

Taste Buds

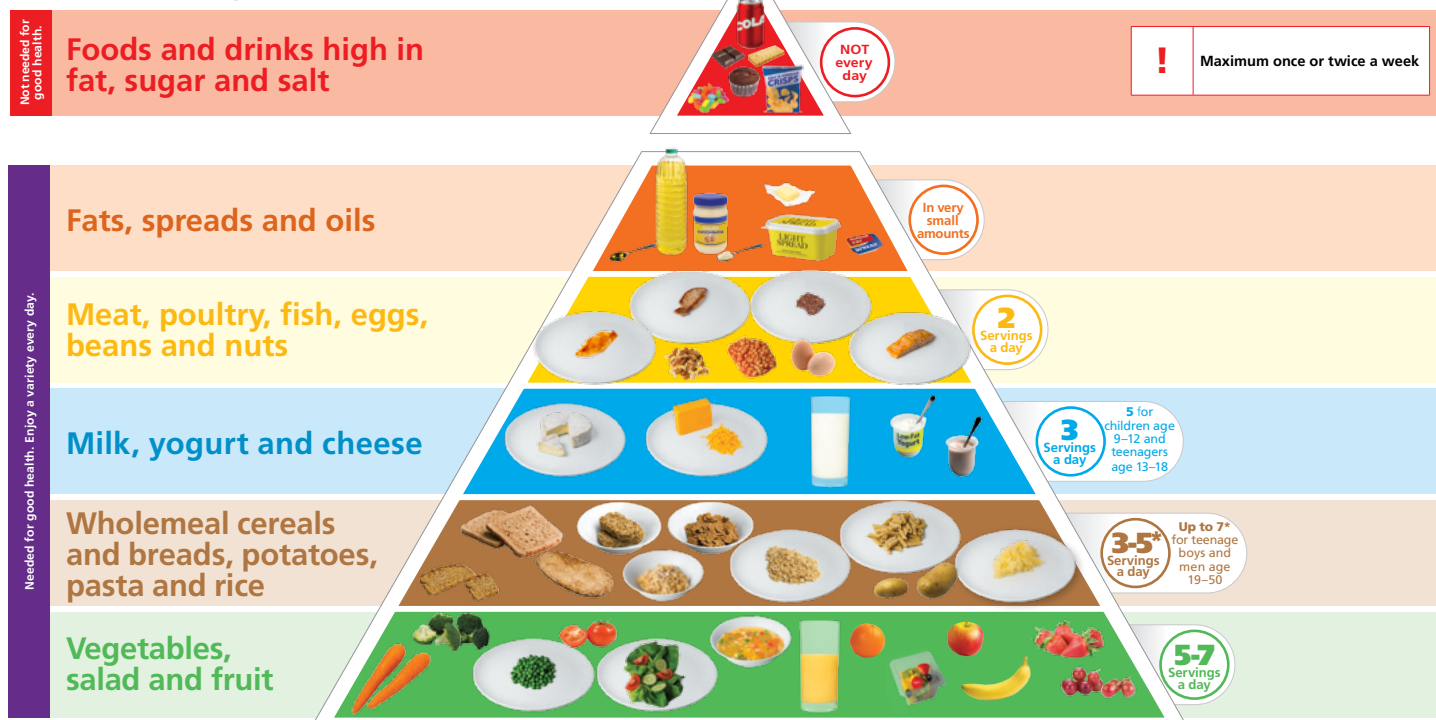
Understanding the Food Pyramid

The Food Pyramid is designed to make healthy eating easier. Healthy eating is about getting the correct amount of nutrients – the protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals you need to maintain good health.



The Food Pyramid

For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over



Foods that contain the same type of nutrients are grouped together on each of the shelves of the Food Pyramid. This gives you a choice of different foods from which to choose a healthy diet.

Following the Food Pyramid as a guide will help you get the right balance of nutritious foods within your Calorie range. Kilojoules and kilocalories are both measures (units) of the amount of energy in food. The correct term for what we commonly call 'calories' is kilojoules (kJ) or kilocalories (kcal).

Studies show that we take in too many kJ/kcal from foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt on the top shelf of the Food Pyramid. They provide very little of the essential vitamins and minerals your body needs. Limiting foods from the top shelf is essential for healthy eating.

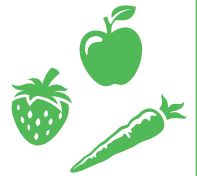
So in a nutshell, healthy eating involves:

- Plenty of bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and cereals – going for the wholegrain varieties whenever you can
- Plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Some milk, cheese and yogurt – choose lower fat varieties where possible
- Some meat, poultry, eggs, beans and nuts – choose lower fat varieties where possible
- A very small amount of fats and oils
- Most people consume snacks high in fat, sugar and salt and sugar sweetened drinks up to 6 times a day (Healthy Ireland Survey 2016). There are no recommended servings for Top Shelf foods and drinks because they are not needed for good health.

Vegetables, salad and fruit

Fruit and vegetables provide fibre. They also provide many important vitamins and minerals and are low in energy value (kJ/kcal).

Fresh, local fruit and vegetables in season are best and can be very good value. Eat a variety of coloured fruit and vegetables – green, yellow, orange, red and purple – in order to benefit from the variety of vitamins and minerals provided by each colour group. Include a vitamin c rich fruit each day such as an orange. If you have juice or smoothies have just a small glass and no more than once a day



Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

Foods in this shelf are the best energy providers for your body, so the more active you are the more you need. Wholegrain breads, high fibre cereals - especially porridge, potatoes, wholemeal pasta and brown rice are the best as they are high in fibre.

So try out brown rice, wholemeal pasta and wholegrain bread instead of white rice white pasta and white bread. Wholegrain breakfast cereals (including porridge) and baked potatoes eaten with their skins are great for fibre too.



Milk, yogurt and cheese

Milk yogurt and cheese provide calcium, needed for healthy bones and teeth. Some foods on this shelf, especially full fat cheese, can be high in saturated fat, so choose lower fat varieties where possible.

When choosing foods from this shelf, have milk and yogurt more often than cheese. Milk is a great drink to keep up your fluid intake.



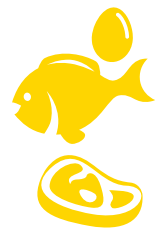
Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

Much of the protein in your diet comes from foods on this shelf. To maintain a healthy and varied diet, you should:

- Go for a variety of choices
- Choose lean meat and skinless chicken
- Limit processed meats such as bacon or ham, because these are high in fat and salt
- Have fish at least twice a week and oily fish at least once a week.

You do not need large amounts of meat and poultry to satisfy your nutritional needs.

Iron rich foods such as red meat and egg yolks are important for children. Other good sources of protein are beans and peas when eaten with wholegrain breads rice or pasta.



Fats, spreads and oils

Spreads and oils provide essential fats but these are only needed in very small amounts. Choose lower fat and reduced fat spreads and oils such as rapeseed or olive oil instead of hard margarine, lard or butter.

Mayonnaise and oil based salad dressing also count towards you intake. Choose lower fat varieties where possible.



Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt

Foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt should be avoided. There are no recommended serving for this group because they are not essential.

Don't eat from this shelf every day, just once or twice a week and in very small amounts.



Fluids

It's important to drink lots of healthy fluids. Drink at least 8 glasses a day of water and lower-fat milks.

Avoid sugary drinks. Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.

