. Serve with low fat custard.
• Tinned fruit in unsweetened fruit juice or frozen fruit without sugar.
• Sugar free jelly with tinned or fresh fruit.
• Low fat natural or Greek yogurt can be used alone or in place of cream or custard with fruit.
• Mixing quark with a low fat yogurt makes a low fat alternative to cream.
• Make custard or a milk pudding with skimmed / 1% / semi skimmed milk and an artificial sweetener and / or spices (e.g. nutmeg or cinnamon). Adding dried fruit sweetens milk puddings enough to need little or no sugar.
• Smoothies made from plain low fat yogurt and fresh, frozen or tinned fruit.
For further information

Libraries, magazines and supermarkets are good places to find recipes and information about food.

Many websites and apps also give healthy recipe ideas, including:

www.nhs.uk/Change4Life
www.nhs.uk/livewell/goodfood
www.bhf.org.uk (download a free healthy recipe finder for your smartphone)
www.diabetes.org.uk
www.wcrf-uk.org (see sections ‘cancer prevention’ and ‘healthy recipes’)
www.teenweightwise.com (aimed at young people but the recipes could be used by all)
www.bbcgoodfood.com (Healthy recipes section)
www.weightconcern.org.uk

www.lnds.nhs.uk website of Leicestershire Nutrition and Dietetic Service, contains up-to-date dietary information which can be viewed and printed