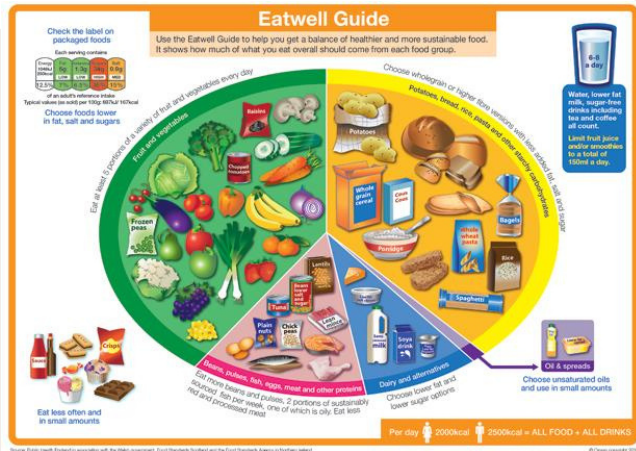


Eatwell Guide



The **Eatwell Guide** was designed to help understanding of what makes up a balanced diet. Lower calorie and fat food group items make up a larger portion such as fruits and vegetables, whereas high calorie, high fat foods like oils and butters are only a small portion by comparison.

It's recommended that rather than trying to make every meal look like this guide, use it as a guide for your daily food and drink intake overall.

- **Fruits & Vegetables** - 5 or more portions a day. 1 x 150ml glass of fruit juice a day is classed as 1 portion. Frozen & tinned fruit also count - be mindful of tinned fruit in syrup because of the high sugar!
- **Bread, rice, potatoes & other starchy carbohydrates** - choose high fibre, wholegrain options where possible
- **Meat, fish, eggs, beans & pulses** - try a few meat-free meals incorporating more beans and pulses, choose leaner cuts of meat where possible & try to consume 2 portions of fish per week (1 oily e.g. mackerel, salmon & sardines).
- **Milk & dairy** - choose lower fat and lower sugar options where possible.
- **Oils & spreads** - use sparingly! Try lower fat options.
- **Processed foods high in saturated fats and added sugar** - eat less often and small portions, try to incorporate balanced diet.

This information applies to healthy adults and should not replace advice other provided by dietitians or other health professionals in those needing specific dietary advice.

References and further resources...

- Check the label - Food Standards Agency
- Food labels - NHS
- Eat Well - NHS
- The Eatwell Guide - NHS
- Looking at Labels - British Nutrition Foundation
- Life stages - British Nutrition Foundation
- NHS Better Health (integrated with Change4Life) - Food Facts NHS



The **Change4Life Food Scanner app** is a quick and convenient way of using barcodes to see what's in your food and interpret food labels. Use this, alongside the Eatwell Guide to inform a balanced diet and make informed decisions



The Food Labelling Classes

How can I use the traffic light labels to make balanced choices?

What is front-of-pack labelling?

2 average chocolates

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
621kJ 149kcal	9.1g	4.9g	14.0g	0.1g
7%	13%	25%	16%	1%

of the reference intake*
Typical values per 100g: Energy 2218kJ / 532kcal

What does reference intake mean?

Does 'red' mean bad?



The Traffic Light Food Labelling System

A red label indicates if a nutrient is high compared to reference intake. This means that like a red traffic light, you need to stop - then think if alternative choices are available and if this red label could factor into a balanced diet (e.g. the other nutrients are green and orange). Foods with red nutrients, if not swapped for alternatives, should be cut down, eaten less or in smaller amounts. Below are the classifications for a nutrient to be red:

Total sugars: >27g/100g/portion
Total fat: >21g/100g/portion
Saturated fat: >6g/100g/portion
Salt: >1.5g/100g/portion

An amber label identifies that a nutrient is neither "high" nor "low". As long as an amber labelled food is eaten in moderation, it can be utilised in a balanced diet mostly/all of the time. Below are the classifications for a nutrient to be amber:

Total sugars: >5g to ≤22.5g/100g
Total fat: >3g to ≤17.5g/100g
Saturated fat: >1.5g to ≤5g/100g
Salt: >0.3g to ≤1.5g/100g

A green label is low in that nutrient and likely considered the healthier choice.

