

# The Food Pyramid

For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over

Not needed for good health.

## Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt



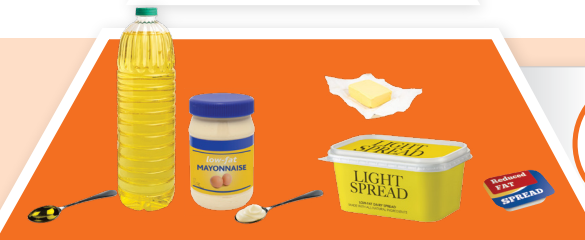
**Most people consume snacks high in fat, sugar and salt and sugar sweetened drinks up to 6 times a day (Healthy Ireland Survey 2016).**  
There are no recommended servings for Top Shelf foods and drinks because they are not needed for good health.



**NOT every day**

## 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.



**In very small amounts**

## Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

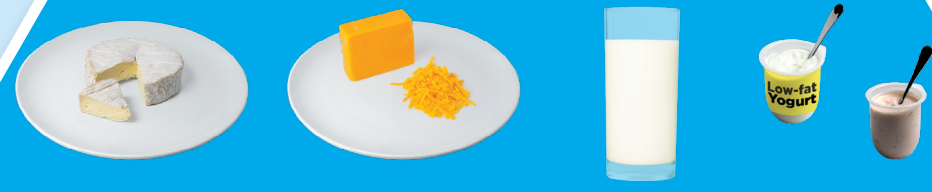
Choose lean meat, poultry (without skin) and fish. Eat oily fish up to twice a week. Choose eggs, beans and nuts. Limit processed salty meats such as sausages, bacon and ham.



**2 Servings a day**

## 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.



**3 Servings a day**  
**5** for children age 9–12 and teenagers age 13–18

## 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.\*



**3-5\*** Servings a day  
**Up to 7\*** for teenage boys and men age 19–50

## 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.



**5-7 Servings a day**

Needed for good health. Enjoy a variety every day.

## Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt

Small or fun-size servings of chocolate, biscuits, cakes, sweets, crisps and other savoury snacks, ice cream and sugary – **not every day, maximum once or twice a week.**

## 1 serving is:

### Fats, spreads and oils

- 1 portion pack reduced-fat or light spread for 2 slices of bread
- 1 teaspoon oil per person when cooking

### Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

- 50–75g cooked lean beef, lamb, pork, mince or poultry (half size of palm of hand)
- 100g cooked fish, soya or tofu
- ¾ cup beans or lentils
- 2 eggs
- 40g unsalted nuts or seeds

### Milk, yogurt and cheese

- 1 glass (200ml) milk
- 1 carton (125g) yogurt
- 1 bottle (200ml) yogurt drink
- 2 thumbs (25g) hard or semi-hard cheese such as cheddar or edam
- 2 thumbs (25g) soft cheese such as brie or camembert

### Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

- 2 thin slices wholemeal bread,
- 1½ slices wholemeal soda bread or
- 1 pitta pocket
- ⅓ cup dry porridge oats or ½ cup unsweetened muesli
- 1 cup flaked type breakfast cereal
- 1 cup cooked rice, pasta, noodles or cous cous
- 2 medium or 4 small potatoes,
- 1 cup yam or plantain

### Vegetables, salad and fruit

- 1 medium sized fruit – apple, orange, pear or banana
- 2 small fruits – plums, kiwis or mandarin oranges
- Small fruits – 6 strawberries, 10 grapes or 16 raspberries
- ½ cup cooked vegetables – fresh or frozen
- 1 bowl salad – lettuce, tomato, cucumber
- 1 bowl homemade vegetable soup
- 150ml unsweetened fruit juice

## Serving guide

<b>Cereals, cooked rice and pasta, and vegetables, salad and fruit</b> Use a 200ml disposable plastic cup to guide serving size.	<b>Cheese</b> Use two thumbs, width and depth to guide serving size.	<b>Meat, poultry, fish</b> The palm of the hand, width and depth without fingers and thumbs, shows how much you need in a day.	<b>Reduced-fat spread</b> Portion packs found in cafes can guide the amount you use. One pack should be enough for two slices of bread.	<b>Oils</b> Use one teaspoon of oil per person when cooking or in salads.

## \*Daily Servings Guide for wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice shelf

Active	Child (5–12)	Teenager (13–18)	Adult (19–50)	Adult (51+)
	<b>3–4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4–5</b>	<b>3–4</b>
	<b>3–5</b>	<b>5–7</b>	<b>5–7</b>	<b>4–5</b>
Inactive	Teenager (13–18)	Adult (19–50)	Adult (51+)	
	<b>3</b>	<b>3–4</b>	<b>3</b>	
	<b>4–5</b>	<b>4–6</b>	<b>4</b>	

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

## Alcohol weekly lower risk limits

**11 standard drinks**  
(110g alcohol over a week)

**17 standard drinks**  
(170g alcohol over a week)

**Standard drinks**  
**One standard drink contains**  
Calories: 100–150  
Pure Alcohol: 10g

**Examples of one standard drink**  
½ pint beer or lager  
Small glass wine  
Single measure spirit

## Average daily calorie needs for all foods and drinks for adults

**Active** 2000kcal **Inactive** 1800kcal

**Active** 2500kcal **Inactive** 2000kcal



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



### 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.