



Somerset

MOVING TOWARDS MORE WHOLE FOODS

For better health
& wellbeing

CONTENTS

3	Introduction
4	What are whole foods?
5	Vegetables and whole fruit
9	Minimally processed plant proteins
14	Minimally processed animal proteins
15	Minimally processed whole grains
20	Healthier fats
23	Herbs, spices and flavour
26	Foods to be mindful of
27	Added sugars
29	Refined grains
30	Ultra processed foods
31	Glossary

INTRODUCTION

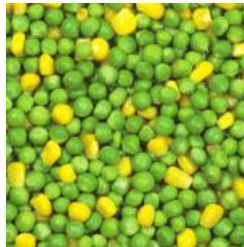
This booklet has been designed to support and inspire you to make gradual steps towards eating more whole foods.

Throughout this booklet we have included more information on what whole foods are and we have provided tips and recipes to give you a taster of how to include more of these foods in your everyday life.

Whilst some of the foods in this book may sound unfamiliar, many of them can be found in your local supermarket or food store and a wider variety can be found online. A glossary is available at the back to help explain some of the less familiar terms in this booklet.

We encourage you to focus your efforts on **what to eat more of** when making healthier choices, whilst being mindful of foods which are linked with poor health.

Any change you make needs to be sustainable for you in the longer term, therefore try to take it one small step at a time. Every change you make towards including more whole foods in your way of eating is a step in the right direction towards better health and wellbeing.



WHAT ARE WHOLE FOODS?



Whole foods consist of a single ingredient and are unprocessed or minimally processed.

Whole foods include:

- Vegetables and whole fruit
- Minimally processed plant proteins
- Minimally processed animal proteins
- Minimally processed whole grains
- Minimally processed healthier fats
- Herbs and spices for flavour

Why more whole foods?

A common theme within approaches to eating for good health and wellbeing is that they include more whole foods, especially plant-based foods. The foundation on which the traditional Mediterranean way of eating is based, is in the inclusion of whole foods, which is linked to lower risk of ill health and disease. Whole foods are packed with essential nutrients like fibre, vitamins, minerals, protein and phytonutrients that help protect against disease.



VEGETABLES AND WHOLE FRUIT

- These are important for vitamins, minerals, fibre and phytonutrients (which help protect against disease).
- Keep the skins on, they contain lots of fibre and nutrients.
- It is better to eat whole fruits, rather than drink fruit juice. When you eat a whole fruit, you get the beneficial fibre that is naturally present in the fruit. This can help you feel full and supports healthy digestion. Additionally, whole fruits have less natural sugars than fruit juice, which can be better for overall health.
- When enjoying fruits, it is important to consider portion sizes, especially with sweeter and larger fruits like grapes, bananas, pineapple, and mango.
- If you have tinned fruit, try to choose those in natural juice rather than syrup and drain the juices away.
- For dried fruit, be mindful of the portion size. A portion would be equal to one piece of fruit, for example, 1-2 dried apricot, dates or figs, or 8-10 sultanas, cranberries, or sour cherries.



Did you know?

You can save time and reduce waste by keeping the skins on your vegetables. The skins of pumpkin and squash are edible and taste great when roasted.



MOVING TOWARDS MORE VEGETABLES & WHOLE FRUIT

Improving the nutritional quality of a ready meal



Adding frozen peas to a ready meal can make your meal healthier. This simple addition of peas can increase the fibre, protein, and phytonutrient content of your meal, which is good for your body.

Making your own tomato sauce



Make your own tomato sauce to act as a base for meals, as a good alternative to ultra processed versions. Lightly fry chopped red onions with seed or olive oil, until softened (5-10 minutes). Add chopped garlic and fry for another minute. Then add a tin of chopped tomatoes and one tablespoon of tomato puree. Season with dried mixed herbs or fresh basil.