Total sugars: ≤5g/100g
Total fat: ≤3g/100g
Saturated fat: ≤1.5g/100g
Salt: ≤0.3g/100g

Reference Intake

Each person has an individual amount of calories required by their body - this can depend on your age, Body Mass Index (a measure of weight compared to height), gender, activity levels and many other factors.

In order to create values on food labels which can be compared, a standard value is used. These general values are based on the reference intake (or requirements) of a female adult individual needing 2000kcal a day.

General reference intake values used in food labelling (these values are considered the maximum (100%) of needs) :

- **Energy: 8400kJ or 2000kcal per day**
- **Total sugars: <90g per day**
- **Total fat: <70g per day**
- **Saturated fat: <20g per day**
- **Salt: <6g per day.**

Food Labelling

Typical values	Per 100g	Per serving (25g)	% of RI/serving
Energy (kJ)	2232kJ	557kJ	7%
Energy (kcal)	534kcal	133kcal	7%
Fat	30g	7.6g	11%
of which Saturates	18g	4.6g	23%
Carbohydrate	57g	14g	5%
of which Sugars	56g	14g	16%
Fibre	2.1g	0.5g	2%
Protein	7.3g	1.8g	3.6%
Salt	0.24g	0.06g	1%

The above table is an example of the food label found on the back of food items, this is a legal requirement, unlike the traffic light labelling system voluntary for food manufacturers. This label also provides information of other important nutrients like fibre and protein. The format of this label can make it very wordy and complicated if trying to quickly check the nutritional content of a food item.

The traffic light labels, as seen below, were introduced in 2013 to try to aid the convenience and understanding of an item's nutritional content. The colours were intended to highlight how nutritionally balanced an item is and how this may impact what you eat throughout the rest of the day in a balanced diet. The portion size used (see here '2 average chocolates') is important to note as companies may use smaller amounts than the serving size to make a product look more green. It is best to compare products using the 'values per 100g'.

2 average chocolates

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
621kJ 149kcal	9.1g	4.9g	14.0g	0.1g
7%	13%	25%	16%	1%

of the reference intake*
Typical values per 100g: Energy 2218kJ / 532kcal

Nutrients seen on front-of-pack labels...

CALORIES

Calories are a measure of the energy that can be found in food. Aspects of all nutrients contain calories but they are often associated with "starchy" carbohydrates like pasta, rice or potatoes. Despite diet culture vilifying calories, the nutrients which contribute to them, such as carbohydrates, fat and protein are vital for energy, growth, repair and maintaining homeostasis (balance) in the body.



SUGARS

When a label refers to 'sugars', this is the total sugar in an item and will include naturally present sugars, such as that in fruit, along with added sugar or free sugars, found in artificially sweetened items, honey and fruit juice.

Free/added sugars are generally considered more detrimental to health and so should be consumed in moderation. A consistent intake of too much sugar could increase risk of weight gain, type 2 Diabetes, dental problems and many other associated risks.



FATS

Another nutrient with a bad reputation is fat. When a label refers to 'Fats' it means total fats, including saturated and unsaturated. Unsaturated fats are another rich source of energy for the body and can be beneficial in protecting the body from high cholesterol and more! They can be found in foods like avocados, nuts and oils. Although considered beneficial, they should still be eaten sparingly due to the high caloric value. Saturated fat is listed separately on food labels as these are the fats we should eat less often. They are high in cheese, processed meats and cakes. A diet of excessive fat can increase risk of heart disease, obesity, high blood cholesterol and fatty liver disease.



SALT

Salt can be found naturally in foods as a compound called sodium. The salt considered less beneficial for health is what is added for flavouring, additives or as raising agents as they can be added to foods in large quantities. High salt foods include crisps, chips, many takeaway foods, ready meals, jarred sauces and soy sauce. Salt, in moderation, can help maintain hydration and blood pressure. Excess salt has been linked to increase risk of hypertension (high blood pressure), heart disease and stroke.

