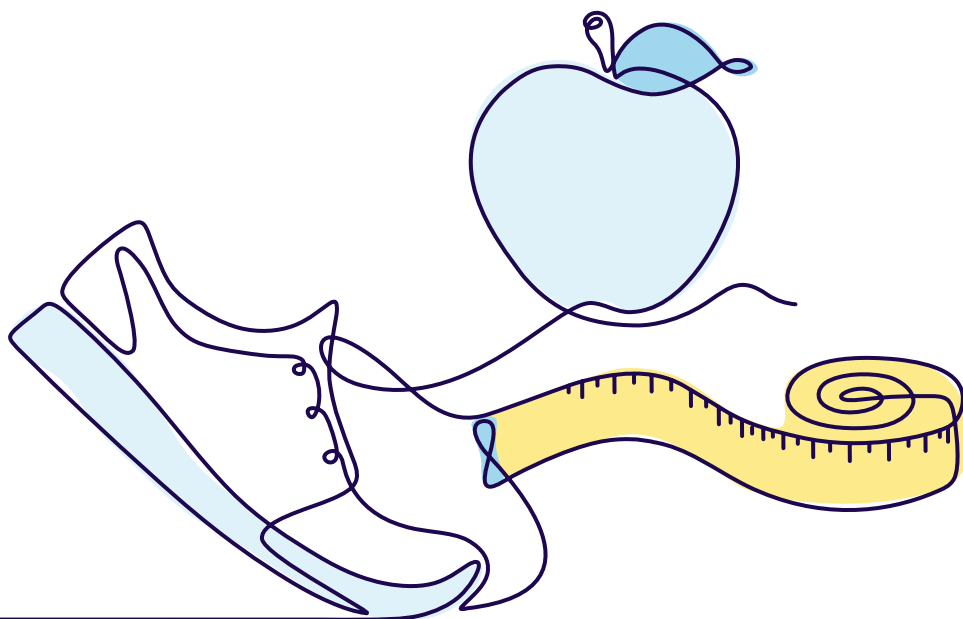


WEIGHT MATTERS

Keeping healthy in an unhealthy world



DEAR READER,

Thank you for choosing this copy of World Cancer Research Fund's Weight Matters.

Whether this is your first time trying to lose weight, have tried to lose weight before or you are looking to maintain your weight, congratulations on taking this step.

We have strong scientific evidence that living with overweight or obesity increases your risk of at least 13 types of cancer and increases your risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes. While modern life can make it harder to manage your weight, there are changes you can make to improve your health.

By following the tips and advice in this guide, you will be on your way to a healthier you and reduce your cancer risk. I hope it helps you make positive changes today.


Feel free to share this guide with your family and friends to spread the message of cancer prevention.

Yours faithfully,

Rachael Gormley

CEO

World Cancer Research Fund

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachael Gormley". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

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WHY DOES WEIGHT MATTER?

Many things can affect your weight, like your genes, health conditions, medications, where you live, what you eat and how much physical activity you do. It is important to try to keep to a weight that is healthy for you.

Being a healthy weight has many great health benefits such as helping you sleep better, giving you more energy and reducing your risk of developing at least 13 types of cancer, heart disease and type 2 diabetes. However, almost 2 in 3 people in the UK are living with overweight or obesity.



WHY IS LOSING WEIGHT CHALLENGING?

Losing weight can be challenging, especially with so many factors working against us. Today, we are constantly surrounded by temptations like fast food and convenient snacks, making it easy to lose track of healthy eating habits.

Advertising and promotions often focus on less healthy options, which can be hard to resist – especially with the rising cost of living making budget-friendly, healthier choices harder to find.

Social gatherings often revolve around food and drinks, adding to the challenge of sticking to healthier options. On top of that, our busy and stressful lifestyles can make it difficult to find time for physical activity, which is important to maintain a healthy weight.



Genetics also play a role in our risk of living with overweight or obesity. While some people may be more likely to gain weight, it is important to remember that healthy changes, no matter how small, can still make a big difference to your overall health.

Understanding these challenges can help you take control and make healthier choices. It is about taking it one step at a time – like making healthier changes to your diet and finding ways to be more physically active, which you can learn more about in this guide.

ARE YOU A HEALTHY WEIGHT?

Your weight is unique to you and can vary over time. What matters most is that you are at a weight that is healthy for you. Below are measures that can help you determine if you are a healthy weight for your height and whether you are at a higher health risk.



Calculating your Body Mass Index (BMI) is a simple way to check if you are a healthy weight for your height.


To calculate your BMI:

- Measure your height in **metres**.
- Weigh yourself in **kilograms**.
- Divide your weight by your height. Then divide your answer by your height again to work out your BMI.