MOVING TOWARDS MORE VEGETABLES & WHOLE FRUIT



Tips

- Use tinned, frozen or fresh versions whichever is more available.
- Tinned tomatoes are really useful to have in the store cupboard and they make a great homemade sauce for meals.
- Red peppers roasted in seed or olive oil are naturally sweet and make a great side dish for meals.
- Try roasting broccoli and cauliflower with plenty of seed or olive oil, some black pepper, paprika and/or cinnamon. They go well as a side dish with meals.
- Courgette, broccoli, peas, carrot and peppers go well in curries and can help bulk out the dish and make it more filling.
- Peppers, courgettes, mushrooms and aubergine can be added to skewers and roasted or barbecued with seed or olive oil and garlic. Sweet corns also barbecue well with seed or olive oil and paprika.
- Add chopped whole fruit to bean and grain salads, for example, chopped orange, or apple. Add the zest of orange for even more flavour.
- Add fresh whole fruit to natural or Greek yoghurt, as an alternative to artificially flavoured yoghurt.

What about potatoes?

Potatoes are classed as a starchy food. They offer some nutrition like fibre and nutrients, but they are often eaten in processed forms (e.g. mashed and fried). If you enjoy potatoes, try to eat them with their skins on and try different types of potatoes too, such as new potatoes and sweet or purple varieties.



MEDITERRANEAN TRAY BAKE

4-6



Ingredients:

- 4-6 tablespoons of seed or olive oil
- 2 sweet potatoes with skins on, chopped into 2cm thick slices
- 1 leek, chopped into 5cm chunks
- 2 peppers (red, yellow or green), sliced
- 6-8 large tomatoes, halved
- 2 red onions, quartered
- 4 garlic cloves, whole
- A tablespoon of dried mixed herbs (e.g. rosemary, oregano or basil)

Optional:

- 1 tablespoon of pesto
- Feta cheese

An easy way to eat more vegetables and bring out their natural sweetness

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C/ 180°C fan. Add oil to a tray and heat gently in the oven. When the oil is hot, add in chopped chunks of sweet potato, leek, sliced peppers, halved tomatoes, quartered onions and whole cloves of garlic (alternatively you can buy frozen bags of Mediterranean vegetables for roasting).
2. Stir in the mixed herbs (and pesto if using) and coat evenly with the oil. Roast for 30-40 minutes (or 20 minutes in an air fryer). Sprinkle with feta (optional) upon serving.

Tip

You can use any vegetables for this recipe, for example, cauliflower, broccoli or butternut squash. Additionally, for variation, you could add in a tin of chickpeas, halloumi, chicken or fish whilst roasting.



MINIMALLY PROCESSED PLANT PROTEINS

- Minimally processed plant proteins, such as pulses, were once the primary source of protein in human diets and meat, fish, and eggs were eaten occasionally. In the last century this trend has reversed, and very few pulses are now consumed in the UK.
- Pulses are rich in beneficial fibre and protein, essential for a healthy gut. As they are wrapped in a fibre shell they are digested slowly, providing a slow release of energy. They also contain essential nutrients like iron, zinc, folate, magnesium, and protective phytonutrients.



Pulses include:

- **Beans** – kidney, barlotti, chickpeas, pinto, runner beans, broad beans, butter beans, mung beans, edamame (soy), and cannellini (white) beans.
 - **Peas** – whole or split green peas, garden peas, marrow fat peas, black eyed peas, yellow peas and black badger (carlin) peas.
 - **Lentils** – french green (puy), green, brown, red and yellow lentils.
- Pulses are available either dried, tinned, frozen and in some cases fresh. They are also very low cost. Choose a variety which works for you.

New to pulses?

See the tips and recipes on pages 10-13 for ideas on how to eat more pulses.



MOVING TOWARDS MINIMALLY PROCESSED PLANT PROTEINS

Improving the nutritional quality of meals made with baked beans



Baked beans are a type of ultra-processed food. If you enjoy eating baked beans, you can make them healthier by adding a tin of tomatoes and cannellini beans, along with extra spices like paprika. This not only makes the meal go further, but also increases its nutritional value by adding more fibre and phytonutrients.

You could try using different types of beans, or try making your own beans in sauce from scratch, without the need for ultra-processed baked beans.

