



Tip Top Ideas to Eat Well in Wales

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This booklet has simple steps to help you enjoy a variety of food, eat the right amount to be a healthy weight and ensure you have the nutrients your body needs to be healthy.

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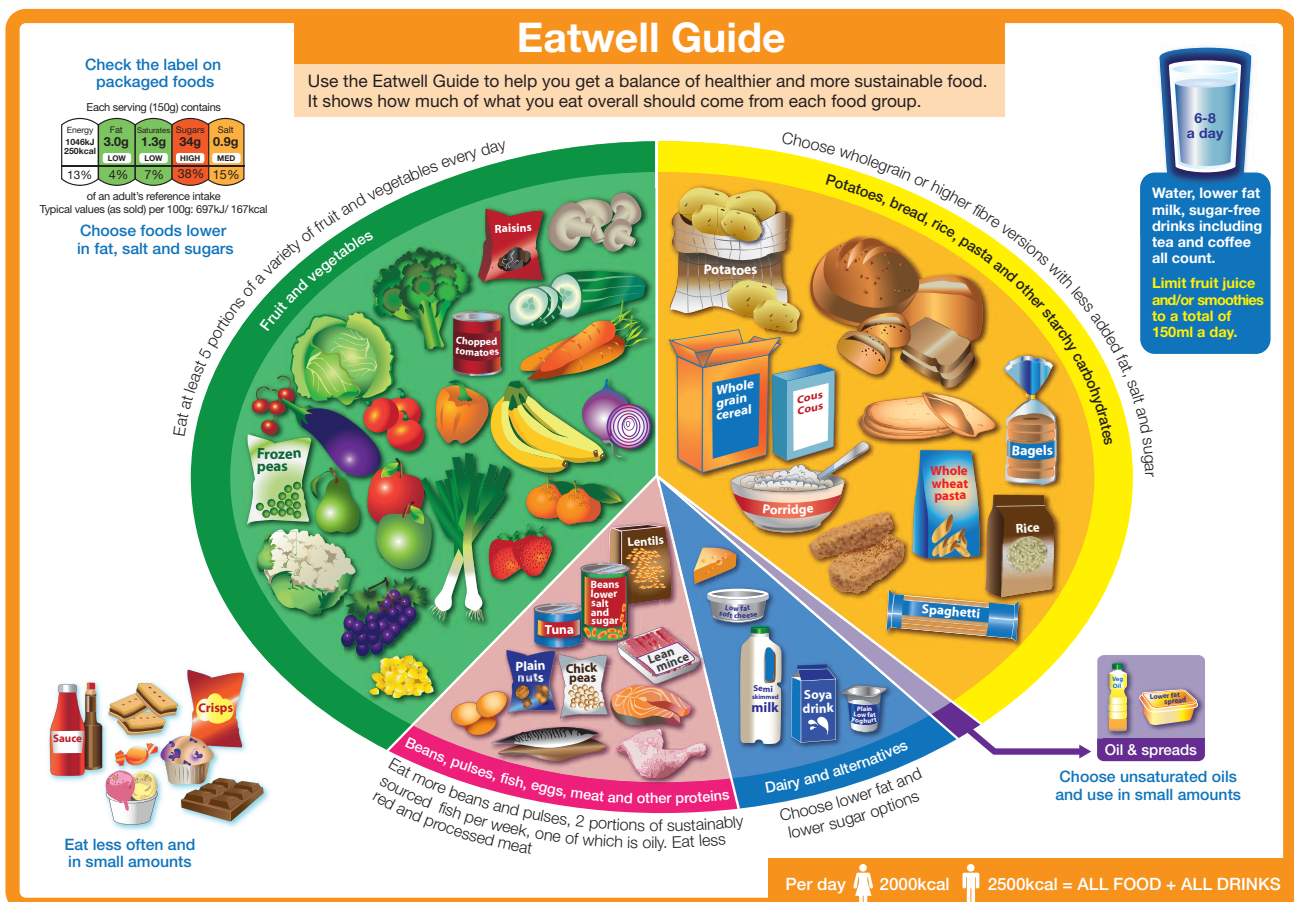
Eatwell Guide

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

When should I use the Eatwell Guide?

