



osteopathy for  
health

# Healthy eating

**Eating healthily has both mental and physical benefits. It is one of the best things you can do to prevent and control health problems such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes. A healthy diet can make you look and feel better, raise your energy levels and increase your sense of general well-being. Variety is the spice of life and we should aim to eat a wide range of foods from the five major food groups.**

## Carbohydrates

These are starchy foods like bread, potatoes, pasta and rice and should make up the main part of every meal. Carbohydrates provide the body with energy, calcium and B vitamins.

## Protein

Meat, fish and eggs as well as nuts, beans, peas, lentils and soya all contain protein. We should have two or three servings of protein every day. Protein is essential for the body to grow and repair itself and provides a range of vitamins, iron and other minerals.

## Fruit and vegetables

Eat a wide variety of at least five portions of fruit and vegetables every day. They contain vitamins, fibre and antioxidants which can prevent some cancers. Fibre keeps your digestive system healthy and makes you feel full which can help control your weight.

## Dairy

We should try to eat three servings of milk, yoghurt and/or cheese each day. Dairy products contain protein and calcium, vitamins A, D and B12 and keep your bones and teeth healthy.

## Fats and oils

Unsaturated fats like olive oil and sunflower oil are good for the body. These fats usually come from vegetables or nuts and are liquid at room temperature. Saturated fats like butter and lard usually come from animals and are often solid at room temperature. Use fats and oils sparingly.

## Fluids

Water, skimmed or semi-skimmed milk are the best choices as they contain no sugar. Unsweetened tea and coffee are also good choices. Aim for six to eight glasses a day and check the colour of your urine. It should be a light yellow colour – if it is dark yellow you may need to drink more fluids.

## Limit sugar, salt and fat

Sugar can contribute to weight gain. This increases your risk of health problems such as heart disease, some cancers and type 2 diabetes. Sugar also contributes to tooth decay and has no nutritional value apart from providing energy.



Fats can raise your cholesterol, which increases the risk of heart disease. Current advice is to cut down on all fats and replace saturated fat with some unsaturated fat. Salt can cause raised blood pressure, which can increase your risk of heart disease and a stroke. Don't add salt to your food automatically – taste it first.

## Six healthy eating tips

What we choose not to eat is as important as what we do choose and a few small changes to the choices we make can have significant benefits.

1. A glass of fruit juice in the morning is one of your five a day – a great way to start
2. Wholegrain carbohydrates for a high fibre diet – brown rice, wholemeal bread, porridge and rye crispbreads rather than white bread, white rice and sugary breakfast cereal
3. Cut skin and fat off – lean meat like chicken and turkey are low in fat; red meat is often high in saturated fats
4. We should have fish at least twice a week.  
Oily fish like salmon, mackerel, sardines and fresh tuna contain omega 3 fatty acids for a healthy heart
5. Watch your salt, sugar and fat – processed and convenience foods such as burgers and pies, sauces and puddings, preserved meats and fish are often loaded with salt, sugar and fat
6. Eat the rainbow – choose different colours of fruits and vegetables to get the maximum benefit from the different nutrients they contain

## How can your osteopath help?

Your osteopath can give you information about things you can do yourself to help improve or maintain your own health and wellbeing. This may include things like eating a healthy diet and exercise.

Osteopaths are highly trained, healthcare professionals, experts in the musculoskeletal system (joints, muscles and associated tissues) and its relationship to other systems of the body. Osteopathic care is based on the individual needs of the patient and so varies depending on your age, fitness levels and diagnosis.

*Contact your osteopath at:*