

**AN INTRODUCTION
TO**

NUTRITION

FOR

YOUNG CRICKETERS

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This resource has been designed to introduce the topic of nutrition to young cricketers. It covers the following topics:

- Why is nutrition important for cricketers?
- Understanding different food groups
- Staying hydrated
- Top tips and examples of foods
- Further resources and support



FOUNDATION

WHY IS NUTRITION IMPORTANT FOR CRICKETERS?

Nutrition is the process of taking in food and drinks that nourish the body and allow it to perform every day functions. As athletes, it is important that you consider the kind of food and drinks that you consume.

Eating the right foods will aid your athletic performance in three ways:

ENERGISE

Perform at your best



REPAIR

Growth, development and recovery



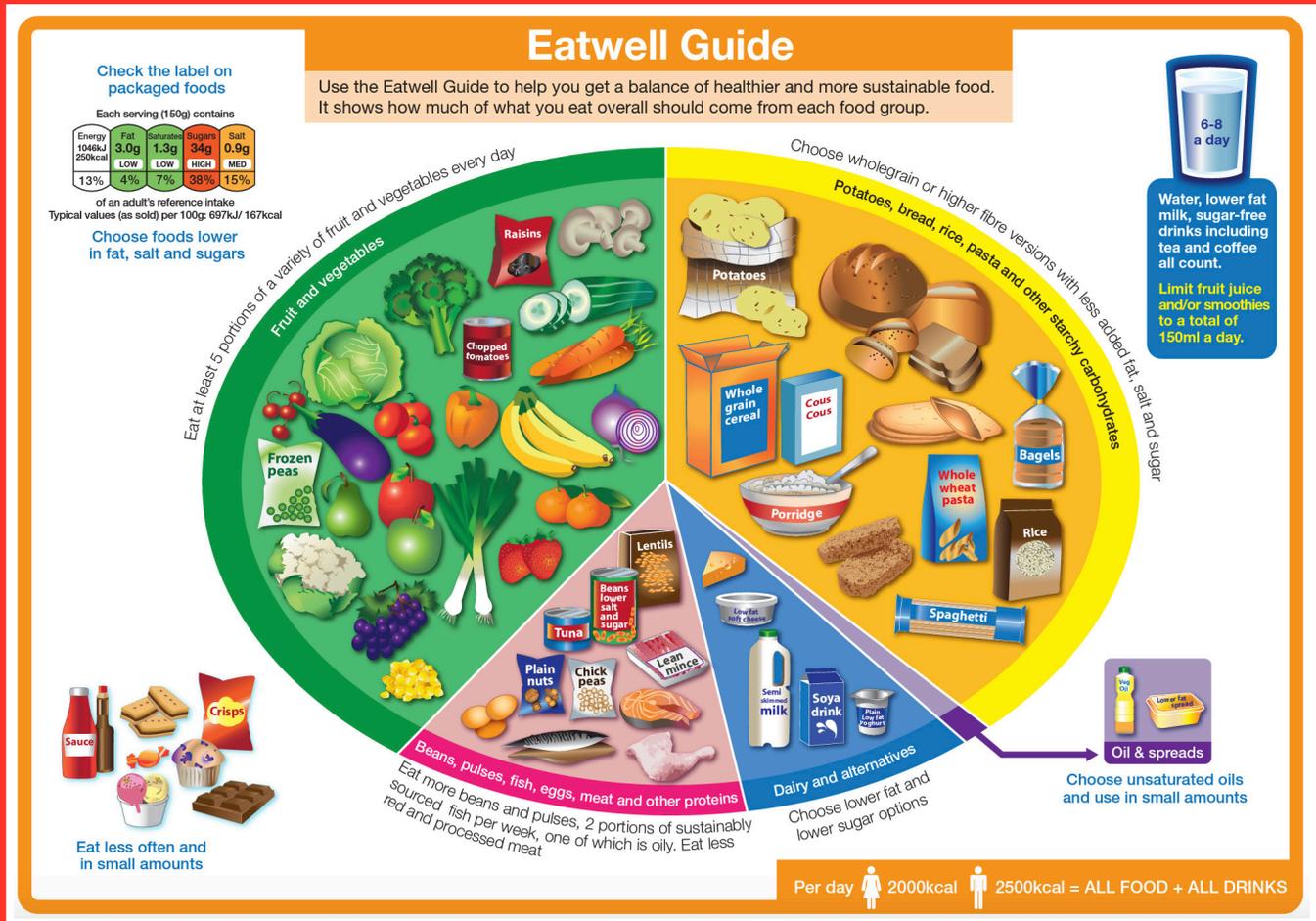
PROTECT

Supports a healthy body



The next section will help you to understand what the different food groups are, and how they contribute to the healthy functioning of your body. Each different food group can be consumed in a variety of ways, and can be adapted for different lifestyles, cultures and dietary requirements (for example, vegetarians).

