

FOOD AND MOOD

Here are some tips from Mind to get you started and some recipe ideas to encourage healthy eating

Eating regularly

- Eating breakfast gets the day off to a good start; arrange to eat breakfast together in school with friends if you struggle to eat early in the morning. The canteen serves free health and nutritional bagels every day;
- Instead of eating large meals, try eating smaller portions spaced out more regularly throughout the day; try not to use all of your meal allowance at break time as this will leave you hungry in the afternoon if you have to skip lunch;
- Avoid foods which make your blood sugar rise and fall rapidly, such as sweets, biscuits, sugary drinks, foods that are high in carbohydrates such as pizza,
- If you struggle to eat while at school for any reason, you should seek support, as this is not a long term, healthy way to be.

Staying hydrated

- It's recommended that you drink between 6-8 glasses of fluid a day;
- Water is a cheap and healthy option;
- Tea, coffee, juices and smoothies all count towards your intake (but be aware that these may also contain caffeine or sugar);
- Avoid energy drinks that contain harmful substances as these lower your immune system, cause spikes in your insulin levels and can cause palpitations; these drinks are banned from school.

Getting your 5 A day

- Fresh, frozen, tinned, dried and juiced (one glass) fruits and vegetables all count towards your 5 a day;
- As a general rule, one portion is about a handful, small bowl or a small glass.

For ideas on how to get your 5 a day, visit [NHS Choices](#)

Looking after your gut

For healthy digestion, you need to have plenty of fibre, fluid and exercise regularly. Healthy gut foods include fruits, vegetables and wholegrains, beans, pulses, live yoghurt and other probiotics.

- It might take your gut time to get used to a new eating pattern, so make changes slowly to give yourself time to adjust;
- If you are feeling stressed and you think it is affecting your gut, try some relaxation techniques, breathing exercises or mindfulness.

Get enough protein

- Protein contains amino acids, which make up the chemicals your brain needs to regulate your thoughts and feelings. It also helps keep you feeling fuller for longer;
- Protein is found in lean meat, fish, eggs, cheese, legumes (peas, beans and lentils), soya products, nuts and seeds.

Managing caffeine

Caffeine is a stimulant, which means it will give you a quick burst of energy, but then may make you feel anxious and depressed, disturb your sleep (especially if you have it before bed), or give you withdrawal symptoms if you stop suddenly.

Caffeine is in tea, coffee, chocolate, cola and other manufactured energy drinks.

- If you drink tea, coffee or cola, try switching to decaffeinated versions;
- You might feel noticeably better quite quickly if you drink less caffeine or avoid it altogether.

Eating the right fats

Our brain needs fatty acids (such as omega-3 and -6) to keep it working well. So rather than avoiding all fats, it is important to eat the right ones.

Healthy fats are found in oily fish, poultry, nuts (especially walnuts and almonds), olive and sunflower oils, seeds (such as sunflower and pumpkin), avocados, milk, yoghurt, cheese and eggs.

- Try to avoid anything, which lists 'trans fats' or 'partially hydrogenated oils' in the list of ingredients (such as some shop-bought cakes and biscuits). They can be tempting when you are feeling low, but this kind of fat isn't good for your mood or your physical health in the long run.

All information is found at <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/food-and-mood/about-food-and-mood/#.XJor4yL7SM8>