You can use the Eatwell Guide to help you make healthier choices whenever you're:

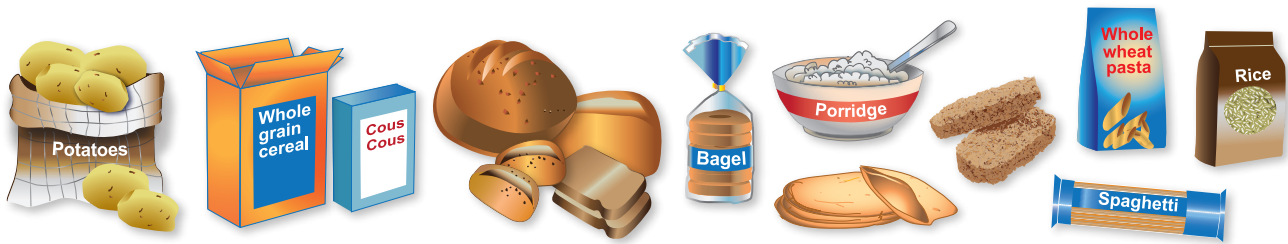
- deciding what to eat
- preparing to cook at home
- out shopping for groceries
- eating out in a restaurant, cafe or canteen
- choosing food on the go



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates



Starchy food is a really important part of a healthy diet and should make up just over a third of the food we eat. These foods should be included at every meal (see portion sizes, page 13).

Try to choose higher-fibre, wholegrain varieties when you can. These foods provide longer lasting energy, keep us feeling fuller for longer and help to prevent constipation.

Wholegrain food includes: wholemeal and wholegrain (granary) bread, pitta, chapatti, wholewheat pasta, brown rice, wholegrain breakfast cereals, whole oats and potatoes with their skin. These foods contain more fibre (and also other vitamins and minerals) than white or refined starchy foods.

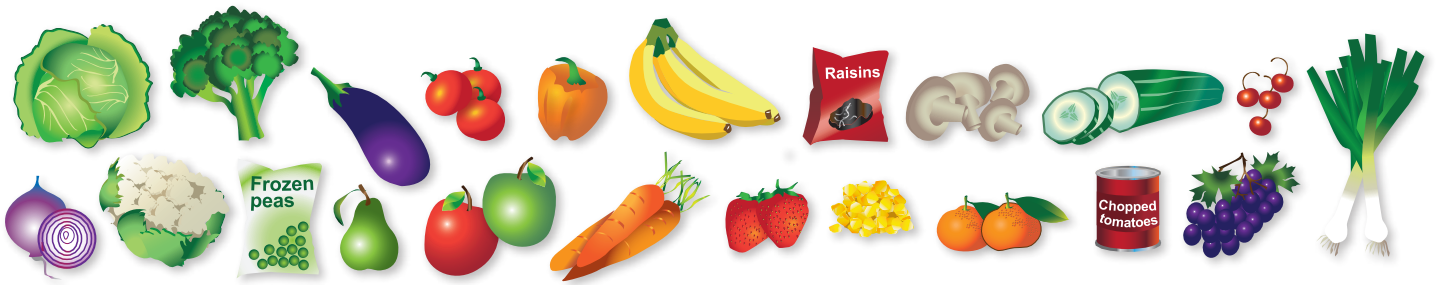
Top Tip:

- You can purchase high fibre white versions of bread and pasta which will help to increase your fibre intake using a like-for-like substitute of your family favourites.

Interesting Fact:

Some people think starchy foods ('carbs', carbohydrates) are fattening, BUT they contain half the amount of calories of fat. Be careful what you add to them because that is what increases the calories, such as butter on bread, cream in pasta dishes, cheese sauces and potatoes cooked in fat (chips).

Fruit and vegetables



Aim to eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day (see portion sizes, page 13). These foods should make up just over a third of the food we eat each day.

Why 5? Fruit and vegetables provide lots of different vitamin and minerals and they are high in fibre.

Remember:

- You can choose from fresh, frozen, dried, tinned or juice
- Only 150 mls of juice, smoothie or a combination of the two per day counts as one portion of your fruit and vegetables
- Tinned fruit in natural juice are healthier than in syrup
- A portion of dried fruit is a lot smaller (tablespoon or 30g) and only one portion per day counts as one of your five a day
- A dessert bowl of salad is equivalent to one portion (all other fruit and vegetables see portion sizes, page 13).

Top Tips:

- Try buying fruit and vegetables that are in season as they are cheaper.
- You could try growing your own fruit and vegetables in the garden. No garden? No problem! There may be community growing and gardening projects in your area. **For more information see Community Gardens links.**

Interesting Facts:

Salad and vegetables are very low in calories and fat which help to maintain a healthy weight.

There is more and more evidence that people who eat lots of fruit and vegetables are less likely to develop chronic diseases like heart disease and some cancers.