UNDERSTANDING THE FOOD GROUPS



Source: The Eatwell Guide (www.nhs.uk)

Please note that the recommended calories are a guide for adults and will vary depending on how active you are.

FATS

Not only are fats a **good source of energy**, but they are involved in the absorption and transportation of essential vitamins and minerals and the insulation/protection of organs.

Generally speaking, we don't typically eat foods for their fat content, yet we find good sources of fat are found in foods which are ideal for young athletes, such as high protein and/or sources of calcium:

Milk, yoghurts, cheese, oily fish, nuts, seeds, tofu, hummus

CARBOHYDRATES

The main role of carbohydrates in the body is the **production of energy**. Carbohydrates provide you with the fuel you need during high intensity exercise and movements - such as running in to bowl and running quick twos.

Examples of carbohydrates are foods such as:

Bread, Oats, Cereals, Pasta, Rice, Potatoes, Noodles, Fruit, Legumes

To help you perform at your best it is important that you eat carbohydrate-based foods around your training sessions and matches. You should look to have some carbohydrates **pre, during, and post training**.

Taking on carbohydrates during training and matches can be a bit of a challenge, as typically you are limited for time and access to food - here are a couple of ideas that you may find useful. Try combining two or three of these options when you prepare for your next cricket training session or match.

Fruit (apple, banana), cereal bars, maltloaf, flapjacks, wraps, sandwiches, yoghurts, jam bagel, banana bread

When you are doing lots of exercise it is important that you eat more carbohydrates - ensure you have at least one source of carbohydrates with each meal and make snacks carbohydrate based to help keep your energy levels high and fuel your performance!



FIBRE

Fibre is found within carbohydrate foods and this nutrient provides a variety of health benefits. Perhaps the most well-known benefit is that fibre aids digestion and **supports a healthy gut**.

Examples of carbohydrates which are high in fibre include:

- **Fruit and vegetables**
- **Some cereals, such as Weetabix or Shredded Wheat, and porridge**
- **Wholemeal bread, wholewheat pasta or brown rice**
- **Pulses (beans, lentils, chickpeas)**

[Click here](#) for more information about including fibre in your diet.



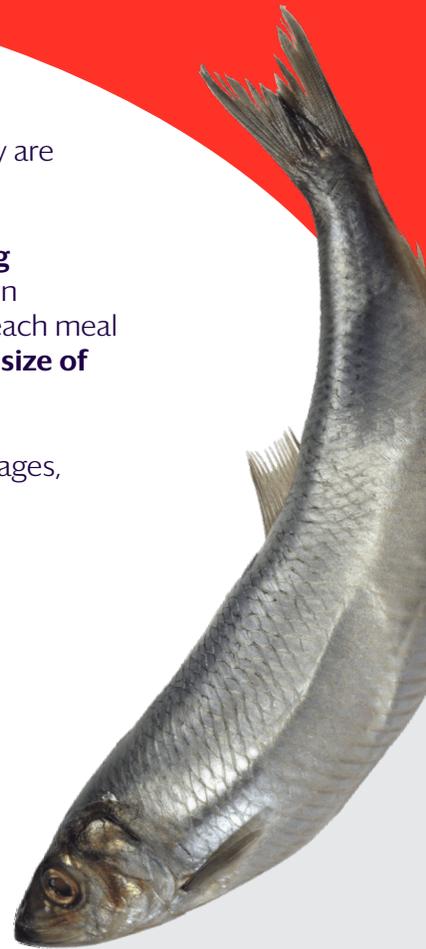
PROTEINS

Protein is part of every living cell in the human body and many tissues in the body are mostly formed of protein, including skin, hair, muscle, tendons, bones and teeth.

Protein also is vitally important for athletes - helping with **muscle repair, building strength and power, and muscle growth**. Therefore, athletes have higher protein requirements than the general population. Aim to have a source of protein with each meal - a good rule of thumb is that the source of protein should be approximately **the size of the palm of your hand**.

Aim for leaner cuts of meat and limit your intake of processed meat such as sausages, bacon, and ham.

- **Beef - aim for leaner cuts of meat where possible**
- **Poultry**
- **Pork**
- **Quorn**
- **Tofu, tempeh and edamame**
- **Fish**
- **Eggs**
- **Cheese and yoghurts**
- **Milk (a great recovery drink for after exercise!)**
- **Beans, peas and lentils**
- **Nuts and seeds**



VITAMINS AND MINERALS

Vitamins and minerals are key providers of micronutrients, meaning that they are needed in small amounts. They are crucial to **support normal growth and development, boost the immune system and help organs function normally**. Whilst all vitamins and minerals are important, there are a few that are key young athletes:

Iron - for the transport of oxygen to your working muscles

Calcium - for the development of strong bones and muscle contraction

Vitamin D - also for the development of strong bones

Fruit & Vegetables...

An excellent source of vitamins and minerals are fruit and vegetables. You should aim to eat **5** portions of fruit and vegetables in total every day - for more information about this, [click here](#).