Or use our online BMI calculator: wcrf.org/bmi-calculator

BODY MASS INDEX

Look at the table below to see if you are a healthy weight for your height, based on your BMI:

	White European background	Asian, Black or Middle-Eastern background
Underweight	BMI < 18.5	BMI < 18.5
Healthy weight	BMI 18.5–24.9	BMI 18.5–22.9
Overweight	BMI 25–29.9	BMI 23–27.4
Obese	BMI 30 or more	BMI 27.5 or more

BMI may not be a useful measure of a healthy weight for pregnant women, older adults, very muscular people or those shorter than 1.5m (5ft).



If your BMI is below 18.5, this puts you in the underweight range which is not good for your health either. Please speak to your doctor for help and advice.



WAIST MEASUREMENT

Measuring your waist is an easy way to check if you have too much fat around your middle. Extra fat can build up around your organs and can increase your risk of health issues, like some types of cancer. Even if your BMI is healthy, your waist size can help show if you might be at higher risk.

To measure your waist:

- 1 Stand or sit up straight.
- 2 Wrap a measuring tape around your waist at the narrowest point between your rib and hip bone. If unsure, lean to one side to see where the skin folds.
- 3 Ensure the tape is level and snug, but not tight.
- 4 Breathe normally and measure after you breathe out.

A healthy waist measurement is less than:

- **Women:** 80 cm (31.5 inches)
- **Men of South Asian background:** 90 cm (35.5 inches)
- **Men of White European and other ethnic backgrounds:** 94 cm (37 inches)



A higher measurement might mean your weight is impacting your health. To reduce your health risk, aim to keep the size of your waist to less than half of your height.



If you have concerns about your weight, speak to your doctor or nurse about local services for support.

UNDERSTANDING WEIGHT CHANGES

Your weight is influenced by the balance between the calories you take in from what you eat and drink, and the calories your body burns from being physically active.



In general, an average adult woman needs around 2,000 calories a day, and an average adult man needs around 2,500 calories a day.

How can weight change happen?

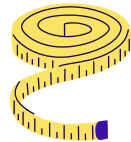
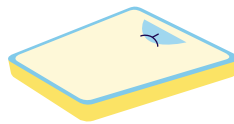
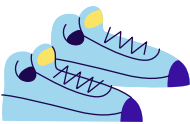
- If you eat more calories than your body burns, the extra energy is stored as fat, which can lead to weight gain.
- If you burn more calories than you eat, your body uses stored fat for energy, which can lead to weight loss.
- To maintain your weight, aim to balance the calories you eat with the calories you burn. If weight loss is your goal, try to burn more calories by keeping active and being mindful of your food choices.



HEALTHY WEIGHT LOSS

If you want to lose weight, it is important to do it in a healthy way.

A healthy and realistic goal is to aim to lose around 0.5 to 2 pounds (0.2–0.9kg) every week. For most people, this means eating around 200–500 fewer calories every day. Once you reach your weight loss goal, it is just as important to maintain your weight. You can do this by making healthy changes to your diet and in particular, being more physically active.



FAD DIETS

If you are trying to lose weight, it is best to avoid a ‘fad’ diet. A fad diet typically involves eating very little food or only certain types of food. They usually promise quick weight loss but lack strong scientific evidence. When you go back to eating normally, the weight you have lost often comes back quickly, and you might gain even more weight.

These diets can leave you tired and lacking energy too because you may not get enough important nutrients. Because of this, they often cannot be followed for a long time and may not be good for your health in the long term.

Instead of following a fad diet, it is better to eat a healthy, balanced diet that you can stick to in the long term and that includes food you enjoy.



HEALTHY EATING FOR A HEALTHY WEIGHT



Our research shows that the following can help you maintain a healthy weight:

- Eating foods high in fibre like fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds, pulses (like beans, chickpeas and lentils) and wholegrain varieties of bread, rice and pasta.
- Eating a 'Mediterranean type' diet filled with high-fibre foods, unsaturated fats (a type of fat you should eat more of) like those found in olive and rapeseed oil, fish and a small amount of meat and dairy.

Equally, our research shows that the following can increase the risk of weight gain:

- Drinking sugary drinks like cola, sweetened milk drinks and too much fruit juice.
- Eating fast food like fried chicken and chips, and high-calorie drinks like milkshakes.
- Eating a 'Western-type' diet which includes a lot of meat, sugar, salt and saturated fat (a type of fat you should eat less of), and is typically low in fruit and vegetables.



It is important to remember there are no “good” or “bad” foods – just ones to eat more of, like fruit and vegetables, and others to eat less of, like foods high in fat, sugar and salt. You do not have to give up all your favourites, but try to focus on healthier choices most of the time.

WHAT IS A HEALTHY MEAL MADE UP OF?

A healthy meal provides a balanced of nutrients, bringing together a variety of foods from different groups – like fruit, vegetables, pulses, wholegrain carbohydrates and lean proteins.



