

Active Families, Active Lives



Teuluoedd Gweithredol, Bywydau Heini

Top Suggestions to Improve Health



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University Health Board



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Children, Young People
& Family Health Services

Making small, sustainable changes can significantly impact our overall health and well-being. Please find information below on facts and tips that you can work towards.

Health Facts

Did you know.....

- The average child's diet contains at least **63% food from ultra-processed foods**, this should be a **maximum of 16%**. (Scan the QR code below for more information on ultra-processed foods).
- Ultra-processed foods contain a **long list of ingredients**, which are “chemical sounding” such as emulsifiers, flavourings, sweeteners, preservatives, fats and added sugars. These foods include cereal bars, biscuits, pizza, chicken nuggets and sugary cereals.
- Consuming too much sugar **forces the liver to convert the excess sugar into fat**, our liver can then become unhealthy if it contains too much fat.
- Insulin levels go up every time we eat. Insulin is a ‘fat storing hormone’. If we always snack in-between meals and during the night, our bodies will be in fat storing mode which makes it harder to lose weight. **Reducing the frequency of snacks** allows our bodies to **use the stored energy and help the insulin levels to come down**.

The following tips can help improve our health:

Nutrition



- 1 | Sugary drinks:**
It's important that sugary drinks are reduced or cut out to improve health.



- 2 | Processed foods:**
Many of our foods such as cakes, cereal bars, pizzas and ready meals are ultra-processed which means that these foods are high in fats, salt and sugar and have many additives in their ingredients. The aim is to limit these foods as much as possible.



- 3 | Increasing fibre:**
Aim for a variety of different fruit and vegetables through the week if you can. Nuts, seeds, lentils, peas, beans, wholegrains all count. (See information below on 'Looking after your gut microbiome').



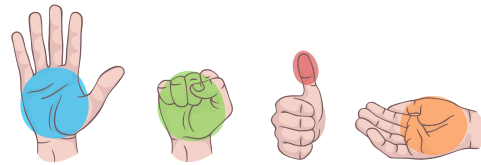
- 5 | Regular meals:**
Eating 3 balanced meals a day helps our energy levels stay even throughout the day. Aim for half a plate of vegetables or salad, quarter protein and quarter carbohydrates.



- 7 | Snacking:**
Limit snacking and choose healthy options where possible.



- 4 | Allow your body to rest from eating:**
Aim to eat within a 12-hour window e.g. if breakfast is at 7am aim not to eat past 7pm in the evening. This allows your body to use energy stored in your body.



PROTEIN VEGETABLES FAT CARB

- 6 | Portion sizes**
Portion sizes are a guide to help people aim for a balanced diet. It's easy to eat more than what we need. (Please scan the QR code below for further information on recommended portions).

Setting small goals:

People often set themselves goals that are too high and unrealistic. These can be broken down to smaller changes that you can work towards over time, working toward and achieving your personal goals can boost self-esteem and motivation. Choose a few of the above suggestions to get started on your journey, and then add the next one in!

Activity



1 | **Going for a 10 minute walk** after every meal helps our bodies reduce high insulin levels.



2 | **Being more active throughout the day** and reducing screentime helps our metabolism (internal health).



3 | **Doing an hour of movement/activity a day** like dog walking, dancing or something you enjoy until you feel warm.

Useful websites:

Information on ultra-processed foods and the Gut Microbiome:



Ultra-processed foods: how bad are they for your health? - BHF



Ultra-processed foods: Everything you need to know (soilassociation.org)



Belly Bugs - Children's Nutrition Solved



How quickly can you improve your gut bacteria? - BBC Food



Video on how the food you eat affects your gut



Please scan QR code below to take you to the AFAL webpage on the Cardiff and Vale UHB 'Keeping mg we well' website for further information on **healthy eating, portion sizes and activity ideas.**

Please contact us on **07812 469935** or **afal.cav@wales.nhs.uk**. If you would like to receive this information sheet via email or would like to discuss any concerns you may have.