

Feel Well

Fuelling your body.

Food is the fuel we need to feed our brains and bodies, produce energy and keep our systems working well. Learn about the healthy plate, the nutrition behind eating well and how to keep your energy levels during the day.



Food as fuel

Food gives us the fuel we need to produce energy. Our bodies get energy from the carbohydrate, protein and fat we consume in the food we eat. Eating the right kinds of food in sensible proportions gives us the best chance of being healthy and feeling well.

How much energy food contains per gram is called energy density. Different types of food have varying amounts of energy density. Fruit and vegetables are low calorie and have lower energy density than higher fat foods like cakes, biscuits and fried foods. Foods like olive oil, nuts, fish and avocados are higher in energy density, but packed with nutrients.

The healthy plate

Carbohydrate is the most important source of food energy for our bodies, as it fuels our brain and muscles. Higher-fibre carbohydrates are better for you. Protein and fat provide energy too, but you should eat these in smaller quantities. Choose beans, pulses and fish over red meat for your protein. Limit your intake of higher fat and sugar foods and opt for lower fat and lower sugar varieties where you can.

According to the NHS Eat Well guide, a healthy plate should be made up of:

- One third fruit and vegetables – as many colours and kinds as you can manage
- One third starchy carbohydrates (pasta, rice, potatoes) – choose wholegrain varieties where possible
- One third split between protein and dairy products – ideally lower fat versions
- A small amount of unsaturated fats, like olive oil, nuts and avocado

Aim for this balance of thirds every day or week if easier – you don't have to plan every meal in this way.

Keeping fuelled during the day

Eating three meals during the day and drinking two litres of water remains the best way to keep yourself well-fuelled. Make sure you prepare a healthy plate so you're getting the best balance of food groups and nutrients for your body.

Snack in moderation and make healthy choices if you must snack. Some nutritionists believe in not overeating at night and giving your digestive system a rest. Avoiding too much sugar and caffeine in your daily diet will help to prevent crashes in energy too.

Snacking well

In Britain, we have a snacking habit that's on the rise. Many of us snack between meals, consuming extra calories that we don't need.

- You may be thirsty rather than hungry. Why not drink a glass of water before snacking?
- Reach for fruit and vegetables as your first choice of snack
- Remember portion size – a snack is a small supplement between meals, not another meal
- Choose unsalted nuts or freshly popped corn, rather than snacks with added salt or sugar
- Plan your snacks – stocking up on healthy snacks encourages you to stay away from unhealthy choices



According to research carried out by the Food Foundation, most UK adults and children aren't getting enough nutrients in their diet.