Money saving meat swap



To make your meals more budget-friendly and nutritious, consider adding red, green, or yellow lentils to any meat dishes. Lentils are a low cost source of protein and adding them to your favourite meals boosts the nutritional value and helps to make your meal go further. Don't forget to add healthier fats and herbs and spices for extra flavour. Additionally, consider batch cooking and refrigerating or freezing any leftovers to save time later on.

MOVING TOWARDS MINIMALLY PROCESSED PLANT PROTEINS



Tips

- Tinned and frozen pulses are readily available from supermarkets and food stores. They are already cooked so can be eaten cold or simply reheated.
- Start with lentils or split peas if you are worried about gut symptoms. These may be a little easier to digest. Increase your intake gradually to help minimise symptoms.
- Red, yellow and green lentils are a softer lentil when cooked and they are good for meals like casseroles, Dhal, curries, stews and soups.
- French (Puy) or green speckled lentils retain their shape and firmness and are ideal for salads.
- Chickpeas go well with spinach and kale and are great in curries with a tomato and/or coconut milk base.
- Chickpeas, broad beans, garden peas, marrow fat peas and lentils can be mashed with ingredients such as garlic, seed or olive oil, lemon juice and tahini to make an easy dip or hummus.
- Dried lentils are very cheap and do not require any soaking before cooking.
- Remember to add healthier fats, herbs and spices for flavour.

Did you know?

Pulses contain pre-biotics. These are non-digestible carbohydrates which friendly strains of gut bacteria use as a 'fuel' source to make important chemicals for good health. Wholegrains, vegetables, whole fruit and nuts and seeds contain them too.



FRIED BUTTER BEANS WITH FETA



Ingredients :

- 2 tins of butter beans
- 3 tablespoons of seed or olive oil
- 8 spring onions, both green and white parts, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely sliced
- Small red chilli or a pinch of chilli flakes (to taste)
- 1/2 lemon, zest and juice
- 1 teaspoons of sumac or smoked paprika

- Optional: 50g feta, crumbled



A side dish for hot or cold meals

Method :

1. Drain the contents of the butter bean tins, rinse and leave to dry.
2. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a frying pan until it starts to sizzle, add half of your butter beans and fry over a medium-high heat turning occasionally, allowing to cook until the skin is a golden brown and starts to blister. Empty onto a clean dish, set aside.
3. Add another 1 tablespoon of oil to the pan, heat and repeat the process with the remaining butter beans. When they are almost cooked add the spring onions, garlic, pinch of chilli, and lemon zest. Lightly fry for one minute. Then add the cooked batch of butter beans, which were set aside, to the pan and heat through for another minute or two.
4. Serve on a bed of salad or spinach and drizzle with lemon juice. Crumble over feta (optional) and sprinkle with sumac or smoked paprika.

RED LENTIL DHAL



Ingredients :

- 2 tablespoons of seed or olive oil
- 1 red onion, diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1 tablespoon medium curry powder
- 2 teaspoon garam masala
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1 cup dried red lentils
- 500ml chicken stock
- 1 tin of chopped tomatoes
- 1/2 block (approx 100g) of creamed coconut
- 1 tablespoon of dried coriander, or a handful of fresh, finely chopped

- Optional: roasted peppers to serve

Make as a side dish or main meal

Method :

1. Heat the oil in a pan then add the onion and garlic and fry until soft. Add the curry powder, garam masala and fennel and continue frying for a couple of minutes.
2. Add lentils and fry for a further couple of minutes before adding the chicken stock, tin of chopped tomatoes and creamed coconut.
3. Simmer on a medium heat until a soft Dhal is formed, this should take approximately 25-30 minutes. You may need to add more water to achieve the right consistency but do this a couple of tablespoons at a time.
4. Take off the heat then mix in the dried or fresh coriander.

Tip

Serve with spinach or peas. Alternatively bulk out this meal with a serving of whole grain rice.



