

Eating well and being the right weight for your height can make a significant difference to your health and, contrary to what a lot of people think, is not expensive and is certainly not dull! Before you start your slimming programme find out what is the right weight for your height and build, then plan your weight loss accordingly. For example, should you need to lose 10 kg, you may decide that you want to achieve this goal over 8 months. This means you need to aim at a weight loss of about 1,25kg per month.

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Be realistic, a weight loss of about 2 kg per month is the average healthy weight loss most people can achieve fairly easily. Research has shown that losing 10% of your present weight is a good goal to start with, and decreases your risk for a heart attack, stroke, cancer and diabetes appreciably.

To determine what your ideal or correct weight should be, go to the section on the body mass index under the Usage tab.

There is a huge variety of food from which to choose, after all, eating is one of the pleasures of life. For good health and variety, foods should be chosen from each of the five food groups set out below, to make up your three meals every day – breakfast, lunch and supper. This ensures that all the nutrients, which the body needs to function properly, are provided.

Use the diet plate for serving all the main meals of the day – even if you eat a packed lunch on the run. This will help you get the balance of foods right at every meal.

More on Food Groups

As previously mentioned there are five main food groups that form part of our everyday diets, which are as follows:

Group 1 - Starchy Carbohydrates

These include Bread, Chapattis, Breakfast Cereals, Pasta, Noodles, Rice, Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Maize, Millet, Cornmeal, Plantain, Green Bananas, Beans and Lentils. Starchy foods should form the main part of every meal, as they provide energy, vitamins, minerals and fibre, but not too much fat or sugar.

Group 2 - Fruit & Vegetables

These include Fresh, Frozen and Tinned Fruit and Vegetables, Salads and Fruit Juice. Five portions of fruit and vegetables each day will provide important vitamins, minerals and fibre for the body. They add lots of flavour and freshness to the diet with very few calories.

Group 3 - Milk & Dairy Products

These include Milk, Cheese, Cream, Yoghurt and Fromage Frais. Milk and dairy products contain calcium, protein, B vitamins and fat. They are high in calories but lower fat versions are available for those who need to watch their weight or reduce fat intake in their diet for other reasons.

Group 4 – Proteins (Meat, Fish & Alternatives)

These include Meat and Meat Products such as Beef, Lamb, Pork, Poultry, Fish, Eggs, Beans, Lentils, Nuts and Textured Vegetable Protein. These foods need only be included in two meals

each day. They should not be eaten in large amounts. In order to maintain a healthy weight 4oz Meat, 5oz Chicken and 6oz Fish is required. Along with protein, they provide the body with vitamins and minerals. Again those needing to keep an eye on their weight or who want to reduce the fat content in their diet should go easy on the fatty meats and trim off any excess fat. A simple way to measure this food group is in the protein section of The Diet Plate.

Group 5 - Fats, Oils & Sugars

Fats and Oils include Butter, Margarine, Oils, Mayonnaise, Salad Dressings and Fried Foods. Sugars include Sugar, Syrup, Treacle, Jam, Marmalade, Honey, Biscuits, Cakes, Puddings, Chocolate, Ice Cream, Sweet Drinks and Sweets. Fats provide vitamins and energy, but should only be eaten in very small amounts each day. Whilst sugar provides energy it does not provide any nutrients and so should also be eaten in very small amounts and not every day. Fatty / Sugary foods are best not eaten too often but enjoyed as occasional treats instead, remembering to practise "Portion Control".

Eating these in the correct proportions as part of your daily meal plan can help control and lose weight, whilst at the same time providing the correct nutrients, vitamins, minerals and energy for your body to function properly.

By using The Diet Plate, measuring and managing the right amounts is as easy as 1,2,3.

No more need to weigh your portions - just put them on the plate.