

Healthy
Workplaces

North
Somerset

EATING WELL AT WORK



FOR EMPLOYEES

Why should we eat well at work?

Many of us consume about one-third of our daily calories at work.

Eating a balanced diet and staying hydrated can improve energy levels and productivity throughout the workday. It can also help you to look after your mental wellbeing, keep your immune system healthy, and reduce your risk of health conditions such as stroke, diabetes, and some types of cancer.








What is a healthy diet?

A healthy diet depends on variety of factors, such as age, gender, lifestyle, cultural context, locally available foods, and dietary customs. However, the basic principles of a healthy diet remain the same.

The Eatwell Guide shows how much of what we eat overall should come from each food group to achieve a healthy, balanced diet. You do not need to achieve this balance with every meal, but try to get the balance right over a day or even a week.

Quick guide

-  Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day
-  Base meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta, or other starchy carbohydrates; choose wholegrain versions where possible
-  Have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as oat drinks); choose lower fat and lower sugar options
-  Eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat, and other proteins (including 2 portions of fish every week, one of which should be oily)
-  Drink 6-8 cups (150ml) of water throughout the day.

[Click here to see the Eatwell guide](#)

PLAN YOUR LUNCHES IN ADVANCE

Planning your lunches in advance can help you to keep a balanced diet and save money and time throughout the week. Taking a packed lunch can prevent you taking fast-food options, grabbing meal deals, or being tempted by quick sugar hits from the vending machines.



TIPS FOR PACKED LUNCHES

- Find a good storage container. Consider what you will be using this for: microwaving, freezing, or putting it in the dishwasher? Glass containers can be a good option for this or durable plastic. If you commonly misplace the lids or worry about spills, find one with an attachable lid or that has a good seal.
- At the start of your work week, fill your fridge with ready-to-eat foods that combine easily to make healthy lunches.
- Use leftovers by making double the night before and setting yourself up with a well-prepared lunch the next day.
- Batch cook a dish that you enjoy at the beginning of the week. If you do not want to keep eating this throughout the week, you can put the rest in the freezer. Lasagnes, curries, grain or bean salads, soups, or prepare a sandwich filler to easily add to your sandwiches each day. Find ideas in the links below.
- Do what works for you. Everyone's meal planning process will be different. Some may not have the time, space, or access to batch cooking or preparing meals. Pre-chopped vegetables can be a handy and healthy option, as well as tins of chickpeas, beans, lentils, and spreads that are low in sugar and saturated fats. Sometimes it can be tricky to know which processed foods are healthier than others. Find a link on 'how to read labels' at the bottom of this page.
- Find a place to save lunch ideas and recipes, such as notes in your phone, in a notebook, or a page on the fridge. It can be a good way to remind you of some simple lunches for the next day.

STAY HYDRATED

Staying hydrated is a key part of getting a balanced diet and keeping well. 6–8 cups or glasses of fluid a day. Water, lower-fat milk and sugar-free drinks, including tea and coffee, all count.

If you do not drink enough, you may feel fatigued, have difficulty paying attention, develop a headache, lose concentration, and have a less-productive day at work. By making hydration a priority at work, it can help you to stay focused and support you with the physical and mental energy that you need for your day.



TIPS TO STAY HYDRATED AT WORK:

- **Carry a water bottle and make it a habit.** Leaving the house? Check that you have your keys, wallet, phone... water bottle! Working from home? Only open the laptop once you have a filled glass of water and keep topping it up each time you take a break from the desk.
- **Plan to make water easily accessible.** Is there access to a water fountain or sink at your workplace? If you forget your water bottle, are there cups available to grab a drink? If not, speak with your colleagues about making this possible.
- **Use reminders:** such as sticky notes on your desk, reminders on your phone.
- **Set a challenge:** every time you see someone else drinking, you drink.
- **Naturally flavour your water:** if you are not enthusiastic about the flavour of water, use natural fruit or herbs to flavour your water, such as cucumber and mint, or ginger and lime.
- **Snack on hydrating foods:** as melon, apples, berries, celery or cucumber. Choose soups, stews, or salads at lunch.
- **Limit fruit and vegetable juices and smoothies to 150ml per day,** and consume at mealtimes to reduce the impact of the sugar on your teeth.

TAKE A REAL BREAK

Eating mindfully allows you to become more aware of your thoughts, feelings, and senses while you eat. It can help you regulate your appetite during the work day and stop you getting distracted by hunger. It can also remind you to enjoy your food more



TIPS FOR MINDFUL EATING AT WORK

- **Move away from your workspace:** find a lunch buddy to encourage you to move away from the task you are doing and take a break.
- **Minimise distractions:** put your phone and laptop away while you eat. It can be easy to over eat if you are distracted.
- **Eat slowly:** chew your food and take pauses throughout your meal. It can take around 20 minutes for your brain to get the signals of fullness after you begin eating. Slowing down can help you to recognise before you become too full or understand whether you need more food.
- **Plan your meal times:** you can help regulate your appetite, by sticking to a routine of meals throughout the day. Just make sure you are eating enough at these meal times and foods that release energy slowly and consistently throughout the day. This can stop you from getting too hungry at different time points and reaching for quick snack options, which may lead to you not feeling hungry for your next meal. Examples of slow release energy foods are wholegrain foods, such as porridge oats, pulses, some fruit and vegetables.
- **Enjoy every bite:** recognise the different tastes, textures, and flavours of your food. This can help you to slow down and enjoy your meals a little more.

MAKE A HEALTHY SNACK KIT



Nut butter, rice cakes, unsalted nuts, trail mix, fresh fruit, and healthy popcorn are all examples of simple snacks that you can add to your kit. If you're able to store your snacks in a fridge, opt for fresh fruit with yoghurt, carrot sticks and hummus, or slices of apple to dip into your nut butters

FIND WAYS TO CELEBRATE WITHOUT SUGAR



Instead of office cakes, find ways to celebrate occasions without sugar:

- decorate workspaces
- eat lunch as a team
- organise a birthday card or small token
- develop a reward system for birthdays
- celebrate outside, bring teas, coffee, and healthy snacks
- get everyone up for a game ([this link offers a list of ideas for games for employees](#))
- celebrate with one birthday cake per month and join all the birthdays from one month

FOOD APPS AND SUGAR SWAPS (LINKS)



[Better Health – NHS](#)

[Download a 7-day meal planner from the British Nutrition Foundation.](#)

[Learn how sugar effects your health](#)

[Make easy sugar swaps](#)

[Download the free NHS Food Scanner app](#)

Healthier take-away lunches



Swap



pastries for sandwiches



Swap



fried for fresh



Swap



thick for thin



Swap



cream for tomato



Swap



meat for veggie



CONTACT US

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