MINIMALLY PROCESSED ANIMAL PROTEINS

- These foods are meat, oily fish, white fish, and eggs that have not been significantly processed or coated in batter and breadcrumbs. They contain protein, vitamins and minerals. Oily fish also contain healthier fats.
- White meat includes chicken and turkey. Red meat includes beef, lamb, pork, goat and venison.
- Eating too much red meat and especially processed meats can increase the risk of certain cancers and diseases. Processed meats are meats preserved by smoking, curing, salting, or using preservatives. For example, sausages, burgers, ham, bacon, and cured meats (e.g. salami and pepperoni).
- Oily fish - examples include pilchards, mackerel, sardines, salmon, sprats, trout, kipper, herring and carp. Some types of white fish, such as sea bass, sea bream, turbot, and halibut, also contain healthier fats, but in lower amounts than oily fish.



Did you know?

Meats and fish were eaten in small amounts in the traditional Mediterranean diet and pulses were the main source of protein.



MINIMALLY PROCESSED WHOLE GRAINS

Minimally processed whole grains may be cooked to make them digestible. They are naturally higher in fibre, protein, healthier fats and phytonutrients than refined and processed grains.

As minimally processed grains are wrapped in a fibre shell, they provide a slower release of energy (blood glucose) than grains which have been more processed and refined.

They are an important source of fuel to help feed the 'healthy' bacteria in your gut. They offer a complete package of energy, fibre, protein, healthier fats and nutrients (including calcium, iron, zinc, B vitamins) and protective phytonutrients.

Examples include:

- brown rice and wild rice
- quinoa
- buckwheat
- millet
- rye
- whole barley
- wheat (freekah, spelt, farro)
- oat groats and pinhead oats.

It is worth looking out for more commonly found grains like brown rice, quinoa, buckwheat, wild rice and bulgur wheat in supermarkets. A wider variety of grains can be bought online or in health food shops if desired.



MOVING TOWARDS MINIMALLY PROCESSED WHOLE GRAINS

Try to make small changes to include more minimally processed whole grains.
For example:



Swap white rice for brown rice

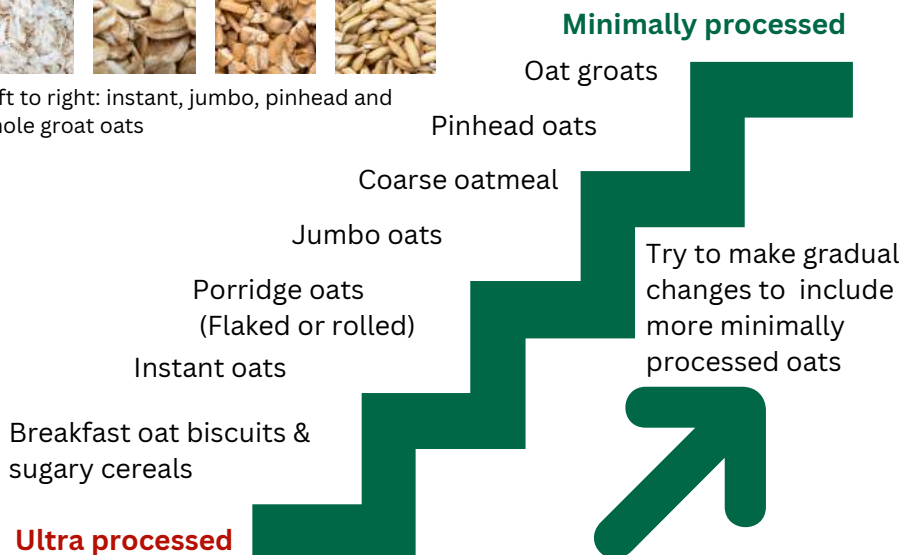
- 1 Try swapping white bread to a bread made with **wholemeal flour**.
- 2 Then try swapping to a bread with **added seeds and grains**.
- 3 Then try swapping to a bread with **fewer added ingredients** e.g. a fresher bread with added seeds and grains.
- 4 Then try swapping some of your bread based meals for meals with **minimally processed whole grains** (see next page for tips).



MOVING TOWARDS MINIMALLY PROCESSED WHOLE GRAINS



Left to right: instant, jumbo, pinhead and whole groat oats



Tips

- Try a different minimally processed whole grain occasionally.
- Buckwheat, quinoa, bulgur wheat, millet, brown rice and pinhead oats are helpful starting grains as they are quicker to cook.
- Remember to add healthier fats and flavour! (see pages 20-25 for tips)
- Whole grains can be cooked on the hob, a rice cooker, slow cooker or using the steam function with an air fryer.
- If you want to prepare whole grains, you can do so by cooking them on the stove for 10-45 minutes or using the 'steam function' in an air fryer in half the time.
- All grains can be cooked using a low energy method too. Simply cover with water and bring to a boil for 3-5 minutes. Then, leave the lid on, turn off the heat, and let them soak in the residual heat for 3-4 hours.

TABBOULEH



Ingredients :

- 1.5 cups coarse whole wheat bulgur
- 4 tablespoons of seed or olive oil
- 1 lemon, zest and juice
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cucumber, diced
- 6 large tomatoes, diced
- 1 tablespoon of dried mint or a large handful of fresh mint, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon of dried parsley or a large handful of fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 2 spring onions, chopped

An easy no cook side dish

Method :

1. Bring 3 cups of water to a boil in a medium pot. Add bulgur, cover and remove from the heat. Let it sit for 20-25 minutes, or until the bulgur is tender. Drain any excess water, then fluff with a fork.
2. In a large bowl, add the oil, lemon juice and zest, garlic, ground coriander, and cinnamon and mix well with a fork or whisk. Add the cucumber, tomatoes, mint, parsley and spring onions. Add the cooked bulgur and mix well to combine all the ingredients then serve.

Tip

This makes a great base for lunch meals. Simply add some pulses, boiled eggs, chicken or fish to make a filling balanced meal.



BUCKWHEAT & ORANGE SALAD



Ingredients :

- 1.5 cups dried buckwheat
- 2 whole oranges
- 1 large red onion, diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 10 cherry tomatoes
- 2 tins of beans e.g. chickpeas
- 6 tablespoons of seed or olive oil
- 4 tablespoons of vinegar e.g. apple cider or red/white wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons of seeds e.g. sunflower, rapeseed or nigella seeds
- 1 tablespoon of sumac
- 1 tablespoon of dried parsley or a large handful of fresh parsley



An easy lunch which can be prepared in advance

Method :

1. Bring 3 cups of water to the boil and add 1.5 cups of buckwheat. Cover and simmer for 8-10 minutes. Remove from heat and add to a colander along with the tinned beans, drain and rinse them with cold water.
2. Grate the zest of the oranges and then cut the peeled oranges into bite-sized segments and add to a large bowl. Add the red onion, garlic and cherry tomatoes. Then add the cooked buckwheat and beans.
3. Pour over the oil, vinegar, seeds and sumac and toss all the ingredients together.
4. Stir in the dried or finely chopped fresh parsley. Add optional extras like crumbled feta and toasted nuts for a crunchy topping if desired.

Tip

You can swap buckwheat for any preferred grain in this recipe. Add a nut dukka (see recipe on page 22) for a crunchy topping.



HEALTHIER FATS

- There is evidence to suggest the type of fat we eat is more important for good health than the total amount of fat. Replacing fats from animal sources with healthier fats from plant sources seems to be beneficial in reducing the risk of certain diseases.
- Healthier fats help to carry flavour which makes eating healthier foods more sustainable. They also have nutrients that can protect against disease, and some of them contain protein and fibre too.
- Try to have more plant-based fats, leaving less room for animal fats like red meat, butter and cream.
- Healthier plant based fats include:
 - nuts and nut oils
 - seeds and seed oils
 - olives and olive oils
 - avocado
- The following types of foods contain fats which appear to be beneficial to health.
 - oily fish
 - natural and Greek yoghurt
 - dark chocolate in moderation (containing 70% or more cocoa solids)



See pages 21 and 22 for tips on how to eat more healthier fats

MOVING TOWARDS HEALTHIER FATS



Tips

- Drizzle roasted vegetables and salads with plenty of seed or olive oil.
- Make an easy dressing using seed or olive oil, apple cider vinegar (or red/white wine vinegar), a squeeze of lemon and lime and a tablespoon of wholegrain mustard or chopped/dried herbs. Add to salads and cooked lentils or grains to add extra flavour.
- Add texture toppers to foods using nuts and seeds for extra crunch and flavour - see Hazelnut Dukka recipe on page 22.
- Natural or Greek yoghurt can be added to lentils, grains, eggs and salads as an alternative to processed sauces. Add a sprinkle of paprika or sumac for extra flavour and colour.
- Tinned sardines in seed or olive oil, spring water or tomato sauce are a low cost way of including oily fish in your diet.
- Swap crisps and processed snacks for raw or lightly roasted nuts. Additionally, try roasting nuts with healthier oils and herbs and spices for extra flavour.

What about calories?

All foods contain calories but evidence suggests the nutrient quality of the food is more important than the calories. Healthier fats appear to be helpful for weight management. They are also really important for brain function and skin health.



HAZELNUT DUKKA



This makes a crunchy
topper for meals

Ingredients :

- 200g hazelnuts
- 1 tablespoon cumin seeds
- 1 tablespoon fennel seeds
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds

Method :

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan. Add all ingredients to a baking tray and cook for 8-10 mins until they are lightly golden.
2. Tip into a food processor and pulse a few times until the nuts are roughly chopped. Alternatively, allow ingredients to cool and place in a zip log bag (expelling the air) and bash with a rolling pin or crush with a pestle and mortar.
3. Store cooled ingredients in an empty jar or airtight container.

Tip

This goes well on top of lentil dishes and salads. You can swap the hazelnuts for walnuts, peanuts or any other preferred nuts for variation.



HERBS, SPICES & FLAVOUR

- These are important for adding flavour to foods and work well with healthier fats. They also contain important phytonutrients.
- Useful store cupboard ingredients for flavour include:
 - onions (red and white)
 - garlic
 - ginger
 - black pepper
 - garam masala (savory blend)
 - curry powder (savory blend)
 - dried mixed or fresh herbs
 - paprika /smoked paprika
 - mixed spice (sweet blend)
 - cumin
 - sumac
 - harissa
 - pesto
 - cinnamon
 - lemon
 - lime
 - orange
 - apple cider vinegar
 - red wine vinegar
 - white wine vinegar



Did you know?

Herbs and spices have been used for thousands of years for both cooking and medicinal purposes. As well as adding flavour they also contain important phytonutrients.



MOVING TOWARDS MORE HERBS, SPICES & FLAVOUR



Tips

- Try adding herbs and spices to your existing favourite meals as an easy introduction.
- Lightly fry onions and garlic in seed or olive oil and add in spices to build a flavourful base for chillies, curries, casseroles and soups.
- Add most of your spices at the beginning of cooking so that they have time to release their flavours. Finish with a sprinkle of spices and a scattering of fresh herbs for added flavour.
- Garam masala and curry powder are savoury spice blends and a useful store cupboard staple to bring out the flavours of pulses and meats in curries and casseroles.
- Mixed spice is a sweeter spice blend and can be useful for adding natural sweetness to all types of meals, including porridge and roasted vegetables.
- Add a tablespoon of harissa or pesto to 4 tablespoons of natural or Greek yoghurt to make an easy condiment for hot and cold meals.
- Adding citrus fruits like lemon and lime as well as vinegar such as apple cider, red or white wine vinegar, can improve the flavour of salads, vegetable and grain dishes. Add as a dressing or squeeze some lemon or lime over the dish before serving. Just like healthier fats, the acidity from these foods helps to enhance flavour in meals.

Are all spices hot?

Only a small number of spices are hot, for example, black pepper, chilli and cayenne peppers are 'hotter' spices. Most other spices are fragrant or sweet scented.



CHIMICHURRI



A flavourful sauce which goes well with pulses, chicken & fish

Ingredients :

- small bunch of coriander
- small bunch of parsley
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 small red onion or a shallot
- 1 small chilli
- 5 tablespoons of seed or olive oil
- 2 tablespoons of red wine vinegar

Method :

1. Finely chop the herbs, garlic, onion and chilli and add to a bowl.
2. Stir in the oil and vinegar and mix to combine all the ingredients.
3. Serve on top of beans, lentils, chicken or fish. Store any remaining sauce in an empty jar in the fridge for up to 5 days.