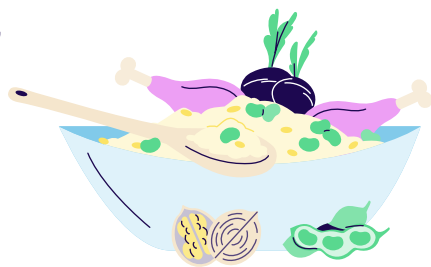
For simple, healthy recipes visit our website at wcrf-uk.org/recipes

Fill a $\frac{3}{4}$ or more of your plate with vegetables, fruit, pulses and wholegrains:

- **Vegetables and fruit** – fresh, frozen, dried or tinned in water or natural juices.
- **Pulses** – like beans, chickpeas and lentils.
- **Wholegrains** – like brown rice, wholewheat pasta, wholemeal bread and high-fibre breakfast cereals such as shredded wheat and oats.

Fill a $\frac{1}{4}$ or less of your plate with plant-based protein, eggs, dairy and lean meat like chicken, turkey and fish:

- **Plant-based protein sources** – like tofu, tempeh, soy chunks, nuts, seeds and pulses.
- **Poultry** – like skinless chicken and turkey.
- **Non-oily fish** – like cod, tilapia and tinned tuna (in spring water).
- **Oily fish** – like salmon, sardines, snapper and mackerel.
- **Eggs and dairy products** – like lower-fat milk, cheese, yoghurt and unsweetened plant-based dairy alternatives such as soy.



Red meat is a good source of protein and other nutrients, but it is best to limit to three portions a week and to avoid processed meats altogether. Eating too much red meat and any amount of processed meat can increase the risk of bowel cancer.

MAKING HEALTHIER FOOD CHOICES

Making healthier food choices can have a big impact on your health and weight.



EAT MORE FOODS CONTAINING FIBRE

Fibre is a type of carbohydrate found in a variety of plant-based foods like fruit, vegetables, pulses, wholegrains, nuts and seeds. Eating fibre can help you feel satisfied and full on fewer calories, which can help you maintain a healthy weight. Fibre also keeps your gut healthy and your bowel movements regular.



It is recommended to eat 30g of fibre a day.

You can achieve this by:

- Eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day.
- Keeping the skin on fruit, vegetables and potatoes.
- Adding vegetables and pulses to dishes like stews, soups and salads.
- Choosing high-fibre cereals like shredded wheat and oats for breakfast.
- Switching to wholegrain varieties of bread, pasta, rice and flour.
- Snacking on high-fibre foods like unsalted popcorn or a small handful of unsalted nuts.

Find out more in our fibre factsheet:
wcrf.org/fibre-factsheet



CHOOSE HEALTHIER FATS

Fat is an important nutrient for your health. It helps your body absorb certain vitamins and keeps your brain and heart healthy. However, having too much of the wrong type of fat in your diet can be bad for your health. There are two main types of fat – saturated and unsaturated fat.

Saturated fat is found in animal foods like meat and dairy, and foods made from them like cakes, biscuits and pastries. They are also found in coconut and palm oil. Eating too much can increase your risk of obesity, heart disease and stroke.

Unsaturated fat is found in plant-based foods like nuts, seeds, avocado, plant oils like rapeseed and olive oil, and oily fish like salmon and herring. This type of fat can reduce your risk of heart disease and can fit into a healthy, balanced diet.



However, all types of fat are high in calories so eating too much can make it easier to eat more calories than you need. Over time, this can lead to weight gain so you should have all types of fat in moderation.

Here are some tips to help manage how much fat you have:

- Use vegetable oils instead of butter or ghee. Be mindful of how much oil you use when cooking by measuring it out with a spoon or using an oil spray.
- Choose lower-fat versions of milk, cheese, yoghurt, dairy alternatives, mayonnaise and houmous.
- Use healthier cooking methods like steaming, grilling, baking and boiling instead of frying.
- Choose lean meat like fish and skinless chicken. Trim off any visible fat.

LIMIT FAST FOOD AND PROCESSED FOOD HIGH IN FAT, SUGAR AND SALT

We all enjoy crisps, biscuits, chocolate and fast food like fried chicken. But having them too often or in big portions can lead to weight gain since they are high in calories, fat, sugar and salt. To help you achieve a healthier weight, only enjoy these foods now and then.



One way to cut back on these foods is by planning your meals and snacks for the week. Cooking at home gives you healthier choices and helps you avoid unhealthier snacks or takeaways.



Here are some simple, healthier swaps that you can make:

Swap from	Swap to
Crisps, biscuits, cake bars, muffins and chocolate	Plain popcorn, unsalted nuts, oat cakes, fresh or dried fruit, vegetable sticks with lower-fat houmous
Flavoured yoghurt and pudding pots	Lower-fat natural yoghurt with fresh or frozen fruit
Store bought fruit juices and smoothies	Water with sugar-free squash or a homemade smoothie with fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables
Sugary cereals	Wholegrain cereal like shredded wheat and oats
Pastries, toast with sugary spreads and cereal bars	Wholegrain toast or crackers with banana, nut butter, cucumber, lower-fat houmous or lower-fat cheese
Fried chicken, chips, burgers and pizza	Homemade versions of your favourite fast food
Ketchup, mayonnaise, gravy	Herbs, spices or reduced salt and sugar sauces

LIMIT SUGAR-SWEETENED DRINKS

It is easy to overlook the calories in drinks. Sugary drinks like cola, energy drinks, lemonade and flavoured milks are high in sugar and calories but low in nutrients your body needs. Drinking them often can add extra calories without filling you up, leading to weight gain over time.