A good idea with vegetables is try to "eat the rainbow" - vary the types and colours of vegetables on your plate. This will help you to get the range of benefits that different vegetables provide. Eating vegetables doesn't have to be boring and plain - they are perfect to add to other dishes such as **curry, stir-fry, chilli, pasta bakes, casseroles, ramen bowls, etc**.

Healthy teenagers usually don't need vitamin/mineral supplements - [with the exception of vitamin D during the winter months in the UK](#). **You should check with your doctor before taking any supplements.**



WHAT ABOUT “JUNK” FOOD?

Food that is considered low in nutrients and/or high in sugar and/or fat is often considered ‘junk’ food. Examples include:

Fast food, takeaways, pizza, chocolate, crisps, fizzy drinks, cakes, processed meats



Whilst we don't recommend that you have these foods on daily basis, you do not need to exclude them completely from your diet.

Additionally, there are ways to improve the nutritional value of these foods by preparing them yourself. These foods can then become excellent sources of carbohydrates, protein and vegetables - have a look at these recipes:

- [Pizza](#)
- [Turkey burger and chips](#)
- [Chocolate chip muffins](#)

STAYING HYDRATED

Water is essential for lots of body functions, including regulating your internal temperature, improving blood circulation, aiding cognitive (brain) function and boosting energy.

It is important to stay hydrated in daily life, but particularly when training or playing matches. When exercising, athletes sweat more which increases the amount of water lost through perspiration, and can lead to dehydration - you should therefore drink more water during and after training or matches to replace the water lost and to ensure you remain hydrated.

If you suffer from any of the below symptoms, it could be that you are dehydrated:

- Thirst
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Fatigue and low energy levels
- Irritability

Some tips to help you improve your hydration:

- Find a reusable bottle that is convenient to travel around with you
- Add a fruit squash flavour of your choice (no added sugar) - fruit squash is also good at replacing electrolytes which are lost through sweat when we exercise
- Get into the habit of having a drink with every meal

TOP TIPS AND EXAMPLES

Here are some tips to help you manage your nutrition for cricket training and matches:

- At each main meal have a source of carbohydrate, protein, and vegetables (or fruit at breakfast)
- Plan ahead! Think about what snacks you will take to training, or meals you will eat before or after matches before the day
- Help your parent/guardian/carer to prepare meals - this will help you to learn about foods and learn very valuable life skills
- Try to eat high carbohydrate foods on match days and big training days
- Take a water bottle with you to training sessions and matches to stay hydrated

Here are some examples of balanced meals:

BREAKFAST

- Porridge made with milk - add in fruit
- Weetabix - top with honey or banana
- Pancakes with fruit - add some honey
- Natural or Greek yoghurt with fruit - add some honey
- Eggs (scrambled, poached or hard boiled) with toast
- Omelettes - add in peppers, mushrooms, ham, chicken, onions, tomatoes, cheese
- Beans on toast



- Jacket potato with tuna/beans/cheese and salad
- Chicken/Quorn/Meat substitute fajitas with vegetables
- Pasta with lean meat and vegetables, sauce and a side salad
- Rice bowls with meat (or vegan equivalent) and vegetables
- Chicken/Chickpea & vegetable curry with rice
- Meat/Potato and vegetable casseroles
- Shepherd/Cottage vegetable pie

LUNCH/ DINNER

SNACKS

- Banana on toast with honey or peanut butter
- Flapjacks - fruit/vegan/chocolate (small squares)
- Chicken/tuna/falafel/meat substitute salad
- Yoghurt - add fruit and/or honey
- Banana bread
- [Home made smoothies](#)



FURTHER RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

For further information:

The NHS have produced their The Eatwell Guide.

[Click here](#) to see their recommendations.

[Click here](#) for information about food and nutrition for good health, provided by BBC Bitesize.

[Click here](#) for more information about different food groups.

For information about healthy eating as a vegetarian/vegan, [click here](#).

The British Nutrition Foundation has helpful information about healthy eating as a teenager. [Click here](#) to be taken directly to their website.



Example meals and snacks:

Here are some other balanced meal ideas from the BBC 'Eat Well for Less' programme: [Eat Well for Less recipes - BBC Food](#)

Here are some family friendly recipes for meat and vegetable curries: [Kids' curry recipes | BBC Good Food](#)

Here are some other examples of balanced snacks that could be eaten before/after cricket training or matches: [40 Healthy Snacks for Hungry Teens](#)

Here are further examples of balanced meals: [Healthy Meals and Snacks for the Busy Athlete](#)

Here are family and budget friendly recipes: [£1 dinners - BBC Food](#)

If you have any concerns about your diet, you should speak to your doctor.

Alternatively, you can contact Beat (Eating Disorder charity) through their helplines which are open 365 days a year. [Click here](#) to be directed to the Beat helplines webpage.