Tip

Try adding zest and juice of lemon or lime to add a bit of zing to your sauce. Store any excess in the fridge and cover with a layer of oil to retain its freshness.



FOODS TO BE MINDFUL OF



Foods to be mindful of

- Added sugar
- Refined grains
- Ultra processed foods

Why ?

For good health and wellbeing it is widely agreed that reducing added sugar, refined grains, and ultra-processed foods is recommended. These foods are strongly linked with poor health outcomes and a higher risk of diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cancer and Alzheimer's.



BE MINDFUL OF ADDED SUGARS

- Added sugar includes sugar which has been added to food and drink and includes natural sugar sweeteners like honey and fruit juice.
- There is strong evidence to show that eating too much added sugar, particularly in sugary drinks, can increase the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, and even Alzheimer's. It is important to be aware of the amount of added sugar in our diets in order to protect our health.
- Added sugars do not provide us with any nutritional benefit and more importantly they displace room for nutritious foods in our diet.
- Added sugars are often found in processed foods. Examples of added sugar and foods which include added sugar are:



- table sugar
- honey
- high fructose corn syrup
- agave nectar
- maple syrup
- cakes, biscuits, pastries
- syrups and sauces
- processed breakfast cereals
- chocolates (particularly white and milk chocolate)
- ice cream, lollies and sorbets
- sugary drinks, for example, cola, energy drinks, fruit juice, lemonade, cordials, smoothies and shakes.

Did you know?

Sugar naturally present in **whole** fruits, vegetables and unsweetened milk and yoghurt is not classed as added sugar.

ADDING NATURAL SWEETNESS WITHOUT ADDED SUGAR



Tips

- Swap fruit flavoured yoghurt for natural or Greek yoghurt and add whole fruit for natural sweetness.
- Add naturally sweet spices to foods in place of added sugar. For example, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, allspice and mace.
- Add whole fruit or a little dried fruit to oats, yoghurt, cooked grains and salads for natural sweetness.
- If you drink squash or cordials, try to gradually reduce the amount you add to water.
- Add slices of lemon or lime to hot or cold water for a refreshing drink.
- Swap milk or white chocolate for dark chocolate (containing 70% or more cocoa solids) to help reduce your added sugar intake.
- Gradually reduce the amount of sugar you add to recipes. Taste buds change over time and often you will not even notice the difference. Add a little vanilla, orange, almond or lemon extract or zest to recipes for extra flavour.
- Try roasting vegetables to bring out their natural sweetness. Red onions, carrots, peppers, butternut squash, beetroot and tomatoes add subtle sweetness to meals.

What about artificial sweeteners?

Artificial sweeteners are considered an ultra processed food substance. The World Health Organisation recommends avoiding the use of artificial sugars for weight control. There is evidence they are linked with a higher risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. There is also some limited evidence linking them to increased risk of cancer.



BE MINDFUL OF REFINED GRAINS

- Refined grains are grains which have been milled or processed changing the structure of the whole grain. This can result in a loss of important nutrients like protein, fibre, healthier fats, and phytonutrients.
- Many of the grains we eat today are refined and the energy they provide is often released very quickly.
- Examples of foods made of refined grains are cakes, biscuits, breads, pasta, white rice, cous cous, packaged breakfast cereals, crackers, flaked and instant oats.
- Bread, pasta and crackers made with whole grain flours and added grains and seeds are a better choice than types made with white flour.
- Packaged breakfast cereals often contain a lot of added sugar and salt and some grains are more refined than others. Jumbo oats, no added sugar muesli, shredded and whole wheat type cereals are a better choice of refined grain than corn flakes, instant oats, granola and other sugar coated cereals.



Tip

Try to include more minimally processed whole grains. They are nutrient dense and they release energy more steadily. See page 16 and 17 for tips on moving towards minimally processed grains.