Dairy and alternatives



Foods from this group are good sources of protein, vitamins and minerals. They are an important source of calcium, which helps to keep our bones strong. Some dairy foods can be high in fat and saturated fat, but there are plenty of lower-fat options to choose from.

This group includes foods such as milk, cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais. When buying dairy alternatives such as soya milk, go for unsweetened, calcium-fortified versions.

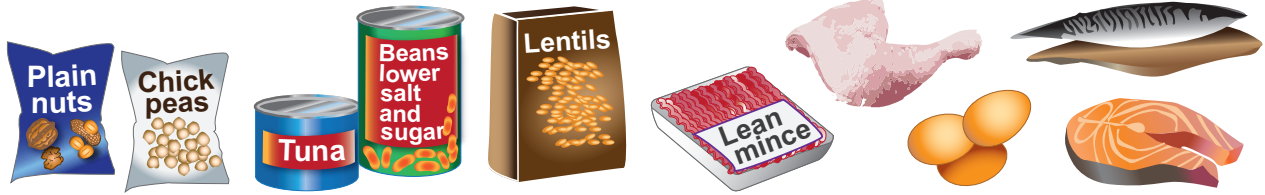
Top Tips:

- Try lower fat and lower sugar products where possible.
- You could try 1% fat milk, it contains about half the fat of semi-skimmed milk without a noticeable change in taste or texture of the milk.
- Did you know reduced fat cheese is widely available? You could also have a smaller amount of the full-fat varieties less often.
- Grating cheese is useful because you use less and it goes further.

Interesting Fact:

Although butter and cream are dairy products, they are not found in this food group because they are so high in fat and contain very little calcium (see What's the fuss about fats? page 7).

Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins



Foods from this group are good sources of protein and vitamins and minerals, particularly iron.

Pulses

Pulses (sometimes called legumes) include beans, peas and lentils. They are good alternatives to meat because they are naturally very low in fat, high in fibre, protein, and vitamins and minerals. These foods are also better for the environment.

Fish

Try to aim for at least two portions (2 x 140g) of fish a week. One portion should be white fish such as cod the other should be oily fish, such as mackerel, sardines and salmon because it is a good source of omega-3 fats. Most people should be eating more fish, look out for the following label, for sustainable fish. **For more information on fish please see fish links.**



Eggs

Did you know eggs will not raise your cholesterol or cause constipation and are actually a healthy food to eat.

Meat

Be aware meat can be high in fat, particularly saturated fat. So when you're buying meat, the type of cut or meat product you choose, and how you cook it, can make a big difference (see What's the fuss about fats? page 7).

Vegetable-based sources of protein

These include tofu, bean curd and mycoprotein; all of which are widely available in most retailers and are a useful source of protein for vegetarians.

Nuts

Also a useful protein source for vegetarians (see What's the fuss about fats? page 7).

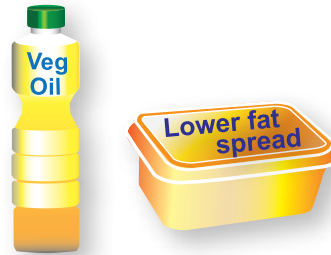
Top Tip:

- If you eat more than 90g (the size of a deck of cards) of red or processed meat per day, try to aim to cut down to no more than 70g per day.

Interesting Fact:

The term processed meat includes sausages, bacon, cured meats and reformed meat products. People who eat a lot of red and processed meat are at higher risk of bowel cancer than those who eat small amounts.

Oil and spreads



Foods in this group include unsaturated fats, such as vegetable oil, rapeseed oil, olive oil, sunflower oil and soft spreads that are made from unsaturated oils.

Butter is not included in this section as it is high in saturated fat and should be eaten less often and in small amounts (see 'What's the fuss about fats?' page 7).

For further information on foods and drinks we should eat less often, see 'What's the fuss about fats', page 7, 'Stop the sugar', page 8 and 'Season without Salt', page 9.

Interesting Fact:

Oils expand when heated and so heating oil in the pan before you use it will make it go further so you don't need to use as much.

What's the fuss about fats?

Some fat in the diet is essential, but overall we eat too much. We need to cut down on all the fats we eat but some more than others.

Unsaturated fats - Healthier

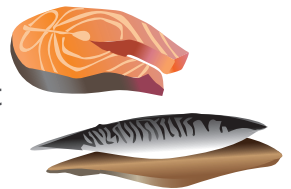
These fats mainly come from plants, such as nuts, seeds and oils (see Oils and spreads, page 6). Swapping to unsaturated fats in your diet can help reduce the cholesterol in your blood.

Saturated fats - Unhealthy

These fats mainly come from animals but are found in other foods. Some saturated fats are easy to spot such as fat on meat, cream, butter, coconut and palm oil. Other fats are hidden in foods such as cakes, pastries, chocolate and crisps.

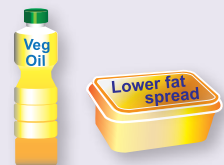
What about fish?

Oily fish contains omega-3 fat (a type of unsaturated fat) which helps protect your heart. It also contains vitamin D which is important for bones, teeth and muscles. Although it is high in fat, we need to have more in our diet rather than less due to its health benefits.



Top Tips:

- Try swapping butter (saturated) for lower fat and olive based spreads (unsaturated).
- Look for lower fat spreads where possible and use sparingly.
- Try swapping cooking fats such as lard, ghee and palm oil for vegetable, olive and rapeseed oils.
- Aim for as lean a meat as possible and try to grill meat instead of cooking it in fat.
- You can use food labels (traffic light system) as a guide to help you cut down. More than 17.5g of fat per 100g means the food is high (red-traffic lights) in fat. Aim for 3g or less per 100g (green- traffic lights).



More than 5g of fat per 100g means the food is high (red-traffic lights) in saturated fat. Aim for 1.5g or less per 100g (green-traffic lights).

Interesting Facts:

All fats contain the same amount of calories, therefore if you are trying to lose weight it is better to reduce all fat in your diet.

Nuts and seeds contain lots of good nutrients and are high in unsaturated fat, but they are also high in calories and should be eaten in small portions (about a tablespoon). Coconut oil and some coconut milks are high in saturated fat. At present, there is not enough good quality evidence to prove that the saturated fat in coconut is more beneficial than other saturated fats. Due to the high saturated fat content they may increase your risk of high cholesterol and heart problems.

Stop the sugar



Sugar contains only calories and has no other nutrients. You can get all the energy you need from healthier options such as wholegrain foods, fruit and vegetables and milk sources. Foods and drinks, that are high in sugar can also cause tooth decay and weight gain. It is possible that drinking lots of high sugar drinks can lead to Type 2 Diabetes.

Foods and drinks high in sugar include foods such as chocolate, biscuits, cakes, sweets, ice-cream, puddings, soft drinks, pastries, juices, jam, white/brown sugar and honey. These foods should be eaten in minimal amounts, if at all, because we do not need them in our diet to be healthy.

Top Tips:

- Sugar Swap Dessert - Try choosing apple slices or other fruits in yoghurt instead of desserts such as regular pudding, ice-cream, trifle and cream. This swap will not only lower your sugar but increase your fibre, vitamin and mineral intake and count towards your 5 a day.
- If you add sugar in drinks such as tea and coffee, try swapping the sugar for sweeteners. They are just as sweet as sugar, but do not contain as many calories and will not affect your teeth in the same way as sugar does.
- You can use food labels (traffic light system) as a guide to help you cut down. More than 22.5g of sugar per 100g means the food is high (red-traffic lights) in sugar. Aim for 5g or less per 100g (green-traffic lights).

Interesting facts:

'Diet' and 'zero' soft drinks taste the same as the regular versions but are both sugar free. Remember they are still acidic, so can still damage your teeth.

Glucose, maltose, honey, brown sugar, cane sugar and muscovado are all other names for sugar. Have a look at the ingredients lists next time you are shopping as all of these should be eaten in small amounts, if at all.

Research shows that sweeteners are perfectly safe to eat and drink on a daily basis as part of a healthy balanced diet.

Season without salt

Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure. If you have high blood pressure you may be more likely to develop heart disease or have a stroke. Even if you don't add salt to your food, you may still be eating too much.

Top Tips:

- You can use food labels (traffic light system) as a guide to help you cut down. More than 1.5g of salt per 100g means the food is high (red-traffic lights) in salt. Aim for 0.3g or less per 100g (green-traffic lights).
- Try avoiding high salt foods (and check the labels) such as crisps, processed meats such as bacon and sausages, some tinned foods and ready meals.
- Look for tinned foods that are low in salt.
- Try to avoid adding salt in cooking or at the table.
- Using herbs and spices in cooking, such as pepper, ginger and chilli is a healthier, tastier alternative to add flavour to food.
- Try making your own stock and gravy or look out for reduced salt products.

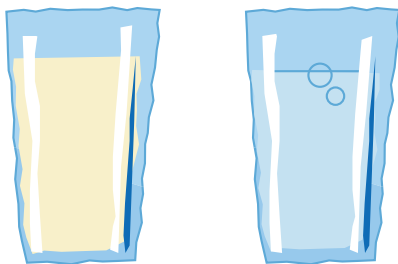


Interesting facts:

Most of the salt we eat is 'hidden', about three-quarters of the salt we eat is already in the food we buy, such as breakfast cereals, soups, breads and sauces.

Did you know the recommended amount of salt per day is no more than a heaped teaspoon for adults and less for children.

Drinks



Drinking is important to make sure we are well hydrated. If we do not drink enough and become dehydrated, we may feel thirsty and have a dry sticky mouth. Dehydration can also cause lack of concentration, tiredness, headaches and dizziness. The recommendations are to drink around **6 to 8 mugs or glasses per day** of healthy drinks. All hot and cold non alcohol drinks count but low fat milk and water are the healthier choices.

When the weather is warm, or when we get active, we may need more fluids.

Top Tip:

- Try to choose sugar free drinks instead of high sugar fizzy drinks, pops and squashes.

Interesting facts:

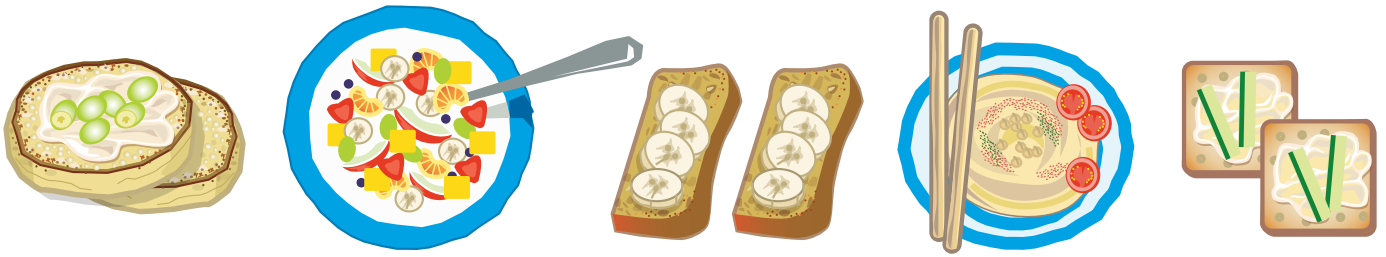
Even unsweetened fruit juice and smoothies are high in sugar, so remember to limit how much you drink to no more than one 150ml glass of fruit juice each day. One glass of 150ml of juice counts towards 1 of your 5 a day.

Regularly drinking high sugar drinks can cause tooth decay and weight gain.

Alcohol contains lots of calories and should be limited to no more than 14 units per week. Units should not be saved up for one day and you should have some alcohol free days in the week.

For a guide to alcohol content and unit size, see the NHS alcohol link.

Regular meals and snacks



Planning regular meals will help you eat more healthily. You should base your meals on the food groups from the Eatwell Guide. It is important to eat three regular meals per day especially breakfast. A healthy breakfast can help manage your hunger and also help to stop snacking and overeating later on in the day.

Eating high fat or sugar snacks can lead to weight gain. You don't have to cut snacks from your diet altogether, but try swapping them for some delicious healthy ones instead.

Top Tips:

- A wholegrain, lower-sugar cereal with fruit sliced over the top is a tasty and nutritious breakfast.
- If we buy unhealthy snacks, we will eat them – one of the best ways to cut back on snacking is not to buy them in the first place.
- If we can see food, it's human nature to want to eat it. Try to keep unhealthy snacks hidden away so you're not tempted.
- We are less likely to eat snacks if they're harder to get to. Try to keep the unhealthy snacks at the back or top of the cupboard.
- Try to avoid eating straight out of a big packet of snacks (it can make us eat up to ¼ more without even realising it), instead, try putting your snacks in a small bowl.
- Think about swapping the TV for the table! Eating distractedly e.g. in front of the TV, means we eat more without noticing or even enjoying it.
- Try to keep healthy snacks like fruit and yoghurt to hand instead of high sugar and fat snacks.

Interesting facts:

Some people skip breakfast because they think it will help them lose weight. In fact, research shows that eating breakfast can help people control their weight.

Weight management

It is important to balance the right amount of calories you eat and drink to the same amount your body uses in activity. If you eat too much and do not do enough activity you will put on weight, eat too little and you will lose weight.

If you are overweight, a weight loss of just 5-10% of your current body weight can improve your health. Weight loss can help reduce your cholesterol, blood pressure and help control your blood glucose levels if you have diabetes. Losing weight can be difficult and therefore you may need additional advice and support. ***You may need to see a Dietitian, speak to your GP about this.***

Being active is an important part of a healthy lifestyle and will also help with weight loss. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five days a week. 'Moderate' means breathing more deeply and feeling warmer. For weight loss, aim for at least 60 minutes of activity five days a week.

Top Tips:

- Doing some activity is better than not doing any.
- Try starting small and gradually build up your activity. Walking is a good way to increase your activity.

Interesting facts:

Do you know some people find it useful to write down what they eat for a week? This helps to see patterns in your eating habits. You can also compare what you have written down with the Eatwell Guide.

Did you know that some people find it really helpful to plan their meals weekly or monthly when trying to lose weight?

Portion sizes

Portion sizes play an important part in getting the right amounts of energy (calories) from your food and drink. Watching your portion sizes will help you maintain a healthy weight. Most people end up eating too many calories because their portion sizes are too big.

Top Tips:

- Try to use a smaller plate or try not to pile your plate high with starchy/ wholegrain foods such as pasta, rice, noodles and potatoes. These foods should not be more than 1/3 of the plate.
- Try to remove all gristle and visible fat on meat and avoid adding fat in cooking. A portion of meat is the same size as a deck of cards.
- Did you know pulses (lentils, beans) are cheap and low in fat, and a portion is equivalent to 3 tablespoons?
- Remember nuts and seeds are healthy but high in calories therefore aim for the equivalent of a tablespoon.
- Try filling half of your plate with salad or vegetables as both are low in calories.
- A portion of fruit and vegetables is equivalent to a cupped-handful (80g).
- Remember dried fruit is high in sugar, a portion is only one tablespoon.
- Aim for one portion of oil or fat spread, which is the size of the top of your thumb.
- Remember cheese is an excellent source of calcium for bones and teeth, but it can be high in saturated fat, a portion size is the same as a matchbox.
- Try to avoid second helpings.
- Try choosing smaller portions of take away and convenience foods as they are typically high in saturated fat, sugar and salt.

Interesting facts:

It takes a while for our brains to register we are full, therefore eating slower will help stop over eating.

Eating on a budget- be a savvy shopper

Cost can sometimes be a factor when shopping for food and drink, however you can eat healthily and save money. Try these top tips to help make healthier choices when you are shopping.

Top Tips:

- Try to plan your meals in advance
- Think about writing a shopping list
- Have a look at the labels
- Try to avoid tempting offers on unhealthy foods
- You can cut down on food waste by eating leftovers from your evening meal for lunch or freezing for the following week
- Did you know most foods and drinks can be frozen?
- Look for cheaper brands to buy
- Try to cook with pulses (beans, peas, lentils)
- Try to eat more vegetables, tinned and frozen varieties can be cheaper
- You could freeze left over bread, rather than throwing it away
- Think about relying less upon 'ready' or manufactured food like takeaways or processed meats and cook from scratch
- Try to eat smaller portions (see Portion sizes, page 13)
- Compare pre-packed with loose fruit and vegetables
- Try to avoid shopping when hungry
- Try to avoid buy one get one free offers (BOGOF) on sugary snacks

Interesting fact:

Superstore value brands taste just as good for a lower price and have the same nutritional value.

For great ways to reduce food waste and save money when food shopping, see [Love Food Hate Waste](#) link.

Sources of further information

Alcohol - NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support/calculating-alcohol-units/>

Community Gardens

<https://gov.wales/allotments-and-community-led-gardening-guidance>

<https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Community-Gardens>

Diabetes Type 2

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/diabetes-type-2.html>

Eating on a budget – NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/20-tips-to-eat-well-for-less/>

The Eatwell Guide - NHS

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx>

Fish and shellfish - NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/fish-and-shellfish-nutrition/>

Fluid

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/fluid-water-drinks.html>

Healthy Eating - British Heart Foundation

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/support/healthy-living/healthy-eating>

Eat well - NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

Marine Stewardship Council

www.msc.org/

Nutrition Skills for Life™

<http://www.publichealthnetwork.cymru/en/topics/nutrition/nutrition-skills/>

Public Health Dietetic Team - Cardiff and Vale UHB

<http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/public-health-dietetic-team>



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Marie Price Cardiff and Vale UHB Public Health Dietetics Team
On behalf of Public Health Dietitians in Wales