

“Eat Well, Stay Well”

The following notes relate to three of the programmes that can be watched on the Koan Arts website (www.ko-an.org.uk) under the “Eat Well, Stay Well” section. In addition, you’ll also find other films and support notes there that look at ways children can become involved in activities to help them learn about healthy food.

- 1) **“The Healthy Plate”** (page 4) - an introduction to three of the key constituents of food (Fats, Sugars & Salts) that can have an impact on your health together with some tips on how to create healthy menus.
- 2) **“What am I eating?”** (page 8) - a guide to food labels and what to look for when you are buying food for the family. Primarily looks at the traffic light option but provides an overview to all labels in use at the moment.
- 3) **“The Sensible Shopper”** (page 12) - a brief guide to not only getting the best value when you are shopping but also ideas on purchasing the healthiest foods.

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Introduction

We all need a balanced, healthy diet to keep functioning properly. This helps ensure that our bodies have enough nutrition:

- Grow
- Repair and heal
- Fight illness and infection
- Avoid weight-related health problems

The foods we need to eat can be divided into five separate groups.

- 1) Fruit & Vegetables - sources of vitamins, minerals & fibre
- 2) Starchy Foods (carbohydrates) - sources of energy, fibre, vitamins & minerals
- 3) Meat, Fish, Eggs, Pulses & Beans - sources of protein, vitamins & minerals
- 4) Milk & Dairy products - sources of protein and calcium
- 5) Foods with fat & sugar - sources of energy

The reason we need a diet drawn from these is that they all deliver different, essential nutritional benefits to our bodies.

Fruit and vegetables one of our main sources of vitamins and minerals. Vitamin A helps to strengthen our immune system, Vitamin B help us process energy from food, Vitamin D helps us maintain healthy teeth and bones and Vitamin C helps to keep cells and tissues healthy. Fruit and vegetables when eaten with the skin on also contain high amounts of fibre which help to maintain a healthy digestive system.

Starchy foods are where we get a lot of our energy from. Our bodies convert these foods into glucose which is used as energy either immediately or stored for later use. Carbohydrates also contain fibre and iron which we need to make red blood cells to carry oxygen around the body.

Meat fish, eggs, pulses and beans provide us with protein which is a building block of the body. Everything in our body needs protein to build and repair itself.

Milk & dairy products are also high in protein and they also provide calcium which is the most common mineral in the body. Calcium is needed to help blood to clot, and to build bones and teeth.

Fat and sugar foods also have a role to play, in moderation. Fat transports the vitamins A, D, E and K around the body and also cushions and protects the internal organs. Sugar is another food that gives us energy, whether it's naturally occurring fructose in fruit or sucrose in table sugar.

No single food will provide all the nutrients we need so a good diet should include a wide range of foods from each of the different food groups above. The NHS suggest:

"Try and base meals on starchy carbohydrates such as bread, pasta or potatoes. Include a range of different fruit and vegetables and have at least one to two portions with every meal. Including a serving of protein-containing food is also important. Then choose adequate calcium sources, aiming for three daily portions of low-fat dairy"

"The Healthy Plate"

Remember that whilst there is no 'bad food', the variety we have in our diet, eating all things in moderation, getting plenty of exercise and sleep are all important. You should however try to limit the amount of fat, salt and sugar in your diet - something this film concentrates on. The following additional items, although not covered in the film, should be borne in mind when considering a healthy diet.

Protein-rich foods e.g. meat and fish - are important as they are known to increase serotonin levels which help to lift your mood. If you are vegetarian you will need to eat more alternative sources of protein such as milk, cheese, eggs and pulses like lentils and beans.

Drinks - Fluids are vital to help our bodies perform effectively, and the best fluid of all is water. Two-thirds of a healthy human body is actually made up of water. It's necessary to help our blood carry nutrients and waste around the body and to help the chemical reactions that occur in our cells. The adult body requires about 1.2 litres of liquid a day to avoid dehydration which causes headaches, tiredness and lack of concentration. Ideally the liquid needs to be water or very watery coffee or tea - alcohol doesn't count!

Vitamins and iron - ensure there is enough iron in your diet - acquired through pulses, cereals and green leafy vegetables. Also you should try to eat plenty of food containing:

Vitamin C. Foods rich in vitamin C include Blackcurrants, Broccoli, Green peppers, Lemons, Oranges, Strawberries, Tomatoes.

FILM TRANSCRIPT

A car's engine has to be given the right fuel to help it run efficiently. Get it wrong and you know you'll have problems. Your body is like an engine. Put in the right fuel and it will have a positive impact on your health and, more importantly, could prevent serious illnesses - such as heart disease and diabetes - occurring later in life. It's therefore important to understand more about what you are eating. Just like the fuel you put in a car, the food you eat consists of several constituents such as proteins, fats, fibres and salts. Some you need lots of, some not so many.

In this programme we're going to look at the key constituents that usually have the most impact on people's health FAT, SUGAR and SALT.

But first of all let's talk about Calories. **CALORIES** are units of energy. When we eat and drink, we're putting energy into our bodies. The more physical activity we do, the more energy or calories we use up. Weight gain occurs when we regularly put more energy into our bodies than we use. Over time, that excess energy is stored by the body as fat and being overweight is a major cause of many serious illnesses. Almost all foods and drinks contain calories and the calorie content is often given in *kcal*s, *which is short for "kilocalories", and also in kJ, short for "kilojoules"*.

An average man needs around 2,500 kcal a day;

An average woman 2,000 and

Children between the ages of 5 and 10 about 1800.

The amount of calories, as well as the other nutritional values in food - some of which we are about to discuss - can be found on the food labels. Using these labels go through a typical days meals and add up the calories you've consumed. OK now let's look at those key constituents that most foods have and that we should know more about.

FATS

We all need some fat in our diet because it is a source of energy as well as some vitamins and provides essential acids that the body can't make itself. But eating too much fat makes us more likely to put on weight, because foods that are high in fat are high in calories. There are two types of fat found in food: **saturated and unsaturated**. It's the saturated fat we need to be careful of because that's the one that causes the most long term health issues we've talked about a few minutes ago.

You therefore need to cut down on foods that contain **saturated fats such fatty cuts of meat, sausages and pies, butter and lard, cheese, cream and ice cream, chocolates, biscuits, cakes and pastries.**

As regards **unsaturated fats**, quite simply, most people should be eating more of them. So try and include **oily fish such as salmon, sardines and mackerel, nuts and seeds, sunflower and olive oils, fruit and vegetables, such as avocados.**

Here are a few ways to help you cut down on your intake of saturated fats:

Spaghetti Bolognese: If you aren't using leaner mince, brown the mince first, then drain off the fat before adding other ingredients.

Potatoes: make your roast potatoes healthier by cutting them into larger pieces than usual and using just a little sunflower or olive oil.

Chips: choose thick, straight-cut chips instead of french fries or crinkle-cut.

Chicken: before you eat it, take the skin off to reduce the saturated fat content.

Meat: trim the fat off.

Sausages: choose the ones lower in saturated fat and make sure you grill them instead of frying.

Cheese: try a strong-tasting cheese, such as mature cheddar. You'll need less and will go even further by grating instead of slicing it.

SUGARS

Sugars occur naturally in foods such as fruit, however we do not need to cut down on these types of sugars. It's the sugars that are added to foods such as sweets, cakes, biscuits and chocolates that we should cut down on. Most foods that contain added sugars also contain a lot of calories so eating these foods can contribute to you being overweight. Sugary foods and drinks can also cause tooth decay, especially when eaten between meals.

Here are a few ideas to help you cut down on your intake of sugar.

Instead of sugary fizzy drinks and juice drinks, **go for unsweetened fruit juice** which can be one of your five a day ***but keep it to just one glass.***

Swap cakes or biscuits for a currant bun or some malt loaf with low-fat spread.

If you take sugar in hot drinks or add sugar to your breakfast cereal, **gradually reduce the amount** until you can cut it out altogether.

Instead of spreading jam or marmalade on your toast, **try a low-fat spread or even a sliced banana.**

Choose **tins of fruit in juice** rather than syrup.

Choose wholegrain breakfast cereals but many cereals have a high sugar level so **check to see what has been added** and avoid those with too high a percentage of sugar.

SALT

Too much salt - often described as Sodium - can raise your blood pressure, which puts you at an increased risk of having a stroke or developing heart disease. Even if you don't add salt to your food, you may still be eating too much. **About 75% of the salt we eat is already in the food we buy**, such as bread, breakfast cereals and ready meals.

Here are a few ways to reduce your salt intake.

One easy way to eat less salt is to **stop adding too much salt to your food during cooking and at the dinner table.** So if you regularly add salt to food when cooking, try cutting it out or adding less. You'll rediscover the real taste of your food. And when you sit down to eat, taste your food first to see if it needs salt.

Some foods, like those below, are **almost always high in salt** so try and eat them less often or have smaller amounts.

Bacon, cheese, gravy granules, ham, pickles, prawns, salami, salted and dry-roasted nuts, smoked meat and fish, soy sauce, stock cubes, crisps, ketchups, tinned soups

In such a short programme we can't cover everything but we hope it's shown how important it is to know more about what's in your food. As we said earlier, one of the easiest ways of doing this is looking at the food labels. The programme "**What am I Eating?**" gives you some guidance on how to do this. Finally, "**The Sensible Shopper**" puts it all into practice to help you achieve a healthy diet and save you money.

“What am I Eating?”

We all know we should eat healthily and that means making sure our food is as nutritional as possible. You've probably all heard of the expression of a “balanced diet” and this basically means:

- **cutting down on fats, salt and added sugars**
- **choosing starchy foods** such as potatoes, bread, pasta and rice
- **eating lots of fruit and vegetables** - the famous “five a day”
- **including protein-rich foods** such as meat, fish, pulses, milk and dairy foods

It's easy to think of fruit, vegetables, fish and so on as being healthy but we don't always know how much fat - especially saturated fats, salt and added sugars are in a lot of the food we're buying and that's where the Nutrition labels comes in. Most labels on food like this one:

Average Values	Per 100g	Per Biscuit – 14.8g
ENERGY (kj)	2014	298
(kcal)	481	71
FAT	21.3g	3.2g
of which SATURATES	10.1g	1.5g
CARBOHYDRATES	62.9g	9.3g
of which SUGARS	16.6g	2.5g
FIBRE	3.6g	0.5g
PROTEIN	7.2g	1.1g
SALT	1.3g	0.2g

give you loads of information about the nutritional value but not only does it look complicated, you don't always have time to look through it all! And that's why a lot of foods also have a quick guide that looks like this or this and it's these labels we're going to look at mainly in this programme.

All the information outlined is linked to what's known as the **Reference Intakes -or RIs**. These are guidelines about the daily amount of nutrients and energy recommended for a healthy diet based on an average-sized woman doing an average amount of physical activity.

As part of a healthy balanced diet the Reference Intakes used for a day are:

Energy: 8,400 kJ/2,000kcal

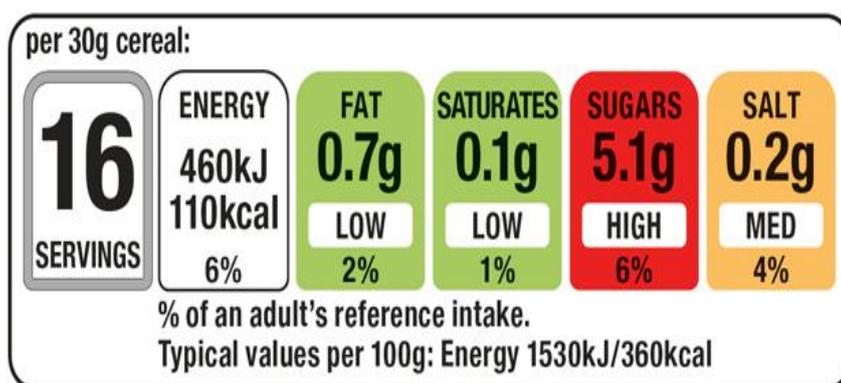
Total fat: 70g
Of which Saturated Fats shouldn't exceed 20g

Sugars: 90g

And Salt: 6g

They are not intended as guides just targets as requirements vary from person to person but for most men the intakes are usually higher and for children aged 5 to 10 they are lower as you can see when you compare calories.

Here's an example of how Reference Intakes are explained on a label from a packet of cereal.



The label provides information on the amount of energy and the number of grams of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt in a typical serving of the food. In this case the manufacturer rates a portion as 30grams and the packet contains 16 servings but it is possible that your idea of a serving could be a lot different than the manufacturers so you need to have an idea of how large the recommended serving or portion actually is.

Percentages are used but to give you a quick guide this particular label also uses traffic light colours. RED indicates a level that gets close to the top recommendations. GREEN if it's closer to the acceptable levels. AMBER means a medium content. **So the more greens on the label the better!**

Each cereal serving of about 30g has 0.7 grams of Fat which is just 2% of the daily RI so it gets a Green label. This Fat content includes Saturated Fats of 0.1grams representing just 1% of the daily RI. So this also gets a Green label.

But when we look at Sugars, a single portion of 30 gms contains over 5 gms of sugar that's over 15% of the cereal. Having so much sugar in it means that a single recommended portion provides 6% of the daily RI. As such it gets a Red label.

Finally the Salt content of 0.2gms per portion represents 4% of the daily RI and is classed as a medium content and gets an Orange label.

Lastly the Energy reference gives you an idea of the number of calories in each portion. In this case it's 460kj or 110kcal which is 6% of the daily RI.

If you have a product that doesn't have the traffic lights then you need to look at the percentage figures. We took as an example information from a label of Digestive biscuits.

Each biscuit (14.8g) contains				
ENERGY	FAT	Saturates	SUGARS	SALT
298 kj 71 kcal	3.2g	1.5g	2.5g	0.2g
4%	5%	8%	3%	3%
of an adult's reference intake (RI)				
Energy per 100g: 2014kj, 481kcal				

The important point to look for is what the percentages relate to in terms of a portion.

The manufacturers give us all the figures based on **just one biscuit**. So per biscuit we had - 3.2gms of FAT or 5% of the recommended daily intake of total fats of which 1.5 gms was Saturated Fats which is actually 8% of your daily intake. So if you had 3 biscuits you would already have had almost a quarter of your daily intake of saturated fats. For sugar it is almost 10% with 3 biscuits.

Once you get the hang of looking at the percentages, the Nutrition labels become easier to understand. Although many usually have a more comprehensive guide including for example fibre, proteins and carbohydrates, you can still look down and see the critical items to consider of Fats, sugar and salt. For example on a tin of Baked Beans, a half can could contain just 1% of Fat with only a trace of Saturated fats but could provide over 10% of your daily sugar suggestion and over 20% of your recommended Salt intake.

So to summarise,

- Use the quick reference labels to help you pick healthier food.
- Pick food that has as many GREENS as possible
- Look at all the food you eat every day and try and keep your intake of fats, sugars and salts within the recommended limits.
- To help you do this, look at the percentage figures and check them against the manufacturers' portion size.
- Finally look at the ENERGY percentage to give you an idea of the total nutritional value and try and keep within the recommended calorie limits.

Just follow these simple tips and you'll feel fitter and healthier.

It's as simple as that.

"The Sensible Shopper"

Generally it is cheaper to shop in supermarkets rather than small shops. However, exceptions to this can often be butchers, greengrocers and markets, so it can pay to shop around. Another point to make is that, if possible, think about buying with a friend or a group of friends as it is much cheaper to buy food in bulk. Our film deals with some shopping tips you can use when supermarket shopping.

FILM TRANSCRIPT

If you have less money to spend on food, it can seem hard to shop for a healthy and balanced diet. Although you may be tempted to pick up everything that's on special offer there are other ways to save money. Here are a few ways to reduce your bill and still eat healthily.

Plan your shopping - If possible plan your meals for the week ahead, check what you may already have and then make a list of what you require before you go shopping and stick to it. That way you just buy what you need and all the ingredients on your list get used with as little as possible getting thrown out. If possible don't forget most unused food can be frozen to be used again.

Look at Brands - You could cut your shopping bill by buying less expensive brands than you normally do. Look up and down the aisles and bear in mind shelves at eye level often contain the more expensive items. Think about swapping branded products for the supermarket's own version.

Buying Fruit & Veg - Buy fruit and vegetables that are in season. On the whole, fruit and vegetables that are grown in the UK are cheaper than imported produce.

Buy frozen and tinned fruit and vegetables as well. They often cost less than the fresh and are underrated.

Frozen vegetables are picked at the peak of freshness and then frozen to seal in their nutrients. Remember fruit and vegetables, whether fresh, chilled, frozen, canned, bottled or dried, count towards the recommended five daily portions.

Fruit and vegetables sometimes cost more pre-packaged than loose so check the price per weight.

Buying Meat - Buy less expensive cuts of meat. If you're prepared to take a little more time with your cooking this can be a great way to save. Choosing a cut of meat, such as braising steak, shin or shoulder, doesn't mean missing out on taste.

Slow cooking breaks down the fibres, giving great taste at a lower cost.

The cheapest way to buy chicken is to buy a whole one. It's often more expensive to buy two pre-cut chicken breasts than a whole chicken. From this, you'll get two breasts, two thighs, two drumsticks and wings.

Bargains - Look out for offers on foods that keep, such as pasta, rice, cereals (choose wholegrain options as they contain more fibre) and tins of pulses or tomatoes.

Supermarkets usually reduce prices on products that are close to their sell by date. This can be a great way of picking up bargains, but before you fill your trolley, be sure that you'll eat or cook everything you buy before it goes off.

Most supermarkets discount fresh items towards the end of the day. However, with longer opening hours it's a case of finding out just the right time to visit. Time it right and the "reduced to clear shelves" can save you money but don't forget to always check those use-by dates.

Snacks - If your regular shopping basket tends to include fizzy drinks, crisps, snack bars, biscuits and cakes, try trimming down on these non-essential items. Many are high in sugar, salt and fat. Think about cheaper and healthier alternatives - such as sparkling water and fruit juice instead of cola, or fruit and plain yoghurt for snacks.

Finally, and this is so true, try not to shop when you're hungry! People who do so are more likely to spend more, especially on less healthy foods, such as those high-fat and sugary snacks we've just mentioned.

So there you have it. Just a few ideas that could make a lot of difference to your health and your wallet!