



Week 3

Why it's important to eat lunch

In Week 3, we look at why it's important to eat lunch every day, even when you are busy:

- include lean protein, wholegrains, vegetables & fruit
- plan and take control of what you eat for lunch

Have you ever skipped lunch, then felt very hungry later in the day, overcompensating by eating more than you usually would?

HAVING LUNCH IS VERY IMPORTANT TO GET YOU THROUGH THE REST OF THE DAY.

Eating every four hours or so maintains blood sugar levels and helps prevent your energy levels reaching a low point. Having a healthy lunch will help you function and concentrate better in the afternoon and helps prevent overeating at dinner time or snacking in the evening which can lead to weight gain. Lunch time is another opportunity for you to top up your **ENERGY LEVELS** when you eat a delicious **NUTRIENT FILLED MEAL**. Use the information you learnt in week two for creating a healthy balanced breakfast by including carbohydrate, protein, fruit and vegetables and base your healthy, balanced lunch on the same formula.

YOUR PLATE SHOULD BE MADE UP OF HALF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES, A QUARTER CARBOHYDRATE AND A QUARTER PROTEIN.

e.g. a whole wheat wrap filled with tomatoes, peppers, carrots and some hummus with a slice of chicken or turkey.

Feel free to include fresh fruit as a pudding.

Include healthy fats in your meals too, not all fats are bad!

You could add a tablespoon of olive oil or oil and vinegar dressing to a salad or have a couple of slices of avocado.

Look at your FOOD AND DRINKS DIARY:

What do you think of your lunch choices?

What can you do to make your lunch healthier?

Are you including vegetables and fruit, some wholegrain carbohydrate and some lean protein?

This week, what can you do to improve your lunchtime habits?

If you are too busy at work to stop for lunch or if healthy options are not readily available, you could keep a packed lunch in the fridge or in a cooler bag.

Is there a reason why you have not been doing this all along?

Are you in a rush in the morning and have not thought that far ahead?

Make things easier for yourself, plan and make your packed lunch the night before, just make sure you remember to take it with you! Making a packed lunch can help you control exactly what you are eating.

Another idea is to have some of your leftovers from dinner the night before and bring that with you to work with some fruit.

Some days due to lunch meetings or meetings over running you may not have time to step away and have a proper lunch. When this happens, you might grab a bar of chocolate or a muffin in between meetings. Later, it is important you remember what you've eaten and have something healthy for a snack, like Greek yoghurt and mixed fruits or a chopped banana, to tide you over until your dinner.

Remind yourself that the bar of chocolate you had earlier was part of your lunch, to stop you overcompensating with calories later in the evening. Remember to add what you ate to your diary while you were rushing around. Some people skip lunch as they think it will help them manage their weight.

THIS DOESN'T WORK

Working on an empty stomach means you are left feeling tired, moody and not working to your full potential, you are also more likely to overeat at your next meal.

If you currently eat out for lunch every day, then it would be a huge change to suddenly stop that and start making your own lunch.

START OFF SMALL

Instead of eating out 5 days a week gradually reduce that, try cutting down to 3 days a week and bring in a packed lunch for the remaining 2 days. Slowly reduce the number of days you eat out over a few weeks and save eating out as an occasional treat.

Here are some **LUNCH IDEAS** for you to try out:

- ½ small avocado with 2 grilled rashers of lean back bacon, 6 cherry tomatoes, whole wheat pasta and fat-free dressing.
- Whole meal pitta bread filled with half a tin of tuna, reduced fat mayonnaise, sweetcorn and some salad.
- Baked potato served with a small tin of reduced salt baked beans, a little grated cheese and salad.
- A bowl of vegetable soup with 2 slices of wholegrain bread filled with some spread, tomato and a little cheese (you could have this toasted).

The **MAIN BENEFIT** of making your own lunch, is that **YOU HAVE FULL CONTROL** over what you eat. If you are not keen on a salad, there is nothing wrong with a sandwich. The sandwich can provide you with wholegrain carbohydrates, lean protein and vegetables. You can make your sandwich with a variety of fillings.

CHOOSE WHOLEGRAIN

VARIETIES of carbohydrates, such as wholewheat or wholemeal bread, wraps, bagels, tortillas, pitta bread etc.

When choosing these wholegrain varieties, look at the ingredients list and make sure the first word of the first ingredient is 'whole' e.g. wholemeal wheat flour.

