

# Brakes guide to Eating well

## Understanding nutritional balance

Below is the Eatwell Guide, showing the proportions and types of foods needed for a healthy balanced diet. Balance is about diversity and variety, no single food needs to be avoided. Try to include a variety of different foods from each of the groups within your meals and menus to help residents get the wide range of nutrients they need.

## Fruit and vegetables

Lots of people are aware that we should eat at least 5 portions of different fruits and vegetables each day, but most people still don't eat enough. This group should make up approximately one third of the diet and fresh, frozen, canned, dried and 100% juiced varieties all count. A fresh, frozen or canned portion is approximately 80g, a portion of juice or smoothie is 150mls (only 1 serving a day) and a portion of dried fruit is about 30g. This group provides vitamins and minerals like folate, vitamin C, vitamin A, fibre and fluid for your residents. Remember each portion must be different, and try to choose a variety of different colours to help your residents get a range of different nutrients. Offer your residents a choice of fruit and/or vegetables as an accompaniment with every meal, offer them as snacks throughout the day and use fruits and vegetables within dishes and desserts.

## Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates

This group provides starchy carbohydrate, energy, dietary fibre, B vitamins, and minerals like iron and calcium. Starchy foods should make up about one third of your residents diet. Fibre is important for gut health, and it's recommended that adults should have around 30g of fibre each day. Offer your residents some higher fibre options such as wholemeal bread, wholegrain breakfast cereal, brown rice and potatoes with the skin left on. Include some starchy food at each meal like cereals at breakfast, jacket potato at lunch or wholemeal bread with evening meal.

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

It's important to offer your residents foods from this group regularly because they provide protein, vitamins and minerals. Beans and pulses are plant-based sources of protein that are also low in fat and high in fibre. Other plant-based sources of protein include tofu, bean curd and mycoprotein.

There should be at least two portions of sustainably sourced fish on the menu each week. You can help your residents achieve this by offering fresh, frozen or canned sustainably sourced fish. One of these portions should be an oily fish such as salmon, sardines, herring, mackerel and trout. Please note - fresh tuna is no longer considered a source of oily fish. Oily fish contains some vitamin D and is also a rich source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are important for heart health.

This group also contains eggs and meat. Some meats are high in fat so choose leaner cuts and lean mince. Remove the skin or cut off visible fat, and grill meat (and fish) where possible. Keep processed meats to a minimum, such as sausages, bacon, cured meats and reformed meat products. Try not to offer your residents more than 70g of processed meats per day.



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## Dairy and alternatives

This group includes milk, yogurt and cheese, and they provide protein, some vitamins and calcium. Calcium is a really important mineral for bone health so make sure you offer your residents foods from this group every day. When choosing dairy alternative products, look for unsweetened and calcium-fortified versions so that they are nutritionally similar to their dairy equivalent.

## Oils and spreads

Although your residents need some fat in their diet, too much saturated fat can have a negative effect on heart health. Use unsaturated fats like vegetable oil, rapeseed oil and olive oil to cook with. Offering lower fat spreads instead of butter can also help to reduce saturated fat intake. Be aware that all types of fat are high in energy though, even unsaturated fats, so use them sparingly.

## Foods high in fat, salt and sugars

This includes products such as chocolate, crisps, confectionary, biscuits, cakes, full-sugar soft drinks, ice cream and butter. Other than energy, these foods don't really provide many other nutrients so they should be eaten infrequently and in small amounts. However, these foods can play a role for residents who are at risk of, or who are already malnourished. Small, high-energy snacks can help to increase energy intakes for residents who are nutritionally vulnerable.

## Hydration

Residents should be offered at least 6-8 glasses of fluid every day. This is to reduce the risk of dehydration which can lead to headaches, tiredness, confusion, constipation and even urinary tract infections (UTI). Water, milk, tea, coffee, fruit juice & smoothies (one 150ml serving per day) and sugar-free drinks all count towards fluid intake. Offer residents a drink upon waking, with every meal and regularly in between meals. Drinks should also be available upon request, and you could introduce hydration stations so those who are able to, can make themselves a drink.



Source: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide/>

Source: Data collated and analysed by Brakes nutritionist and Brakes customer marketing from Public Health England, NHS and the BDA