

Watch those fats!

Fat is a good source of energy, but eating too much fat can make us more likely to put on weight.

Eating foods that are high in saturated fat increases the risk of developing heart disease by raising your cholesterol levels. Foods that are high in saturated fat include:

- Processed meat products such as meat pies, sausages, breaded meats, etc
- Butter, ghee, suet and lard
- Cream
- Hard cheese
- Pastry, cakes and biscuits
- Fried savoury snacks

Instead choose foods high in unsaturated fats including;

- avocados
- vegetable oils such as sunflower, olive, rapeseed and walnut
- nuts and seeds (but choose unsalted)
- oily fish like sardines, pilchards, mackerel, herring, salmon and trout

Oily fish all contain 'omega 3 fatty acids', which are good for your heart and vitamin D which is important for healthy bones. You should aim to eat at least two portions of fish a week, one of which should be oily.

Vitamin D is also found in fortified cereals and soft spreads such as margarine. We also make vitamin D from sunlight on our skin. If you do not eat any of these foods, or you rarely get any sunshine you should consider taking a daily 10 mcg vitamin D supplement.

Fantastic fibre

Base your meals on foods that are high in starch and fibre, such as wholemeal bread, pasta, rice, cereals and potatoes. Oats, fruits and vegetables, pulses, such as lentils, butter or baked beans are all good sources of fibre.

Eating fibre rich foods and drinking plenty of fluid – around 6 to 8 glasses throughout the day – can help prevent constipation, which also reduces the risk of some common disorders in the intestine.

It's not a good idea to sprinkle raw bran on your food to increase the fibre you eat, as this may prevent you absorbing some important minerals.



Protein and iron

Have some protein such as meat, eggs, pulses (peas, beans and lentils) and fish every day. Many of these protein rich foods also include iron, which is important to prevent anaemia. Other foods that contain iron include bread, dark green vegetables and fortified breakfast cereals.

Liver is a high source of iron but is also a rich source of vitamin A, so you should avoid eating liver or liver products like paté more than once a week, or eat smaller portions. This is because having too much vitamin A (more than 1.5mg per day) might increase the risk of bone fracture. You should also avoid taking any supplements that contain vitamin A, including fish oils which are high in vitamin A.

Useful contacts

If you would like further information on Ageing Well in Wales and how to become involved please contact:

Age Concern Cymru on **029 2043 1555**

Age Concern

For up to 5 free factsheets on a range of topics, ring Age Concern Information Line: **0800 00 99 66** (freephone) 7 days a week from 7am – 7pm.