Instead, it's better to:

- Pick water as your go-to drink. Add sugar-free squash, lemon or cucumber for added flavour.
- Swap sugary soft drinks with drinks that have no added sugar.
- Limit fruit juice, vegetable juice or smoothies to 150ml (a small glass). You can also dilute fruit juice with sparkling water.
- Choose lower-fat versions of milk.
- Choose less milky coffees like espresso, americano or cappuccino without added sugar or honey.
- Choose herbal or fruit teas that come in a variety of flavours but avoid adding sugar.



LIMIT ALCOHOL

For many of us, drinking alcohol has become a normal part of our daily lives, whether it is a beer after work or a glass of wine with dinner. However, it increases the risk of 7 types of cancer and is high in calories without providing any essential nutrients. If you choose to drink, it is recommended to drink **no more than 14 units a week** spread over three or more days. To drink less alcohol, you can:

- Alternate alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic ones like sugar-free drinks or water.
- Choose smaller glasses or measures of wine, beer and spirits.
- Dilute your drinks – for example, a small wine spritzer with soda water rather than a large glass of wine.
- Avoid keeping alcohol at home, as it can make you more likely to have a drink.
- Choose low-alcohol or alcohol-free alternatives like mocktails and non-alcoholic beer, wine and cider. Choose sugar-free and low salt versions where possible.

One pint of
normal strength
beer, lager or
cider is 2 units



One small
125ml glass
of wine is
1.5 units



One 25ml
measure of spirits
such as vodka or
whiskey is 1 unit



To find out how many calories there are in alcoholic drinks, try our alcohol calorie calculator: wcrf.org/alcohol-calculator

Find out more in our alcohol factsheet:
wcrf.org/alcohol-factsheet



GET FAMILIAR WITH PORTION SIZES

You can put on weight when you eat and drink more calories than your body needs, regardless of how healthy the food or drink is. That is why it is important to learn what healthy portion sizes look like for different food groups:

Fruit and vegetables

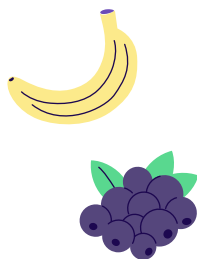
Aim to include a variety of at least five portions a day.
One portion is around 80g.

Vegetables



- 1 whole carrot, sweet potato, parsnip
- 4 tablespoons cooked pak choi, spinach, okra, squash
- 8 florets or pieces broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower

Fruits



- 1 medium apple, banana, orange
- 1–2 handfuls blueberries, pomegranate seeds
- 1 slice papaya, melon, pineapple
- 1 tablespoon dates, dried fruit like cranberries and raisins – eat at mealtimes, not as a between-meal snack, to reduce the risk of tooth decay

Juices and smoothies

150ml of unsweetened fruit or vegetable juice or smoothie.

Find out more about 5 A DAY portion sizes at wcrf.org/5ADAYportion-poster



Starchy carbohydrates

Eat 3–4 portions a day. Where possible, choose wholegrain varieties.

Pasta
and rice



75g or two handfuls
(uncooked)

Bread



2 medium slices

Breakfast cereal
like shredded wheat
or oats



40g or about
3 handfuls

Protein foods

Eat 2–3 portions a day. Choose plant-based protein and lean meat. Eat no more than 3 portions of red meat per week and avoid processed meat.

Pulses
beans, chickpeas and lentils



120g or 3 heaped tablespoons
(soaked or drained tinned pulses)

Soya, tofu and meat
alternatives



90–100g or use serving
size on package instructions

Eggs



2 medium-sized eggs

White and oily fish



140g or about the size of
your palm (cooked weight)

Meat and poultry
like chicken and turkey



80g or about the size of a
deck of cards (cooked weight)

Dairy and fortified dairy alternatives

Have 2–3 portions a day.

Choose lower-fat versions where possible.

Milk and alternatives
almond, oat and rice



200ml or 1 glass

Cheese



30g or about the size
of two thumbs

Yoghurt



125g or one standard pot

Unsaturated oils and spreads

Use in small amounts – measure out with a spoon or use an oil spray.

Vegetables oil like rapeseed,
sunflower and olive oil



15ml or 1 teaspoon

Spreads



5g or 1 teaspoon

Find out more about healthy portion sizes at
wcrf.org/portion-poster



READ FOOD LABELS

Most packaged food and drinks have a nutrition label on the back or side of the pack, which shows you how much energy (calories), and nutrients like fat, saturated fat, carbohydrate, sugar, fibre, protein and salt (sodium) a product has. It is typically broken down per 100g and per serving.



Reading food labels can help you know how many calories and what nutrients are in each serving. It also allows you to compare similar products and makes it easier to choose healthier options.

