Age UK is the new force combining Age Concern and Help the Aged. With almost 120 years of combined history to draw on, we are bringing together our talents, services and solutions to do more to enrich the lives of people in later life.

The Age UK family includes Age Cymru, Age NI and Age Scotland. There are also more than 170 local Age UKs.

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Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this guide is correct. However, things do change, so it is always a good idea to seek expert advice on your personal situation.

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Introduction

It’s never too late to start eating healthily. A healthy diet doesn’t have to be boring and doesn’t mean going without your favourite treats, although you might do well to eat them less often or in smaller portions. Eating well means that you are likely to feel healthier, stay active for longer and protect yourself against illness. You might be surprised by how much more energy you have.

This guide also looks at maintaining a healthy weight, including tips on eating well if you find that you’ve only got a small appetite. It includes important information about food safety too, so you can lower your risk of food poisoning, which is not only unpleasant but can also be a serious health risk.

Throughout this guide you will find suggestions for organisations that can offer further information and advice about your options. Their contact details can be found in the ‘Useful organisations’ section (see pages 26–28). Contact details for organisations near you can usually be found in your local phone book. If you have difficulty finding them, your local Age UK should be able to help (see page 26).

As far as possible, the information given in this guide is applicable across the UK.

Key

- This symbol indicates where information differs for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- This symbol indicates who to contact for the next steps you need to take.
Eating well

Eating well means enjoying your food and having plenty of variety and balance in what you eat. The eatwell plate can help you to follow a healthy, balanced diet by showing you how much to eat from each food group (see pages 6–7).

**Fruit and vegetables**
Research shows that people who eat plenty of fruit and vegetables are less likely to develop heart disease, certain cancers and eye conditions. Try to eat a variety of fruit and vegetables each day. Aim for five portions a day. A portion is roughly the amount you can fit in your hand – for example, two satsumas, three apricots, an apple or a banana. Frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables, dried fruit and fruit juice all count. Try to choose five different-coloured ones to have with or between meals.

**Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, lentils and nuts**
Eat a portion of any of these foods at two of your daily meals. They all contain protein, which build and repair your body. You don’t need to eat meat or fish every day – try cheese, well-cooked eggs, beans, lentils or tofu instead. Try to eat fish twice a week – one portion of white fish such as haddock or cod, and one portion of oily fish such as salmon or sardines. Oily fish are rich in vitamin D and a type of fat that helps to prevent heart disease. Avoid frying meat or fish.

**Foods containing fat and sugar**
Cut down on foods that are high in saturated fat or sugar. This includes foods such as butter, ghee, cakes, biscuits, sausages, meat pies, paté and fatty meat. Don’t fill up on them at the expense of more nutritious foods. Saturated fats raise the level of cholesterol in the blood and increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.
**Breads, other cereals and potatoes**
Have a serving of starchy food (bread, chapatis, breakfast cereal, potatoes, yams, rice or pasta) with every meal. These foods give you energy. Wholegrain foods such as brown rice or wholegrain bread or pasta contain B vitamins, minerals and fibre that keep you well and help prevent constipation.

**Milk and dairy foods**
These foods contain calcium, which helps to keep bones strong. Try to have three servings a day and choose lower-fat versions, such as semi-skimmed milk, half-fat cheese and low-fat paneer where you can. A serving can be a cup of milk, pot of yoghurt, matchbox-size piece of cheese, or small pot of cottage cheese.

*List your favourite fruits and vegetables opposite. Which meals and snacks could include an extra portion of them?*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favourite fruit or vegetable</th>
<th>Meal idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>Porridge with chopped bananas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.

Fruit and vegetables

Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

Department of Health in association with the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland. © Crown copyright 2011
Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods

Milk and dairy foods

Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar