Healthy Food for Life

The Food Pyramid

Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt

Not needed for good health.

Most people consume snacks high in fat, sugar and salt and sugar sweetened drinks up to 6 times a day (Healthy Ireland Survey 2016). There are no recommended servings for Top Shelf foods and drinks because they are not needed for good health.

Fats, spreads and oils

Use as little as possible. Choose mono or polyunsaturated reduced-fat or light spreads. Choose rapeseed, olive, canola, sunflower or corn oils. Limit mayonnaise, coleslaw and salad dressings as they also contain oil. Always cook with as little fat or oil as possible – grilling, oven-baking, steaming, boiling or stir-frying.

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

Choose lean meat, poultry (without skin) and fish. Eat oily fish up to twice a week. Choose eggs, beans and nuts. Limit processed salty meats such as sausages, bacon and ham.

Milk, yogurt and cheese

Choose reduced-fat or low-fat varieties. Choose low-fat milk and yogurt more often than cheese. Enjoy cheese in small amounts. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding need 3 servings a day.

Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

Wholemeal and wholegrain cereals are best. Enjoy at each meal. The number of servings depends on age, size, if you are a man or a woman and on activity levels. Watch your serving size and use the Daily Servings Guide below.*

Vegetables, salad and fruit

Base your meals on these and enjoy a variety of colours. More is better. Limit fruit juice to unsweetened, once a day.

Serving size guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving</th>
<th>Active Child (5-12)</th>
<th>Active Teenager (13-18)</th>
<th>Active Adult (19-50)</th>
<th>Active Adult (51+)</th>
<th>Inactive Teenager (13-18)</th>
<th>Inactive Adult (19-50)</th>
<th>Inactive Adult (51+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereals, cooked rice and pasta, and vegetables, salad and fruit</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>Use two thumbs, width and depth to guide serving size.</td>
<td>Use a 200ml disposable plastic cup to guide serving size.</td>
<td>Use as little as possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meat, poultry, fish</td>
<td>The palm of the hand, width and depth without fingers and thumbs, shows how much you need in a day.</td>
<td>Choose lean meat, poultry (without skin) and fish. Eat oily fish up to twice a week. Choose eggs, beans and nuts. Limit processed salty meats such as sausages, bacon and ham.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced-fat spread</td>
<td>Portion packs found in cafes can guide the amount you use. One pack should be enough for two slices of bread.</td>
<td>Choose reduced-fat or low-fat varieties. Choose low-fat milk and yogurt more often than cheese. Enjoy cheese in small amounts. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding need 3 servings a day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oils</td>
<td>Use one teaspoon of oil per person when cooking or in salads.</td>
<td>Use two thumbs, width and depth to guide serving size.</td>
<td>Choose lean meat, poultry (without skin) and fish. Eat oily fish up to twice a week. Choose eggs, beans and nuts. Limit processed salty meats such as sausages, bacon and ham.</td>
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Get Active!

To maintain a healthy weight adults need at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on 5 days a week (or 150 minutes a week); children need to be active at a moderate to vigorous level for at least 60 minutes every day.

Drink at least 8 cups of fluid a day – water is best

Source: Department of Health/Health Service Executive 2016.

Average daily calorie needs for all foods and drinks for adults

Active 2000kcal Inactive 1800kcal

Active 2500kcal Inactive 2000kcal

*Daily Servings Guide – wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

There is no guideline for inactive children as it is essential that all children are active.