



Nutrition **Guidelines**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Improving the nutrition of our employees will underpin the goals set out in the Community Plan for “our health and well being”. It is recognised that there is a particular prevalence of diet related illness in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Nutritional Guidelines aim to assist in improving this problem by raising awareness amongst our employees of healthy eating regimes, empowering them to make healthy choices and to share this information with their families and friends in the local community.

2. AIM

To raise awareness amongst RCT employees of the benefits, of following healthy eating patterns and remaining a healthy weight.

3. OBJECTIVES

- a) Working closely with our Catering Services colleagues to maintain the following good practice, which is currently being provided:
 - To ensure that the healthy options are purchased from suppliers for example low fat mayonnaise, skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, low fat cheese etc.
 - To ensure that healthy cooking methods are favoured for example grilling and oven baked food rather than frying
 - To include the main elements of a healthy diet in foods offered for example: high fibre, low fat, low sugar and low salt alternatives
 - To promote healthy eating options and avoid increased prices in healthier food choices
 - To promote knowledge of the Eatwell plate
 - Ensure drinking water is supplied in all areas
- b) The Occupational Health Unit will:
 - Offer information and advice on healthy eating and weight control during lifestyle screening
 - Promote healthy eating in conjunction with National Theme days
 - Offer opportunist advice during consultations at the OHU
 - Use opportunities to promote healthy eating and weight control in Newsletters and on the Intranet “what’s new page”

4. BACKGROUND TO HEALTHY EATING

It is generally recognised that there are no unhealthy foods, only unbalanced and therefore unhealthy diets. The Foods Standards Agency (FSA) had adopted “Eight guidelines for a healthy diet”:

- Enjoy your food
- Eat a variety of different foods
- Eat the right amount to be a healthy weight
- Eat plenty of foods rich in starch and fibre e.g. wholegrain bread and rice
- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Don't eat too many foods that contain a lot of saturated fats e.g. butter, oils, pastries etc but unsaturated fats e.g. oily fishes such as mackerel, tuna sardines etc.
- Don't have sugary foods and drinks too often and
- If you drink alcohol, drink sensibly and within your limits
- It's all about balance.....

5. FOR A HEALTHY BALANCED DIET, AIM FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- Eat at least 5 portions of different fruit and vegetables each day.

A portion could be an apple, some tomatoes, a small bunch of grapes or a glass of fruit juice. Tinned fruit and vegetables also count, make sure it is in natural juice and not sugar syrup.

- Eat more starchy foods, such as pasta, rice, potatoes, cereals and pulses (beans, peas and lentils). These should make up about a third of your diet
- Choose lean meat and trim off any visible fat and skin

6. BENEFITS OF HEALTHY EATING

The benefits of eating a balanced diet and maintaining a healthy weight are numerous, but in particular will:

- Help secure, maintain and improve general health
- Help reduce health risks associated with poor diet for example obesity, heart disease, diabetes, dental decay, anaemia and osteoporosis
- Protect future health
- Help towards the consumption of the right amount of vitamins and essential minerals

7. HEALTH PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH A POOR DIET AND UNHEALTHY WEIGHT GAIN:

- High blood pressure
- High blood sugar levels possibly leading to diabetes
- High cholesterol levels possibly leading to heart problems
- Painful joints e.g. ankles, knees and hips
- Increased risk of heart disease
- Increased risk of strokes

More minor problems include:

- General tiredness/lack of energy
- Poor immune system, being more prone to colds and minor infections
- Anaemia
- Dull appearance to skin, hair and nails

8. WHAT IS OVERWEIGHT?

There have many ways of determining average recommended weight and the one that most people are now familiar with is the Body Mass Index known as BMI. The desirable BMI range is 19-24.9 but consideration should be given to muscle mass and gender. A BMI of 25-29 is overweight whilst more than 30 is obese and more than 40 is morbidly obese and in danger of causing a health problem.

A simpler way of monitoring your weight is by waist measurement. A waist measurement in excess of 37 inches for a man puts you at a health risk, whilst more than 32 inches for a woman puts you at a health risk. The higher the waist measurement, the more chance of having a serious health problem.

9. EATING FOR WEIGHT LOSS:

Once you have decided to loose weight, there are many clubs and organisations that offer help and assistance but some basic facts are helpful.