BE MINDFUL OF ULTRA PROCESSED FOODS

- Many of today's foods are highly processed or ultra-processed. These types of foods are often made from substances extracted from foods, like starches, unhealthy fats, sugars, and hydrogenated fats. They usually contain additives such as artificial flavours, colours, stabilisers, and preservatives. They often contain a lot of added salt too.
- As with added sugar, there is growing evidence that ultra processed food and drinks raise the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers and other diseases.
- Examples of ultra processed foods include:
 - artificial sweeteners e.g. aspartame, sucralose and saccharine
 - biscuits, pastries, buns and cakes
 - breakfast cereals
 - carbonated (fizzy) drinks
 - crisps
 - fruit-flavoured yogurts
 - ham
 - ice cream



- instant soups
- mass-produced bread or pre-packaged bread
- pre-prepared chips or fries
- pre-prepared meals, pizzas and pies
- sausages, burgers and nuggets
- sweets and chocolates

Tip

Try swapping ultra processed snacks like crisps and sweets for healthier options like nuts, whole fruit and dark chocolate.



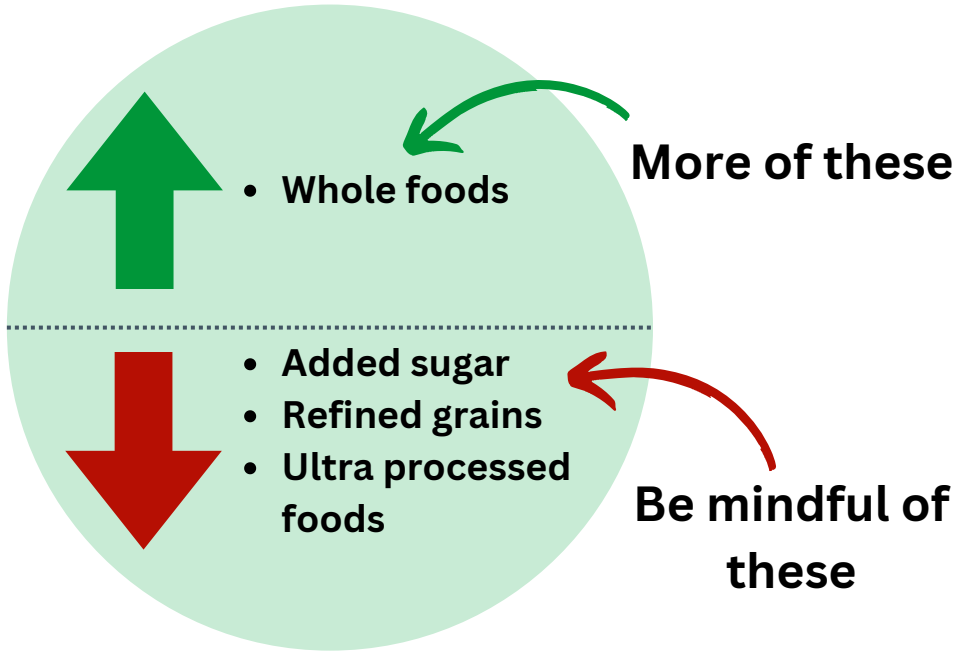
GLOSSARY

This glossary explains some of the terms in this booklet

- **Phytonutrient** - Nutrients which are found in plant foods which appear to be protective against ill health and disease. The word 'phyto' is the Greek word for 'plant'.
- **Pulse** - the seeds of edible plants, they are an umbrella term for different types of peas, lentils and beans.
- **Fibre** - found in plant foods and the main fuel for the health promoting microbes in our gut.
- **Sumac** - a citrus flavoured spice made from dried berries.
- **Garam masala** - a blend of spices which bring flavour and warmth to meals.
- **Harissa** - a blend of roasted peppers and spices which add a peppery and smoky flavour to meals.
- **Tahini** - a sesame seed paste.
- **Quinoa, buckwheat and millet** - edible seeds, classified as whole grains because of their similar nutritional properties. They are all gluten free.
- **Bulgur, freekah, farro and spelt** - types of wheat grain. Bulgur and freekah are a type of cracked wheat which are quicker to cook.
- **Oat groats and pinhead oats** - these are minimally processed oats. Pinhead oats are cracked whole oats (groats) which make them quicker to cook. You can make overnight oats with pinhead oats by soaking them in boiling water for a few hours or overnight.



FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTHIER EATING



Notes:
