

Balanced diet



The Eatwell Plate

What is a balanced diet?

Your balanced diet will be specific to you – it will depend on your age, your body weight and your gender. It also depends on how active you are. It will depend on other underlying health problems you might have. It can also be affected by food allergies or difficulties with eating or drinking.

Having a balanced diet means eating the right amounts of a wide variety of foods every day to fight infection and stress, for repair and healing. A balanced diet is the key to promoting health and wellbeing – both physically and emotionally.



Supplements

yes

You might need to supplement your diet with extra vitamins and minerals:

- » If your diet is limited because of poor general health or the side effects of your treatment
- » If you have to exclude certain foods from your diet
- » If you need to have extra vitamins, minerals and nutrients

Your dietitian may prescribe a short trial with specialist nutritional supplements – e.g. ready-made drinks, soups and desserts - to be used as snacks between meals to support a balanced diet.

no

You should **not** take any form of vitamin or food supplement unless you have been prescribed them by a professional. **Do not** take any supplements if you are currently going through treatment. Always talk to your doctor.

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Protein

Protein: used for growth and repair of skin, muscle, tissues and bones in your body.

Protein comes from animals and plants –

**meat, fish, poultry
eggs, milk, cheese
nuts, beans, pulses
grains, seeds**

Protein can also be used to provide energy if there is a shortage of energy in the diet.



Carbohydrate

Carbohydrate: used as an energy source by every part of the body.

Simple sugars:

honey
fruit (flesh and juices)

Complex carbohydrates: *(also known as starches)*

**bread, pasta, rice, corn,
oats, noodles, couscous,
potatoes, root vegetables,
green leafy vegetables,
salads, beans and pulses**

Wholegrain foods and vegetables can help to keep blood sugar levels more stable.





Fats and oils

Fats and oils: Another important source of energy.

Unsaturated fats can also help to fight inflammation.

- oily fish** (e.g. mackerel, salmon, sardines)
- nuts and nut oils**
- seeds and seed oils**
- olives and olive oil**
- coconut flesh and oil**

Saturated fats from animal sources are known to cause health problems affecting your heart, brain and blood circulatory system. They should be eaten only occasionally and in small amounts.

Saturated fats are found in meat, cheese, cakes, biscuits and ready meals. High saturated fat food contains more than 5g of saturated fat per 100g.

Fibre

Fibre: Helps to keep your digestive system working effectively and efficiently.

The richest sources of fibre come from plants –

- pulses** (e.g. beans, peas, lentils)
- cereals** (e.g. wheat, corn, oats, rice, barley, millet)
- vegetables** (flesh and skin)
- fruit** (flesh and skin)

Occasionally during a bowel cancer journey you may be asked to follow a low fibre or low residue diet to rest your bowel, or as part of your preparation for surgery. These are specialised diets followed under the supervision of a dietitian.

A daily supply of vitamins and minerals is the key to good health and a balanced diet.

Your essential daily vitamins

– and the types of food they are found in.

Vitamins

Vitamin A	Cheese, eggs, carrots, apricots, spinach
B vitamins	Meat, cheese, poultry, eggs, green vegetables, potatoes, bread, fortified cereals
Folic acid	Beans, lentils, green vegetables
B12	Meat, shellfish, cheese, eggs, oily fish
Vitamin C	Citrus fruit, peppers, tomatoes, green vegetables
Vitamin D	Oily fish, eggs, cheese, fortified margarine
Vitamin E	Nuts, seeds, cereals, green vegetables, tomatoes
Vitamin K	Green vegetables, cheese, oats



Your essential daily minerals

– and the types of food they are found in.

Minerals

Calcium	Dairy, green vegetables, wholegrains, nuts & seeds
Chromium	Wholegrains, yeast, beef, eggs, potatoes, apples
Copper	Nuts, shellfish, wholegrains
Iodine	Seafish, shellfish, meat, eggs
Iron	Red meat, poultry, fish, spinach, dried apricots, beans, fortified cereals
Magnesium	Green leafy veg, nuts, seeds, dairy, seafood
Manganese	Tea, nuts, seeds, beans, greens, cereals
Phosphorus	Yoghurt, eggs, meat, beans, fish, bread
Potassium	Bananas, potatoes, almonds, beans, wholegrains, chicken, fish
Selenium	Wholegrains, nuts, oats, oily fish
Sodium	Mainly added as SALT to many processed products
Zinc	Poultry, shellfish, seeds, bread



tips

If you need to add calories to your meals, you can do this by:

- 1 Adding olive oil, sunflower oil, coconut and other seed oils to any dishes
- 2 Adding seeds and nuts to cooked dishes and salads
- 3 Adding milk powder, full fat milk or cream to soups casseroles, sauces and desserts
- 4 Cheese, eggs, cream and mashed potato add extra calories and protein
- 5 Having a small pot of custard or rice pudding as a snack



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