Many products nowadays have a green label with a green tick stating 100% wholegrain. This can be something else to watch out for.

Instead of always having butter or a low-fat spread, try something different like light mayonnaise, salsa, a small amount of reduced fat hummus, mustard or guacamole. Then add some lean protein like sliced turkey, chicken, tuna or beef or some low-fat cheese and some vegetables.

BE ADVENTUROUS, TRY NEW THINGS!

Experiment with different combinations. Add something with a bit of a crunch for different textures, such as lettuce, sliced carrots, celery, tomatoes, cucumber, red, green and yellow peppers, red onion, or sugar snap peas. Try adding a small amount of oil and roasted variations of these vegetables, you can add some herbs for some extra flavour.

Another idea is to have some of your leftovers from dinner the night before and bring that with you to work with some fruit. You might not want to have a packed lunch each day, you may choose to eat at a restaurant or cafeteria some days.

Here are some tips to help you choose a healthy balanced lunch: In winter, soup and a wholewheat roll or lean meat and a variety of vegetables are both good options. In warmer weather head for the **SALAD BAR**, if there is one, and fill up on vegetables. Be mindful of salad dressings and sauces already added to some of the foods, such as tuna or chicken mayo and other salads. Dressings and sauces can increase the calories you are consuming unnecessarily.

Fill your plate with plenty of different types of greens and different vegetables. Then add some lean protein, such as chicken or tuna.

Beans are another great source of protein and an excellent source of fibre, if you don't want to eat meat, or if you are vegetarian.

To top off your salad, give it some crunch and add some healthy fats and essential fatty acids, sprinkle on some nuts or seeds, or use a little olive oil. If there are no nuts or seeds use a little olive oil as a dressing. It's all about getting the balance right.

If you find that you are still hungry in the afternoon have a piece of fruit or a yogurt.

If you don't have time to exercise in the morning, have a brisk lunchtime walk before you eat your lunch. See if anyone in the office would like to join you! Your walk should make you feel warm, make you breathe faster and raise your heart rate. You should still be able to chat and carry on with a conversation.

For many of us our job involves sitting at a desk for long periods of time. We need to get up and move and stretch every half hour. Take a walk to the water cooler and fill up your water bottle to help keep you hydrated, take a phone call standing up, or work at a standing desk.

HYDRATION

- Staying hydrated is very important.
- Around two-thirds of the human body is made up from water.
- Fluids have many functions in the body:
- Acts as a lubricant for our joints and eyes and helps us swallow.
- Helps to protect the nervous system.
- Helps the body excrete waste.
- Helps regulate body temperature.

THE AMOUNT OF FLUID WE NEED DEPENDS ON MANY FACTORS:

- Environmental temperature.
- Size of the person.
- Activity levels.
- Dietary consumption.
- The Department of Health recommends:

1.2 LITRES OF FLUID DAILY

- around eight 150ml glasses or six 200ml glasses.

WE LOSE ON AVERAGE 2.5 LITRES OF FLUID DAILY

- we get about a litre of water from the food we eat and our body can recover about 300ml of water from chemical reactions that occur as it functions.

Fruit and vegetables have a high-water content, and a small amount of water comes from the bread and dairy products we consume. The rest of our fluid must be obtained from the drinks we consume.

Water is the best choice as it is calorie free, but milk and fruit juices are healthy choices too.

Alcoholic drinks do not count towards fluid levels, they cause you to become dehydrated. They are also high in calories.

When our body is lacking in water we are said to be dehydrated:

THE FIRST SIGN OF DEHYDRATION IS FEELING THIRSTY.

Other signs of dehydration include headaches, lack of energy, feeling lightheaded, not passing much urine or passing urine that is dark in colour.

Very often **PEOPLE CONFUSE THE FEELING OF THIRST WITH FEELING HUNGRY**, so it is best to drink fluids regularly throughout the day. A lot of the time we depend on coffee, tea, fruit juices and sometimes soft drinks to meet our fluid requirements. It is important to understand how these drinks contribute to our fluid intake and how useful are they for keeping us hydrated.

CAFFEINE IS A STIMULANT, and it encourages the kidneys to excrete more water. A review looking at the current evidence linking increased urine production with caffeine, found that this only usually occurs when at least 300mg of caffeine is consumed, this is around 5-6 cups of tea or 4 cups of coffee.

