

Mealtimes/Eat Well Spend Less

Week 6

Mealtimes - Eating Together

Eating meals together helps to support family relationships as it provides a daily time for the whole family to be together

It often helps to expose children to different foods and expand their tastes

When families eat together, young children are less likely to be overweight or obese as these children tend to eat regular, nutritious, home cooked meals, and also often help in the making or serving of those meals

Try to have at least one meal a day as a family

Try different types of meals e.g. Fajitas night where everyone serves themselves



Correct seating position:



Correct seating position:

It is important that the **CHAIR** is a suitable size, to provide stability when eating:

- o Hips flexed at 90 degrees
- o Feet flat on floor (or footplate) and hip width apart.
- o Bottom and back supported.
- o Chair tucked in under the table.
- o Elbows supported on the table.

Consider the properties of the **TABLE**:

Ensure that the child is sitting close to the table.

Ensure that the table is at the right height so that the elbows rest comfortably on the table.

Keep the table space clear from clutter. This will encourage the child to concentrate on the task in hand.

Helping with Development



Mealtimes are a great opportunity to build on a child's fine and gross motor skills

Using cutlery supports children to develop their fine motor skills – OT recommend Kura cutlery/larger size nannas manners - [Shop Stage3 – Nanas Manners](#)

Finger foods are a great way to encourage hand to eye coordination and as the child grows, they will begin to use cutlery using a pincer grip

Gross motor skills are also supported through mealtimes, children can practise and develop these through self-serving, using jugs and large serving spoons, gaining independence and control over their larger movements

Top Tips for mealtimes

- Get into a regular routine of sitting down together for meals away from distractions such as TV, toys and phones – at a table, picnic-style on the floor or wherever works for your family
- Involve children in planning a healthy meal that everyone will like – and in helping to prepare it
- Try to create a positive atmosphere – by smiling, chatting and showing interest in what everyone has been doing, rather than just concentrating on whether the children are eating and getting through the meal
- Set age-appropriate limits for mealtime behaviour – while accepting that young children will make a mess at first



Tips continued...



- Offer healthy food choices – and then let children decide how much they can eat and when they are full
- Eat with your children: when young children see you eating and enjoying healthy food, they are more likely to try it – and decide they like it
- Praise children for trying new food even if they don't eat very much of it
- Depending on their age, gently encourage children to eat independently
- Allow children to eat at their pace rather than rushing them to finish or urging them to hurry up

Mealtimes - Breakfast

A healthy breakfast is a great way to start the day. Try to plan ahead as having breakfast will set you up for the day.

- Cereals
- Beans, tomatoes, mushrooms with grilled meat remember to cut off excess fat or substitute with meat free option
- Overnight oats
- Yoghurt and fruit
- Poached, scrambled or boiled eggs
- Wholemeal toast

Remember to check the labels of cereals and avoid those high in sugar, you could always add fruit or honey instead.



Mealtimes - Lunch

Preparing a lunch in advance can help avoid opting for a less healthier choice.

- Try sandwiches filled with veggies and hummus
- Try to have wholemeal pasta and rice dishes
- Opt for wholemeal options such as bread, wraps and pittas
- Choose baked items such as potatoes with a healthier filling such as tuna or reduced sugar and salt baked beans
- Add a piece of fruit to lunch



Mealtimes – Tea/Dinner



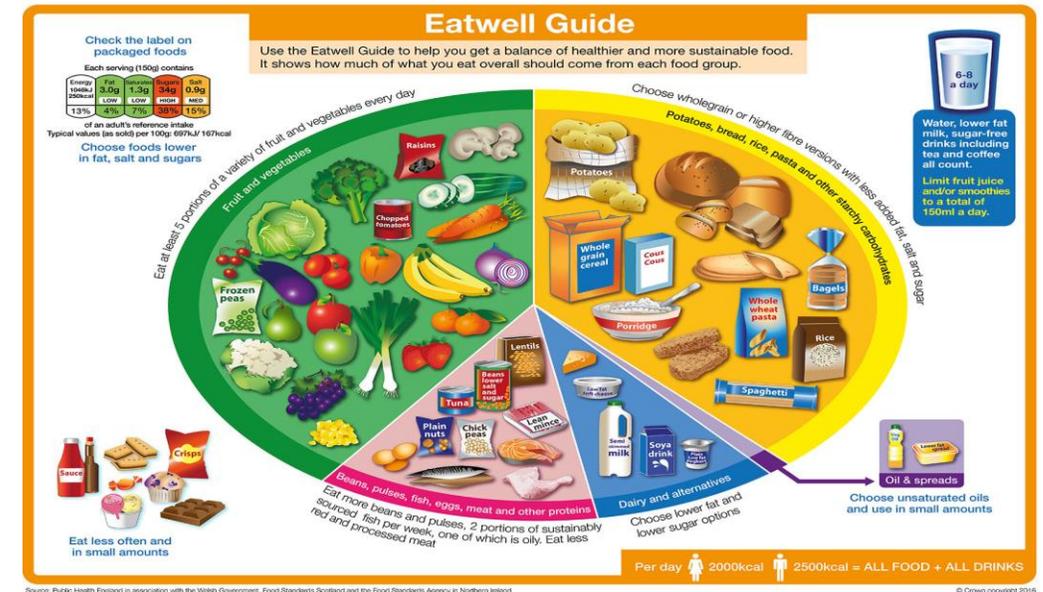
Making a meal plan for the week allows you to plan ahead saving money, time and will help you achieve a healthy balanced diet.

- Consider how you cook the food, aim to use a healthier cooking method, such as steam, boil, bake or poach
- Try to pick foods without butter, gravy or sauces
- Use the Eatwell guide to help you choose foods for the week ahead
- Aim for a dessert if having one of fresh fruit or share the dessert with someone
- Remember to consider portion sizes
- Use the food labels and colour coding to help make your decisions when purchasing foods

The Eatwell Guide

This shows that to have a healthy, balanced diet you should choose a variety of different foods from the 5 main food groups to get a wide range of nutrients. This means eating a wide variety of foods in the right proportions, and consuming the right amount of food and drink

- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day
- Base meals on higher fibre starchy foods like potatoes, bread, rice or pasta
- Have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya drinks)
- Eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other protein
- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads, and eat them in small amounts
- Stay hydrated drink at least 6 to 8 glasses a day



Eat well Spend less

- Make a meal plan
- Write a shopping list, check what food you already have at home to avoid buying things you don't need
- Consider switching to supermarket own brands
- Avoid shopping when you are hungry as this often affects what you buy
- Be aware of special buys as these are not always the cheapest option, use the unit pricing to check the price of food for a specific unit of weight or volume





- Consider shopping at the time supermarkets make the fresh food reductions, some items may be suitable for freezing
- Have a go at making a home-made take away
- Use left over vegetables to make a soup
- Consider replacing protein source with alternatives such as lentils, chickpeas or baked beans
- Consider options when choosing cuts of meat as some are cheaper than others for example chicken drumsticks rather than chicken breast

- Select seasonal fruits and vegetables as they are often less expensive
- Look at what offers the supermarkets have, they often have selected fruits and vegetables on offer
- Consider buying the cheaper loose and wonky fruits/vegetables
- Tinned and frozen fruit/vegetables are a good option as they are cheap and often last longer, remember to avoid tinned fruits in syrups and vegetables in canned salted water



Further Resources



This is a free 8-week email programme that encourages families to eat better and move more, with budget conscious, easy and practical ideas.

www.healthysteps.uk

Thank You