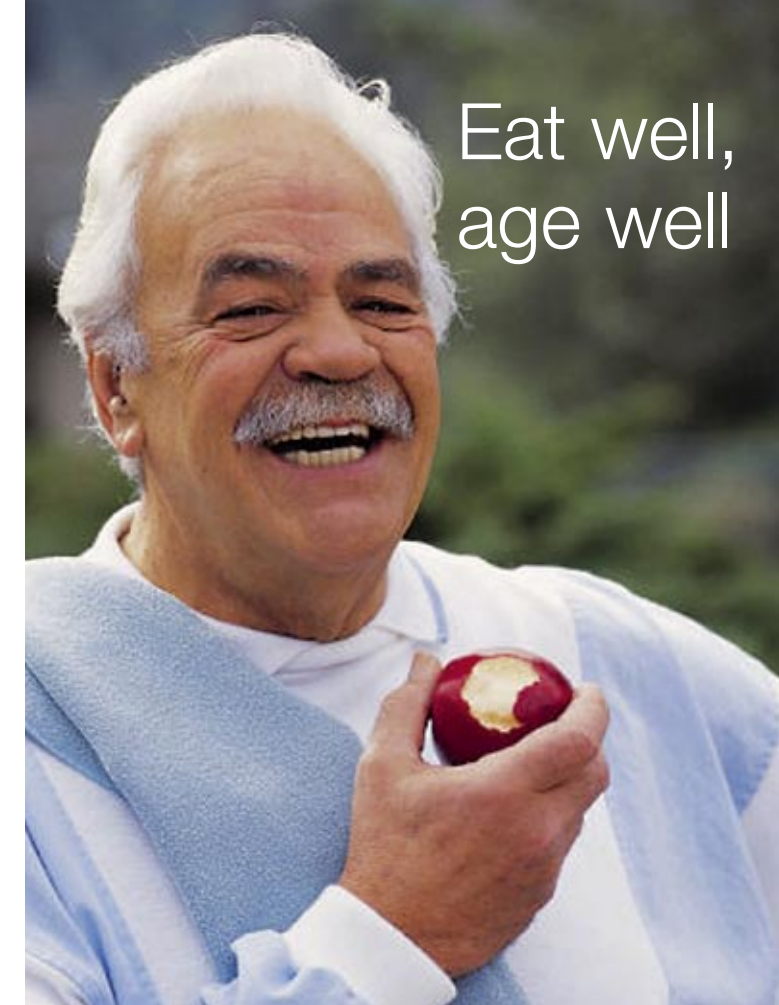
www.eatwell.co.uk

With grateful thanks to the
ActivAge Unit Age Concern England.
Supported by the
Welsh Assembly Government

Age Concern Cymru Registered Charity No. 505071



Eat well,
age well



AGE
Concern

Ageing Well in Wales
Heneiddio'n Dda yng Nghymru

Eating a varied and balanced diet is important for everyone. This leaflet gives some ideas on how making small changes to your diet can help you to stay healthy and active.

www.accymru.org.uk

Leaflet also available in Welsh
from Age Concern Cymru

Eating well

Eating well is a positive choice to make. Even though many people think that they are eating a healthy diet, most people in the UK don't eat enough fruit and vegetables and fibre, and eat too much sugar, salt and fat, especially saturated fat.

Of course it is important to enjoy your food and to remember that variety is the spice of life. Eating a wide variety of foods will help to ensure you get all of the nutrition that you need.



Healthy eating

Changing your diet so that you eat plenty of fruit and vegetables and foods that are high in fibre and low in sugar, salt and fat (especially saturated fat) can help to:

- Reduce your blood pressure
- Reduce your risk of heart disease
- Reduce your risk of stroke
- Reduce your risk of some types of cancer



What's more, watching what you eat – along with keeping active – can help to keep your weight healthy which can reduce the risk of developing many diseases. Being overweight as you grow older can affect your mobility, which can affect your quality of life.

It is also not a good idea to be underweight. This could mean that you're not eating enough food or that you're not well. If you are concerned about your weight, check with your GP. He or she may refer you to a dietitian, who can give you advice about changing what you eat to meet your current needs.

If you find that you are not enjoying the meals you used to eat try having smaller meals more frequently and eat nutritious snacks, for example some fresh or dried fruit or milky drinks, in between.

Eat more fruit and vegetables

We should all aim to eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day (in the UK most people eat less than 3 portions).

You can choose from fresh or frozen varieties, or dried fruit such as prunes or raisins. Canned varieties are also good, but try to buy fruit in natural juice, rather than syrup or sugar, and vegetables with no added salt or sugar.

One portion is, for example:

- One apple, orange or banana
- One heaped tablespoon of dried fruit
- A cupful of grapes, cherries or berries
- A dessert bowl of mixed salad
- Three heaped tablespoons of vegetables
- A glass of fruit or vegetable juice, however fruit juice only counts as one portion however much you drink
- A bowl of vegetable soup

Fruit and vegetables provide important minerals and vitamins, including folic acid (also found in brown rice, fortified bread and breakfast cereals), which help maintain good health in older age, and vitamin C, which may help you absorb iron.

Fruit and vegetables which are in season are often cheaper – so buying fresh needn't be expensive.

Eat less salt

We all need a small amount of salt in our diet, but most people have too much. On average, you should eat no more than 6g per day.

Many people suffer with high blood pressure as they get older; but high blood pressure generally has no visible symptoms. Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure and having high blood pressure triples the risk of having heart disease or a stroke. Cutting down on salt will help to reduce your blood pressure in weeks. When your blood pressure goes down, your risk of developing heart disease and stroke goes down too.

About 75% of the salt we eat is already in foods, so it is important to always read the food label. Foods such as some breads and breakfast cereals, bacon, processed meats, ready prepared meals, salted nuts and snacks contain a lot of salt. When you're shopping, try comparing the labels on similar foods – sometimes there can be a big difference in the amount of salt they contain. Try to avoid eating lots of foods that are high in salt, which means 1.25g salt (or 0.5g sodium) or more per 100g. Choose foods that are lower in salt, when you can.

If you add salt to your meals or use it when cooking, try to cut down on the amount you use. You could try seasoning with pepper or other



spices, or adding herbs to give your food extra flavour instead.