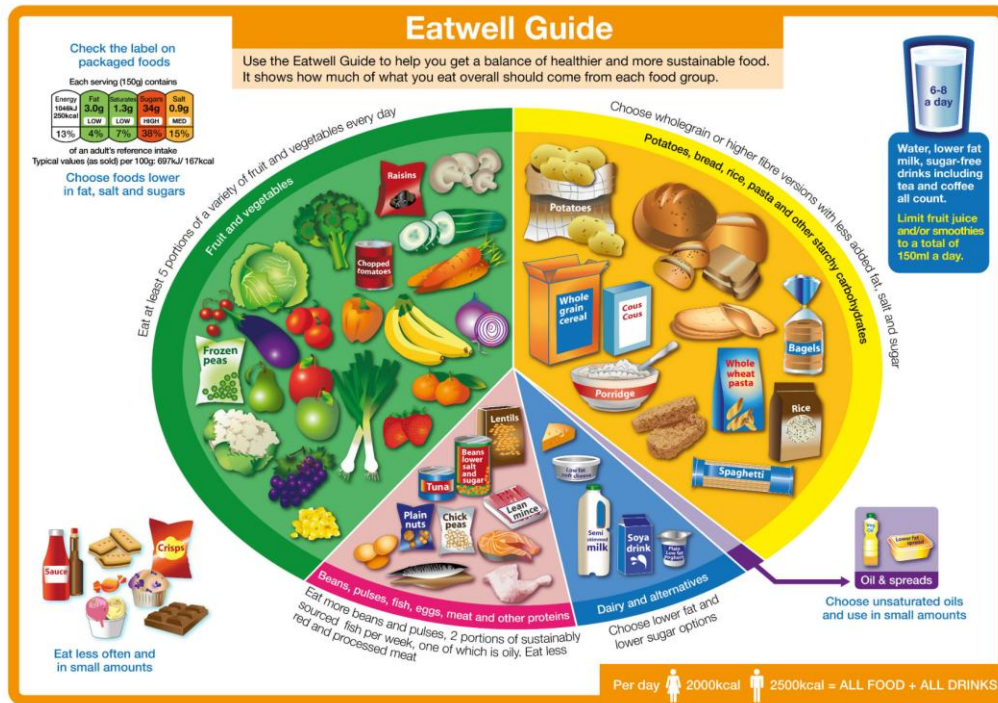


Healthy Eating for Children

Parent/Carer Guide to the Eatwell Plate (2026)

A balanced diet helps children feel well, learn effectively, and grow healthily. The **Eatwell Plate (2026)** shows the ideal mix of foods children should eat most days. It's about balance, not perfection.



Fruit & Vegetables – Around 40% of the plate

- Aim for 5 a day
- Fresh, frozen, tinned, dried, and juiced all count
- Try different colours and textures

Starchy Carbohydrates – Around 35% of the plate

- Provide energy for learning and play
- Choose wholegrain where possible
- Examples: potatoes, pasta, rice, bread, cereals

Protein Foods – Around 15% of the plate

- Support growth and repair
- Includes beans, lentils, eggs, fish, poultry, lean meat, tofu

- Aim for two portions of fish a week

Dairy & Alternatives – Around 10% of the plate

- Important for bones and teeth
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese, fortified plant alternatives
- Choose lower-fat, lower-sugar options

Oils & Spreads – Small amounts

- Choose unsaturated oils (olive, rapeseed, sunflower)
- Use sparingly

Foods to Have Less Often

- Sugary drinks
- Sweets, chocolate, cakes, pastries
- Crisps and fried foods
- Processed meats

These are high in sugar, salt, or saturated fat and should be occasional treats.

Hydration

- Children need **6–8 drinks a day**
- Best choices: water and milk
- Limit juice/smoothies to 150ml
- Avoid energy drinks entirely

Healthy Lunch Ideas

- Wholegrain sandwich, wrap, or pasta salad
- Fruit or veg sticks
- Yoghurt or cheese portion
- Water
- Optional small treat

A Balanced Approach

Healthy eating is about building positive habits. The Eatwell Plate helps children understand what a balanced meal looks like and how different foods help their bodies.

Together, we can support children to make healthy choices every day.