Fact 1: It is not individual foods or drinks that result in weight gain or prevent you from losing weight but the overall calorie (or energy) intake from these foods and drinks in your diet. To lose weight you have to take in less energy than you burn up.

Fact 2: Research has shown that the best way to lose weight and keep it off is by combining a healthy, reduced calorie intake with doing more regular exercise/physical activity.

Fact 3: Steady weight loss is favourable to the rapid weight loss often associated with fad diets. This is because fad diets do not teach you lifelong messages about healthy balanced diets and you are therefore more likely to return to your old bad habits.

Fact 4: Cutting calories by 500 a day can lead to a weight loss of around 1lb (0.5kg) per week.

Daily guideline amounts of calories and fats:

Daily guideline amounts for those who are a healthy weight

	Men	Women
Calories	2500	2000
Fat (g)	95	70

Daily guideline amounts for those wishing to lose weight

	Men	Women
Calories	1800	1500
Fat (g)	60-70	50-60

10. REMEMBER ALCOHOL INTAKE

Most people enjoy a drink and there is no reason why you shouldn't have an occasional drink while following a healthy diet. Remember though that alcoholic drinks add to the calorie intake but are low on nourishment and also act as an appetite stimulant encouraging you to snack on high fat crisps and nibbles and worse still a late night takeaway. Keep within the safe limits of no more than 14 units per week as a woman or 21 units a week as a man. One unit = one small can of bitter beer, lager or cider or just one third of a pint of strong ale or premium lager. One small glass of wine is one unit but a large pub measure of wine of 250mls provides 2½ units of alcohol. One pub measure

of spirits = one unit of alcohol but the calorie content can be increased significantly if a normal mixer is used rather than the low sugar version.

11. FOR A HEALTHY BALANCED DIET, AIM FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- Eat at least 5 portions of different fruit and vegetables each day. A portion could be an apple, some tomatoes, a small bunch of grapes or a glass of fruit juice. Tinned or frozen fruit and vegetables also count.
- Eat more starch foods, such as pasta, rice, potatoes, cereals and pulses e.g. beans, peas and lentils. These should make up about a third of your diet.
- Choose lean meat and trim off any visible fat and skin.
- Try to eat fish twice a week, including one portion of oily fish such as mackerel or sardines.
- Reduce the amount of sugar and salt in your diet. Be aware of any added salt or sugar in processed foods such as ready meals.

12. TOP TIPS FOR HEALTHY WORK HABITS

- Make time for regular balanced meals including breakfast.
- Be more active more often; build up to 10,000 steps per day as recommended by the British heart Foundation. Steps can be measured by wearing a pedometer, purchased from any good sport shop. As a guide an average office worker walks approx 4,000 steps per day without any additional exercise.
- Increase your intake of vegetable and fruit portions
- Make healthier choices at break times
- Reduce your intake of high calorie foods and drinks such as crisps and fizzy drinks.

13. TOP TIPS FOR ALL BUT SPECIFICALLY SHIFT WORKERS

- Eat regular smaller meals and planned snacks rather than continuous snacking throughout your shift. Have a mid-shift break preferably with colleagues to take time to enjoy your food.
- If not available at work, bring in healthy snacks such as fresh fruit, pots of low fat yoghurt and rice pudding. Don't forget canned fruit counts too, make sure it is in natural juice and not sugar syrup.

- Caffeine can help keep you alert but too much caffeine can interfere with sleep and digestion, aim for no more than three cups of coffee or five cups of tea and not near your bed time.
- Stay as active as you can include moving around as much as you can at work.
- Take a walk, change your task or do some deep breathing if you feel tired or clumsy.
- Try taking a nap during breaks if your working environment permits.
- If you sleep during daylight hours ensure your bedroom is as dark and quiet as possible. Try earplugs and eyeshades.
- Think positive, if shift work is something you need or choose to do then look for the pros as well as the cons. Talk to people who have established routines that work for them.

Need more support?

Useful contacts include:

- The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit Tel no: (01443) 494003
- Weight management advice written by dieticians www.bdaweightwise.com
- British Heart Foundation www.bhfactive.org.uk
- Food Standards agency www.eatwell.gov.uk
- Catering Services Tel no: (01443) 744155