Some packaged food and drinks also have a traffic light label on the front of the package that shows if the food or drink is **high (red)**, **medium (amber)** or **low (green)** in fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt in each serving.



Choose foods with more greens and fewer reds to help you make healthier choices when shopping.

ENERGY
460 KJ
110 KCAL
6%

FAT
0.7G
LOW
1%

SATURATES
0.1G
LOW
1%

SUGARS
5.1G
HIGH
6%

SALT
0.2G
MED
3%

Find out below what green, amber and red means on a traffic light label:

Green – have regularly

The food or drink has low amounts of fat, saturated fat, sugar or salt per serving.

If a food or drink has all or mostly greens, it is likely to be a healthier choice and you can have it more often or in larger amounts.

Amber – have sometimes

The food or drink has a moderate amount of fat, saturated fat, sugar or salt per serving.

Amber means a food or drink is neither especially high nor low in a nutrient (fat, saturates, sugar or salt) so you can have foods and drinks with all, or mostly, ambers quite often.

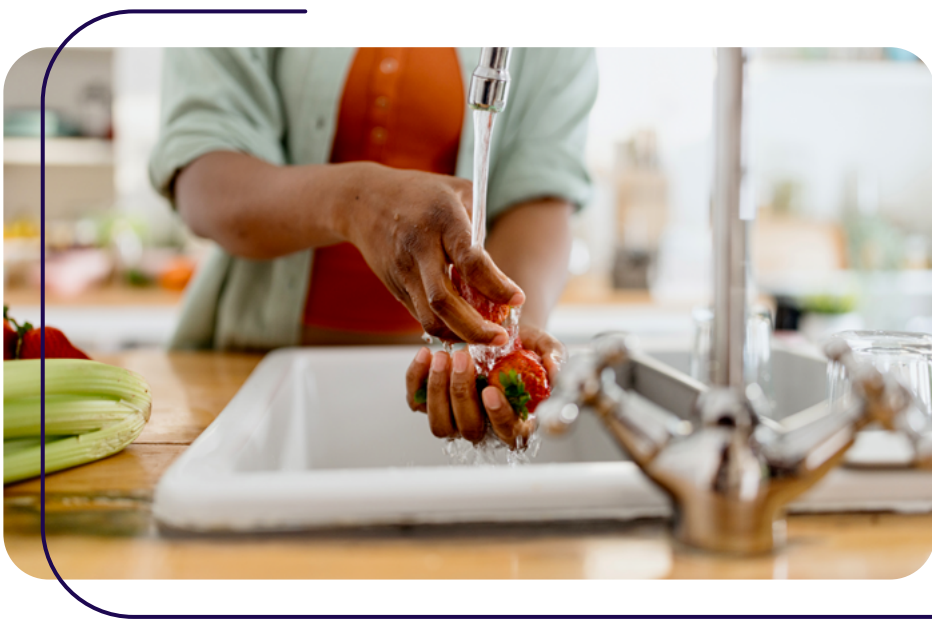
Red – have less often and in small amounts

The food or drink has a high amount of fat, saturated fat, sugar or salt per serving.

The more reds on a front-of-pack label, the less healthy the food or drink is likely to be. Try to have these less often or only in small amounts.

CREATING A HEALTHY HOME ENVIRONMENT

With fast food and unhealthier snacks always within easy reach, making healthier choices can feel challenging – but it is okay to enjoy these foods now and then. The goal is to eat a healthy, balanced diet most of the time.



A great place to start is right at home, where you have control over your environment and can set yourself up for success in reaching your health goals.

Taking control of what you eat at home can have a big impact on your health and weight.

FOOD SHOPPING

Planning your weekly food shop is a great way to control the types of food you have at home and what you cook. Here are some tips to consider when planning your shop:

- **Plan your weekly meals:** Before shopping at the supermarket or online, plan your meals and snacks for the upcoming week. This helps you stick to your plan and make healthier choices.
- **Make a shopping list:** Based on your meal plan, write down everything you will need based on your meal plan for the week. Sticking to a list saves you time, money and keeps you on track with healthy choices.
- **Avoid shopping when hungry:** Heading to the store after a meal or snack can make a big difference. When you are not hungry, it is easier to stick to your list and make choices you will feel good about later. You will be less tempted by quick, less healthy options too.
- **Shop the outer sections first:** In many supermarkets, you will find fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables, bread, chicken, fish and dairy around the outside of the store. It is a good idea to start your shopping in these sections because these foods are what make up a healthy, balanced diet.
- **Read the food label:** Compare the food and traffic light label on similar products to help you pick the healthier option.



YOUR SHOPPING LIST OF ESSENTIALS

Use this list as a guide to create your own shopping list of essential ingredients to keep at home to make healthy, balanced meals and snacks throughout the week.

