



12 Small Steps to Healthier Eating

It can be difficult to know where to start to begin to eat healthily. Try building up to it over 12 small steps instead.....

January

Reduce saturated fats

Unsaturated fats, found in olive oil, nuts and seeds, oily fish and avocados can have many health benefits. But saturated fats (those that are solid at room temperature) can increase your risk of heart disease, amongst other badies. Choose leaner cuts of meat, skim off fat when you cook, and choose lower-fat versions of milk and dairy.

April

Cut back on salt



Most of us eat too much salt. We only need about 6g a day, equal to 2.4g of sodium. Even if you love salt, if you really cut back this month, your taste buds will get used to it. Keep the salt cellar off the table and add lots of herbs and spices instead.

February

Eat more fibre

You need soluble fibre from oats, beans, pulses and fruit and vegetables – these help to control blood sugar levels, reduce cholesterol and eliminate toxins. You also need insoluble fibre from whole grains and cereal to maintain a healthy digestion – and to make you feel full. Try porridge to start the day, add beans to casseroles and switch to wholemeal bread and brown rice.

May

Eat 5-a-day

This can be one of the most important health changes you make. Add fruit juice and berries, apple or banana at breakfast. Nibble dried apricots at lunchtime, have vegetable soup or salad at lunchtime and pile on the veggies at dinner.



March

Get more variety

The proportion of nutrients in every food is different, so get a good variety and get the most from your food. Protein comes in meat, dairy and vegetable sources (grains, nuts, pulses), so eat a range each week. More variety may also reduce the risk of you becoming intolerant to a food. Overeating a common food, such as bread may cause problems.

June

Drink plenty of water

Not just water – diluted fruit juice, herb teas and fruit teas count too. You need to get at least 1.5 litres of good fluids like these a day. And more when the weather is hot. Dehydration can give you headaches, muscle aches, dry skin and put you in a bad mood.



July

Eat more colours

Eat your greens! And your yellows and purples and oranges! Each colour provides a different range of nutrients, so eat a variety of colours each day.

Orange fruit and vegetables contain beta-carotene & purple fruits have powerful antioxidants – these help your immune system.



October

Eat less sugar

Less sugar is good for your waistline, your teeth and your general health. It's got nothing in it but calories, and your body actually uses up nutrients to digest it. Dealing with it causes your body a lot of extra stress – so give it a break!



August

Eat more whole foods

Foods in their natural state, such as nuts, seeds, pulses, whole grains and dried fruit contain more nutrients, fibre and taste than refined foods. They have no additives either. So snack on nuts and seeds and try new whole grains such as bulgar wheat and quinoa.

November

Drink sensibly

A moderate amount of alcohol (a 125ml glass of wine or two) is fine, and may even have health benefits, but regularly exceeding this will have serious effects on your health. If you're thirsty, drink water before you start on alcoholic drinks, and dilute your drinks with soda water.

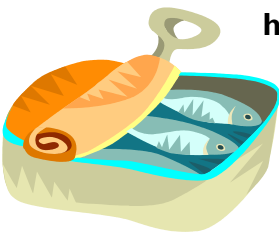


September

Eat more fish

Fish are full of protein and nutrients. Aim for 2 portions a week. At least one should be an oily fish, such as mackerel, salmon,

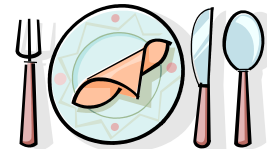
herring or sardine, which are great for omega 3. Tinned fish are good too.



December

Watch your portion sizes

It's not all about what you eat, but also how much you eat. It's better for your body to eat regular small meals, than it is to eat enormous platefuls. This way it has time to process all the nutrients that you feed it, and you'll feel better for it.



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