



THEME 1

Healthy food and drink

Theme introduction

Background

Messages about healthy eating seem to be everywhere, urging individuals to buy more of certain foods, to avoid other foods, to manage their weight, to look after their heart and so on. The plethora of information and conflicting messages inevitably causes considerable confusion about food and what constitutes healthy eating.

Choosing healthy food is more than just an individual choice. The ability to buy, store and cook healthy food requires a wide range of skills, such as knowing which foods are healthy, understanding about portions, being able to read and understand food packaging and labelling and working within a budget, to name but a few. Access to healthy and low-cost food in supermarkets also often depends on having a car. The term 'food poverty' describes social and economic causes of an unhealthy diet. It is important to understand that food poverty limits individuals' ability to make healthy food choices for themselves and their families.

Many individuals associate the word 'diet' with losing weight. In these materials we use the term 'healthy eating' to avoid such confusion and to reflect the current thinking of health practitioners.

Whilst healthy eating clearly encompasses more than weight management, there is no escaping the serious levels of obesity in the UK: 57% of women and 66% of men in England are overweight or obese.¹ Obesity is more common in individuals from lower socio-economic groups, so it is likely that many of the learners you encounter will be obese or overweight.

National targets/policies

The Eatwell Guide (March 2016) defines the government's advice on a healthy balanced diet. The Eatwell Guide is a visual representation of how different foods and drinks can contribute towards a healthy balanced diet. The Eatwell Guide is based on the 5 food groups and shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.

Public Health England encourages organisations and individuals to use the Eatwell Guide to make sure everyone receives consistent messages about the balance of foods in a healthy diet. This publication provides guidance on using the Eatwell Guide in promotional materials.

The Eatwell Guide shows the different types of foods and drinks we should consume – and in what proportions – to have a healthy, balanced diet.

1. *Health survey for England, 2016* <https://digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB30169>

The Eatwell Guide² shows the proportions of the main food groups that form a healthy, balanced diet:

- Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day
- Base meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates; choosing wholegrain versions where possible
- Have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya drinks); choosing lower fat and lower sugar options
- Eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins (including 2 portions of fish every week, one of which should be oily)
- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads and eat in small amounts
- Drink 6–8 cups/glasses of fluid a day
- If consuming foods and drinks high in fat, salt or sugar have these less often and in small amounts.

This theme

The topics in this theme support learners to develop an up-to-date understanding of healthy foods and fluid intake, based on information and guidance from reputable sources such as Public Health England. For example, by understanding the different food groups and the idea of the food plate, learners will be able to look at their own eating behaviour. The topics in this theme are:

- Food groups
- Food labels
- Nutritional information
- What is a portion?
- Budgeting
- Food temperature safety
- Food date safety
- Understanding a diet
- Writing a list
- Are you drinking enough fluid?

Further information and suggestions

Find out whether there are any community food projects or 'Cook and Eat' initiatives in the locality.

2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>

Mapping to Functional Skills/Core Curriculum

Topic	Functional Skills		Core Curriculum	
	English	Maths	Literacy/Language (L)	Numeracy (N)
1 Food groups	E3.3 E2.12	E2.22 E2.24	Rw/E3.1 Rt/E2.4	HD1/E2.1 HD1/E2.3
2 Food labels	E2.12 L1.14 L1.14 E2.8	E2.13	Rt/E2.2 Rt/L1.4 Rt/L1.5 Rw/E2.2	MSS1/E2.3
3 Nutritional information	E3.12 E3.8	E3.14 E3.21 E3.14	Rt/E3.9 Rw/E3.1	N2/E3.3 HD1/E3.1 MSS1/E3.9
4 What is a portion?		E2.24 E2.22 E2.25 E3.15 E2.5		HD1/E2.3 HD1/E2.4 HD1/E2.5 MSS1/E2.6 N1/E2.4
5 Budgeting		E3.10 E3.16 L1.11		MSS1/E3.1 MSS1/E3.6 MSS1/L1.1
6 Food temperature safety	E3.9 E3.8 E3.12	E3.14 E3.14	Rt/E3.3 Rw/E3.1 Rt/E3.9	MSS1/E2.8 MSS1/E3.9
7 Food date safety	E3.8 E3.9	E2.13	Rw/E3.1 Rt/E3.7	MSS1/E2.4
8 Understanding a diet	E3.10 E3.9 E3.3 L1.17		Rt/E3.2 Rt/E3.8 Rw/E3.1 Rw/L1.3	
9 Writing a list	E1.10 E1.8 E2.7 E1.15		Rt/E1.2 Rw/E1.1 Rw/E2.3 Vw/E1.1	
10 Are you drinking enough fluid?	E3.9 E3.9	E3.17	Rt/E3.7 Rt/E3.8	MSS1/E3.7