Limiting caffeine consumption is advisable for people with high blood pressure and pregnant women.

SPORTS DRINKS are great for when you need an energy boost during high level endurance sport. They are no different to sugary drinks which means they contribute to tooth decay and contain calories. Unless you are taking part in endurance sport, water is the best option to replace any fluids you have lost.

UNDERSTAND FOOD LABELLING

The majority of packaged foods have a food label which gives information on the number of calories, protein, carbohydrate and fat. Some provide additional information on sugars, salt, sodium and saturated fat.

You can use food labels to help find foods that are right for you.

Many products now have the traffic light system on the front of the packaging. When you are in a rush or are unable to decide between two products, choose the one which has most greens. *See example images 1, 2 & 3 on the last page.*

* If the label only has the sodium content, multiply by 2.5 to find salt value.

FIZZY DRINKS and some **SQUASHES** contain few nutrients and are very high in sugar, it is best to keep these to a minimum. High levels of sugar mean they are high in calories leading to weight gain.

CUTTING DOWN ON THESE TYPES OF DRINKS IS A GOOD WAY OF CUTTING DOWN ON YOUR CALORIE INTAKE WITHOUT LOSING ANY NUTRIENTS.

If you want to drink a fizzy drink, they are best drunk when eating a meal to help reduce damage to your teeth and stop your blood sugar spiking. An alternative to fizzy drinks is to dilute fruit juice with sparkling water.

The best drink to give children is water. Milk and milkshakes are healthy too, choose milkshakes that have no added sugars.

VEGETABLE and **FRUIT JUICES** and **SMOOTHIES** are a healthy choice and contain plenty of vitamins. Remember to check the ingredient labels to ensure that they are 100% fruit or vegetable juices with no added sugar. Be aware that some juice drinks contain as little as 5% fruit juice and have a lot of sugar added to them.

Juices and smoothies **ONLY COUNT AS ONE OF YOUR 5 A DAY** no matter how many you drink.

Be mindful of the calories contained in smoothies and fruit juices, you can drink a lot of calories very quickly!

MILK provides us with **CALCIUM** which helps **BUILD AND MAINTAIN HEALTHY BONES**. It also contains protein, fat and carbohydrate, vitamins and minerals. Semi-skimmed milk or skimmed milk have less calories than full fat milk.

WATER is the best choice of fluid for hydration. It has no calories and doesn't cause tooth decay. If you don't like the taste of water, add a slice of lemon, lime or orange or sliced cucumber and strawberries. Another alternative is sparkling water or add some fruit juice or reduced-sugar squash for some added flavour.

QUENCH YOUR THIRST THE RIGHT WAY

Remaining hydrated is very important, we would only survive for a few days without water. For our body to function well, the chemical reactions occurring in our cells need water.

To stay healthy hydration is key. We lose fluids every day through breathing, sweating and urinating and it is important that we replace what we lose.

BEST DRINKS TO KEEP YOU HYDRATED:

- Water
- Milk
- Fruit juices

SIGNS OF DEHYDRATION:

Lack of energy, headaches, dark coloured urine and not passing very much urine, feeling light-headed.

Much of the time people confuse the feeling of thirst with feeling hungry, so it is best to drink fluids regularly through the day.

A lot of the time we depend on coffee, tea, fruit juices and sometimes soft drinks to meet our fluid requirements. These drinks are fine as long as they are part of a healthy balanced diet.

BIG TIP!

Always carry a water bottle with you or have it on your desk. You're more likely to keep hydrated that way!

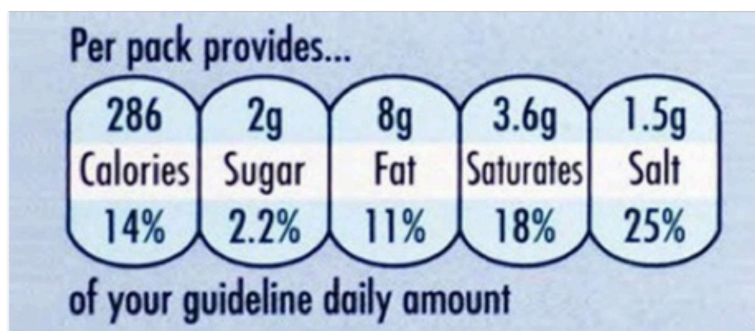
Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



NOTES