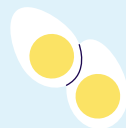
Food for the cupboard

- **Tinned fruit and vegetables** (in water or juice)
- **Dried or tinned pulses** like beans, chickpeas and lentils
- **Dried fruit, nuts and seeds**
- **Wholegrain** varieties of bread, pasta and rice
- **Tinned fish** (in spring water) like tuna
- **Garlic, ginger, herbs and spices**
- **Vegetable oils and sprays** like rapeseed, sunflower and olive varieties



Food for the fridge

- **Fresh vegetables** like tomatoes and broccoli
- **Fresh fruit** like apples and satsumas
- **Lower-fat milk, cheese and yoghurt** or plant-based alternatives like soy
- **Eggs**



Food for the freezer

- **Frozen fruit and vegetables** like berries, carrots and peas
- **Frozen chicken and fish**
- **Bread** – remember to freeze before its best before date



Remember to choose tinned products lower in salt and sugar, and avoid ones packaged in oil.

Remember when you go shopping to:

- **Fill your basket with a variety of colourful fruit and vegetables** as they are full of fibre, vitamins and minerals, and are low in calories, making them great for snacking and as part of your main meals. Frozen fruit and vegetables are budget-friendly, just as nutritious as fresh produce and have a longer shelf life. Stock up on these items to have healthy options available at all times.
- **Choose plant-based and lean protein sources** such as pulses (like beans, chickpeas and lentils), nuts, seeds, tofu, eggs, skinless chicken, turkey and fish. These options are lower in calories and saturated fat than red and processed meats. Oily fish and nuts can be high in calories, but in moderation, they are a valuable part of a healthy, balanced diet.
- **Choose lower-fat dairy and plant-based alternatives** as they are typically lower in calories and saturated fat. Always check the label to compare similar products and choose the ones lower in saturated fat, sugar and salt.
- **Limit processed foods** that are high in calories, fat, sugar and salt as these foods can make you feel hungrier and eat more than you need which can lead to weight gain over time.



ORGANISING YOUR KITCHEN

You can organise your kitchen to make healthy choices easier by:

- **Keeping healthier foods at eye level** in the fridge and in cupboards, and place less healthy options out of sight or in harder-to-reach areas.
- **Keeping healthy snacks visible** by placing fresh fruit, vegetables, unsalted nuts, plain popcorn and wholemeal crackers in easy-to-see areas around your kitchen. For example, have a bowl of fruit on the counter and pre-cut vegetables in the fridge. This way, you are more likely to grab these healthy options when hungry.
- **Stocking your kitchen with helpful tools** like a blender for smoothies and soups, a steamer basket for vegetables, a non-stick pan so less oil is needed and a sharp knife for easy chopping.



We have lots of simple, healthy and tasty recipes for you to follow. They can be found on our website at wcrf.org/recipes

You can order or download a range of cookbooks for free, from Budget Bites to British Favourites – we have something for all. You can view all of our cookbooks at wcrf.org/cookbooks



COOKING FROM SCRATCH

Cooking from scratch at home lets you control the ingredients you use and what portion sizes you serve. It does not have to take a lot of time and can help you eat healthier, save money and reduce food waste. Here are some tips to make cooking from scratch easier:

- **Begin with preparing simple recipes** if you are not confident in the kitchen. They require basic skills and minimal ingredients.
- **Pre-wash vegetables, fruit and potatoes** at the start of the week.
- **Pre-wash and pre-cut fruit**, storing them in airtight containers in the fridge.
- **Buy frozen or tinned vegetables, fruit and pulses** for quick use.
- **Cook staples like rice and chicken in large batches.** Cool them quickly, then store in the fridge or freezer in portions in airtight containers. For more information on safely storing food at home, visit the Food Standards Agency website.
- **Stock up on lemon, herbs, spices, garlic and ginger** to flavour your food instead of using store-bought sauces, salt and sugar.
- **Store any leftovers** in the fridge or freezer for quick meals later.
- **Prepare meals for the week** ahead of time to save money and manage portion sizes.



While some people may feel they lack the time or confidence in the kitchen, starting with just one homemade meal can be a positive step towards healthier eating.

If you have ingredients in your kitchen that you need to use but are not sure what to cook, try our online recipe generator: wcrf.org/recipe-generator

EATING MINDFULLY

Once you have prepared your meals, it is equally important to eat mindfully. This means listening to your body and judging how hungry or full you feel. Aim to eat until you are almost full – satisfied but not uncomfortable. This can help you avoid overeating, which can lead to weight gain over time if done regularly.



Try to avoid watching TV or scrolling on your phone while eating too, as these can distract you from noticing when you have had enough, making you more likely to overeat.



KEEPING ACTIVE

Life can often get in the way of being active, but making time for physical activity is important for your overall health. We have strong evidence that regular aerobic physical activity, including walking, protects against weight gain. Whatever your fitness level, ability and age, it is never too late to start.



WHAT IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

Physical activity is any form of movement which requires you to move your body. This includes everyday activities such as walking your dog, cycling to work, gardening and doing chores around the house, as well as structured exercise such as running, a fitness class or playing sports.



