Healthier eating
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The need for us all to eat healthier is well known. However, for people with learning disabilities, understanding and choosing healthier options and cooking methods may be something that requires additional support. This guide when used with the associated film will help to enable individuals to make healthier choices in terms of menus, and cooking methods.

It also touches on bulk cooking which links in with how to manage money as this helps to eliminate waste and sometimes buying larger amounts can be cheaper, if cooked at once it saves on energy and provides a fast, healthy meal when time is short.

Remember:

- Read the Promoting Independence section, (if you haven’t already).
- Read this section, and watch the associated film.
- Enable the individual in line with enabling plan using this section and film.

Link to film: [https://vimeo.com/255858287](https://vimeo.com/255858287)

Contents

- Healthy eating plate
- Dietary requirements
- Different cooking methods
- Bulk cooking
- Discussion points from the film, Resources and Links
Eight reminders for healthier eating

Here are some useful tips to help us make healthier choices.

- Base your meals on starchy foods
- Eat lots of fruit and vegetables
- Eat more fish
- Cut down on saturated fat and sugar
- Eat less salt
- Get active
- Don’t get thirsty
- Don’t skip breakfast

The ‘eatwell’ plate

The eatwell plate is the UK’s healthy eating guide which sets out the types and amounts of food we need to make up a healthy, varied diet.

The eatwell plate is divided into five food groups:

1. Fruit and vegetables.
2. Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods.
4. Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar.

Source: NHS Eatwell Plate
Fruit and vegetables

One-third of the eatwell plate should be made up of fruit and vegetables. Fruit and vegetables provide vitamins and minerals for good health. We should all aim to eat at least five pieces of fruit and vegetables each day. All the fruit and vegetables below all count as one of your ‘five a day’.

Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods

These foods provide us with carbohydrates, which gives us energy. They also provide some B vitamins and minerals such as calcium and iron.

Choosing whole grain varieties gives us extra dietary fibre which is important for our gut health.
Milk and dairy

Milk and dairy foods such as cheese, milk and yoghurt provide us with calcium, which is an important mineral to keep our bones strong. They also provide protein, some B vitamins and other minerals.

There is also soya drinks which also count towards your dairy intake.

Choosing lower fat versions whenever possible is also recommended to follow a healthy diet.

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

These foods are a rich source of protein. Protein is needed for lots of functions throughout the body, therefore we all need some protein in our diets. When buying meat, go for the leanest option e.g. chicken/turkey. Pulses include beans, lentils and peas. They are a cheap, low-fat source of protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals, and they count towards your recommended five daily portions of fruit and vegetables.

A healthy diet should include at least two portions of fish a week, including one of oily fish e.g. salmon.
Foods & drinks high in fat and/or sugar

Not all fats and sugars are bad however, they need to be eaten in small amounts. We still need to eat them in our diet as they can provide the body with energy. If we eat more fats and sugars than our bodies burn this is when it can start to affect our health.

How can we eat less fat and sugar?

- Snack on dried fruit or fresh fruit.
- Trim the fat off meat.
- Buy lean meat.
- Steam or bake rather than frying in oil.
- Use less butter and margarine.
- Use skimmed milk rather than full fat.
- Avoid too much high fat fast foods.
- Avoid too many high sugar sweets and drinks.
Cooking methods

Healthier cooking methods:
- Boiling
- Steaming
- Poaching
- Grilling
- Roasting
- Microwaving

Bulk cooking

Bulk cooking, means cooking a lot of the same food at the same time. It saves time and money. It also means that there will always be some healthier meal option in the freezer when you don’t have a lot of time.

Examples of healthier meals that you can cook in bulk and freeze:
- Cottage pie (with lean mince)
- Lasagne (with lean mince)
- Vegetable soup
- Fish pie

Benefits
- Time saving.
- Money saving.
- Enables healthier meal choices.
- Reduces waste.
Using the film

How to use the film with this section

Link to the film:  https://vimeo.com/255951552

The aim of the film is to show some of the elements from this section, it will not show everything.

The films provide opportunities to discuss examples of best practice and where things may have been done differently to promote learning for both the individual and the Support/Care Worker

To gain maximum benefit from the resource it is important that you:

- Familiarise yourself with section 1 Promoting Independence and this section.
- Watch the film. Consider the following points:
  - Was the film a good example of how to promote independence?
  - Could anything have been done differently?
  - Which parts of the task were carried out in line with good practice as identified in this section?
  - Which parts of the tasks could have been done differently?
- When watching the film with an individual, pause it at relevant points and discuss in greater detail, use the resource whilst enabling the individual to do the task themselves, if it supports the way they learn.
- Repeat as often as is necessary.