



HSE Mental Health Services

Roscommon Mental Health

Nutrition and Dietetics Department

Healthy Eating / Weight Management

Treatment Guidelines

***General healthy eating
recommendations for gradual
healthy rate of weight loss.***

1. Regular meals

- Aim for 3 meals and 2 healthy snacks daily.
- Use the food pyramid as a guide to healthy eating to plan meals and snacks.

2. Portions matters

- Use the food pyramid as a guide for serving sizes. Portion size matters for counting calories.

- Half plate at meals should comprise of fruit, vegetables or salad which are low in calories and high in fibre which aids feeling of fullness. One quarter of the plate to comprise of starchy food (e.g. bread, potatoes, rice, pasta, noodles, crackers etc.), and one quarter protein source (e.g. meat, chicken, fish, eggs, legumes/pulses, protein-substitute etc.).

3. Vegetables, salad and fruit

- Eat more fruit and vegetables, up to 7 servings a day. The foods in this shelf can help control body weight as part of a healthy lifestyle and contain nutrients that protect against heart disease and cancer.
- Enjoy a variety of coloured fruit and vegetables to benefit from the different minerals and vitamins each contains.
- Aim for 1/2 your plate to be fruit/vegetables/salad at each meal.

4. Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

- Wholemeal/high fibre/brown varieties of breads, cereals and potatoes provide the best energy for the body to work. The amount of energy you need depends on your physical

activity levels. Adults watching their weight will need less.

- Portion guide - Use a 200ml disposable plastic cup to guide portion size for breakfast cereals, cooked rice and pasta.

5. Milk, yogurt and cheese

- These foods provide valuable calcium, protein, and other nutrients, and are important to include.
- Low-fat options provide the same amount of calcium and other nutrients with fewer calories and saturated fat so they are a good choice to aid weight loss.

6. Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

- Limit processed salty meats such as sausages, bacon, ham and salami as these are usually much higher in fat than lean fresh meat.
- Lean meat is best. Remove skin from poultry and visible fat from meat for the healthier option.
- Use low-fat cooking methods such as grilling, baking, steaming or boiling. Cook without fat or oil to keep calorie intake low.
- Portion guide - The palm of the hand, width and depth without fingers and thumbs, shows how much meat, poultry and fish you need in a day.

7. Fats and oils

- All types of fats and oils are very high in calories but some contain better fats than others.
- Reduced-fat spreads are lower in calories as they contain less fat and more water. Choose mono or polyunsaturated reduced-fat or light spreads.
- Saturated fats, found in hard animal fats, raise blood cholesterol and can increase risk of heart disease.
- Good essential fats are found in vegetable oils, including rapeseed, olive, canola, sunflower and corn oils. Always cook with as little fat or oil as possible – measure it out instead of pouring into the pan.
- Limit mayonnaise, coleslaw and salad dressings as they also contain oil. Choose lower fat options and use smaller amounts.
- Portion guide - Portion packs of reduced-fat spread found in cafes can guide the amount you use. One should be enough for two slices of bread.

8. Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt

- There are no recommended servings for this shelf because they are not needed for good

health. Not every day – maximum once or twice a week.

- Many processed foods like cakes, biscuits, confectionery, takeaways and ready meals contain high levels of added sugars and fat, and can be high in calories.
- These foods have little nutritional value and may cause obesity which can lead to heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.
- Portion guide - Limit foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt to sometimes – not every day. Choose smaller amounts or fun-size servings.
- Limit chips and takeaway food as much as possible – most are very high in fat, salt and calories.
- Choose healthy snacks such as fruit and vegetables.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

9. Get Active

To be healthy you need regular physical activity.

- To maintain a healthy weight, adults need at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on 5 days a week or 150 minutes a week.
- Moderate activity is any activity that causes your heart to beat slightly faster and your breathing to become noticeably

heavier without feeling out of breath. Examples include brisk walking and cycling slower than 10mph.

- Vigorous activity is any activity that causes a big increase in heart rate and your breathing becomes much faster and deeper leaving you feeling out of breath and sweaty. Examples include running and sports such as football or basketball.