Physical activity recommendations

Each week, adults in the UK should aim for:

- 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity, like brisk walking (around 20-30 minutes a day)
- Or 75 minutes of vigorous -intensity activity, like running (around 10-15 minutes a day)
- And at least two muscle-strengthening activities, like carrying heavy shopping or exercises that use your body weight like push-ups and squats



If this sounds like a lot to do, try building up how much you do by doing a few extra minutes of physical activity each day until you can reach the recommended amount. All movement adds up – even doing short bursts of physical activity throughout your day will benefit your health.

There are many benefits of being physically active beyond helping you to achieve a healthier weight, such as:

- Strengthening muscles, improving fitness, flexibility and mobility
- Reducing your risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease
- Managing stress, anxiety and depression
- Improving mood and overall well-being
- Supporting your immune system
- Improving sleep



MIXING UP YOUR MOVEMENT

Finding an activity that you enjoy means you are more likely to stick to it. Here are the different types of activity that you can include in your weekly routine.

Moderate-intensity activity

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity makes you breathe a bit faster and gets your heart rate up, but you are still able to talk.

If you are not currently very active, it is best to stick to this level of intensity.

Examples include:

- Brisk walking
- Swimming
- Doing chores around the house more energetically
- Dancing
- Cycling
- Gardening



Vigorous-intensity activity

Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity makes you breathe hard and fast so if you are working at this level, you will not be able to say more than a few words without pausing for a breath.

Once you have built up your fitness, you can start including these types of exercises into your routine.

Examples include:

- Jogging
- Fast cycling
- Fast swimming
- Walking up stairs
- Skipping
- Playing sport
eg, basketball,
netball, football,
badminton



Muscle-strengthening activities

These exercises use resistance, such as from weights or your own body weight, to make your muscles work harder than usual. They help to increase muscle strength and keep your bones healthy.

Examples include:

- Carrying heavy shopping
- Carrying young children
- Wheeling/pushing a wheelchair
- Body weight exercises like sit-ups and squats
- Using resistance bands
- Weight training
- Heavy gardening like shovelling and digging
- Chores around the house like building furniture or hanging up pictures
- Yoga and pilates



Since muscle burns more calories than fat, having more muscle means your body burns more calories, even when you are resting. So doing resistance exercises helps you lose weight from fat instead of muscle, which is better for your overall health.



If you have been inactive for a while or have any underlying health conditions, speak to your doctor before making any major changes to how active you are.

SITTING LESS

As well as keeping active, it is important to limit how much time you spend sitting down using your computer, watching TV or scrolling on your phone. We have strong scientific evidence that spending too much time in front of screens can contribute to weight gain over time.

If you find yourself sitting for long periods of time, **try to get up and move around every 30–60 minutes.**



BOOSTING YOUR EVERYDAY ACTIVITY

Getting more active does not have to take a lot of your time or mean you need a gym membership – all forms of movement count. It is about looking for opportunities to move more in your daily life which add up over time. Here are some tips to boost your everyday activity:

Keep it fun

Get involved in activities that you enjoy and that fit into your lifestyle. Consider inviting a friend or family member to come along with you to make it more fun and motivating.

Create a plan

Plan when and how you will get active and prepare your activewear the night before to give yourself a reminder.



Build it up

Start slowly and gradually build up how much you do and how hard you push yourself. As your fitness improves, it becomes easier and can motivate you to keep going. You could start with a 10-minute brisk walk and then gradually build this up to 30 minutes.



Keep active at work

If you sit at your desk for long periods of time, there are simple ways to be more active during your workday:

- Incorporate exercises like desk push-ups or stretching your legs, arms and back.
- Take a break every 30 minutes by standing up and walking around.
- Walk to the kitchen furthest away when filling your water bottle.
- Use a bathroom on a different floor.
- Encourage your colleagues to have standing or walking meetings.



If you work from home, it is really important to make time to keep active, especially because you might work longer hours and it is easy to sit at your desk all day without moving. That is why it is a good idea to take regular breaks, walk around while you are on the phone or go for a walk during your lunch break.

Try exercise snacking

'Exercise snacking' refers to doing short bursts of activity a couple of times a day for a few seconds or minutes, rather than going for a run or to the gym for an hour. When you break up exercise into smaller chunks, it makes it more manageable.

Examples include:

- Walking during phone calls, whether for work or socialising.
- Breaking up the day with a couple of brisk walks, even if just for a few minutes each time.
- Taking the stairs instead of the lift or escalator.
- Doing a set of squats, star jumps or jog on the spot while you boil the kettle or wait for the bus.

Get active at home

Housework or handiwork such as hoovering, mopping, drilling or assembling furniture all count as being active. These chores can get you moving and work different muscles.



Keeping active is a great way to improve your overall health, ensuring you are not only achieving a healthy weight but if kept up regularly, reduces the chances of you regaining any weight you have lost.

For more information on getting active, explore our Living an active life guide: wcrf.org/living-an-active-life



READY FOR CHANGE?

Now that you have read this guide, you can start thinking about how being a healthy weight can benefit your overall health and reduce your cancer risk.



Find what motivates you

Knowing why you want to lose weight is a really important first step. Maybe you want more energy to play with your children or grandchildren, or to reduce your risk of cancer. Finding a strong, personal reason will help you stay committed.

Set yourself a goal

Setting a goal can help you create a clear plan for reaching it and keep you motivated along the way. Take a moment to think about what you want to achieve and how you would like to feel in a few months. It is important to make sure your goal is specific, achievable and realistic, with a timeline in place.

Instead of setting a general goal like 'I want to lose weight,' try making it more specific, such as 'I want to lose 5kg over the next three months.' A specific goal gives you something achievable to work toward.

Reaching your goal

Now that you have thought about your goal, it is helpful to break it down into smaller, more manageable steps. Remember, losing weight takes time, and you do not have to change everything at once. Instead, focus on building healthy habits one at a time, making them as specific and achievable as possible.

For example, if your goal is to lose 5kg in three months, here is how you can plan to reach it:

- Every Sunday, plan and prepare your meals for the week, so you have healthy options available.
- Include a 20-minute brisk walk before work or during your lunch break on weekdays.
- Make it a goal to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables every day.

What is your motivation?

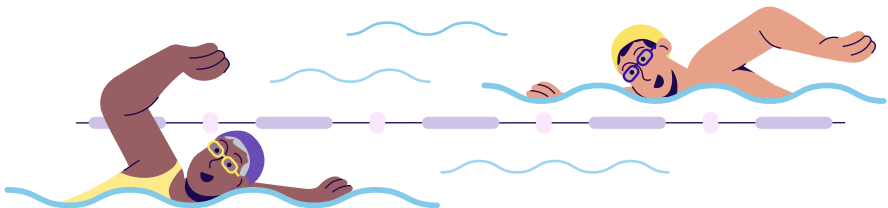
What is your goal?

How will you reach your goals:

1

2

3



Tips for success

- **Track your progress:** Use a diary or an app to track your progress to keep yourself motivated.
- **Get support:** Involve a friend or join a community that has the same goals. Encouragement from others can help keep you motivated.
- **Overcome challenges:** If you find it hard to stay motivated, remind yourself why you started and the benefits of reaching your goal.

Creating a plan and tracking your progress allows you to see the positive changes you are making, keeping you motivated to reach your goals.

Focusing on one change at a time can help you achieve healthy, sustainable weight loss and improves your overall health in the long term. Even if results take time, every step forward is a step toward better health.



Visit our website
for more advice
and recipes to help
you keep up your
healthy habits:
wcrf.org



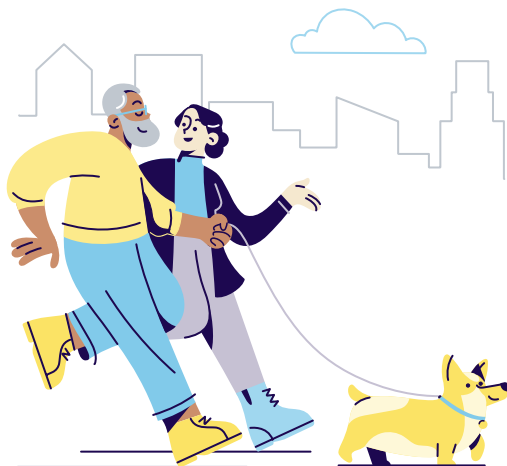
Disclaimer

World Cancer Research Fund's healthy eating and lifestyle information is aimed at the general adult population and is not aimed at individuals who are following special diets (on medical advice) or who have special dietary or exercise needs.

The information contained in our health information publications relate to the prevention of cancer. We are unable to give medical advice. For specific advice, please consult your doctor.

How can you help?

Will you help us build a world where fewer people every day get preventable cancers? Our work is funded solely by charitable donations. Your support will help us continue providing easy-to-access health information to help people reduce their risk of cancer and live well with cancer. wcrf.org/donate



CANCER PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS



Be a healthy weight



Be physically active



Eat a diet rich in wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and beans



Limit consumption of 'fast foods' and other processed foods high in fat, starches or sugars



Limit consumption of red and processed meat



Limit consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks



Limit alcohol consumption



Do not use supplements for cancer prevention



For mothers: breastfeed your baby, if you can



After a cancer diagnosis: follow our Recommendations, if you can

Not smoking and avoiding other exposure to tobacco and excess sun are also important in reducing cancer risk.

Following these Recommendations is likely to reduce intakes of salt, saturated and trans fats, which together will help prevent other non-communicable diseases.

To read our full Recommendations visit: wcrf.org/10ways



World Cancer Research Fund examines how diet, weight and physical activity affect your risk of developing and surviving cancer. As part of an international network of charities, we have been funding life-saving research, influencing global public health policy and educating the public since 1982.

While society continues searching for a cure, our prevention and survival work is helping people live longer, happier and healthier lives – free from the devastating effects of cancer.

For any enquiries or to request the information in large print, please contact us:

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Preventing cancer. Saving lives

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