



## TOPIC 1

# Healthy food and drink

## Topic introduction

### Background

Messages about healthy eating seem to be everywhere, urging individuals to buy more of certain foods, to avoid other foods, to manage their weight, to look after their heart and so on. The plethora of information and conflicting messages inevitably causes considerable confusion about food and what constitutes healthy eating.

Choosing healthy food is more than just an individual choice. The ability to buy, store and cook healthy food requires a wide range of skills, such as knowing which foods are healthy, understanding about proportions, being able to read and understand food packaging and labelling and working within a budget, to name but a few. Access to healthy and cheap food in supermarkets also often depends on having a car. The term 'food poverty' describes social and economic causes of an unhealthy diet. It is important to understand that food poverty limits individuals' ability to make healthy food choices for themselves and their families.

Many individuals associate the word 'diet' with losing weight. In these materials we use the term 'healthy eating' to avoid such confusion and to reflect the current thinking of health practitioners.

Whilst healthy eating clearly encompasses more than weight management, there is no escaping the serious levels of obesity in the UK: 59% of women and 68% of men in England are overweight or obese.<sup>1</sup> Obesity is more common in individuals from lower socioeconomic groups, so it is likely that many of the learners you encounter will be obese or overweight.

### National targets / policies

The NHS Policy / Guidance: *Choosing a Better Diet: a Food and Health Action Plan* (March 2005) sets out the Government's plans to encourage and coordinate the actions of a range of organisations to improve nutrition and health in England.<sup>2</sup> The main messages for healthy eating for adults and children over 5 years of age are as follows.

- Enjoy your food! Healthy eating can be tasty and interesting. The key is to eat a variety of different foods.
- Eat at least five portions of a wide variety of fruit and vegetables a day.

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1. *Eating healthily – messages for individuals* (Ref: National Heart Forum, 2004, nutrition and food poverty, A toolkit)

[www.heartforum.org.uk/Publications\\_NHFReports\\_NutritionToolkit.aspx](http://www.heartforum.org.uk/Publications_NHFReports_NutritionToolkit.aspx)

2. [www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/10/57/09/04105709.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/10/57/09/04105709.pdf)

- Eat lots of starchy foods. Base your healthy eating on foods such as bread, potatoes, rice and pasta. Eat a variety of foods from this group and go for wholegrain or wholemeal starchy options, as they are also high in fibre.
- Eat moderate amounts of meat, fish and alternatives. Aim to eat at least one portion of oily fish (e.g. sardines, pilchards, salmon or mackerel) a week.
- Eat moderate amounts of milk and dairy foods. Choose low-fat options such as skimmed milk, low-fat yogurt and lower-fat cheese where possible.
- Try not to have foods and drinks that are high in sugar too often, and when you do, have only small amounts.
- Eat only small amounts of foods that are high in fat.
- Eat only small amounts of foods that are high in salt.
- If you drink alcohol, drink within sensible limits.

### **This topic**

The themes in this topic support learners to develop an up-to-date understanding of healthy foods and fluid intake, based on information from reputable sources such as the Food Standards Agency and the Department of Health. For example, by understanding the different food groups and the idea of the food plate, learners will be able to look at their own eating behaviour. The themes in this topic are:

- Food groups
- Food labels
- Nutritional information
- What is a portion?
- Budgeting
- Food temperature safety
- Food date safety
- Understanding a diet
- Writing a list
- Are you drinking enough fluid?

### **Further information and suggestions**

Find out whether there are any community food projects or 'Cook and Eat' initiatives in the locality.

## Mapping to the core curriculum

Topic 1 Healthy food and drink				
Theme	Literacy	Language	Numeracy	Page references
Food groups	Rw/E3.1, Rt/E2.4		HD1/E2.3, HD1/E2.1	4–12
Food labels	Rt/E2.2, Rw/E2.2, Rt/L1.4, Rt/L1.5		MSS1/E2.3	13–23
Nutritional information	Rt/E3.9, Rw/E3.1		HD1/E3.1, MSS1/E3.9, N2/E3.3	24–33
What is a portion?			HD1/E2.3, HD1/E2.4, HD1/E2.5, N1/E2.4, MSS1/E2.6	34–43
Budgeting			MSS1/E3.1, MSS1/L1.1, MSS1/E3.6	44–52
Food temperature safety	Rt/E3.3, Rw/E3.1, Rt/E3.9		MSS1/E2.8, MSS1/E3.9	53–61
Food date safety	Rw/E3.1, Rt/E3.7		MSS1/E2.4	62–68
Understanding a diet	Rt/E3.2, Rw/E3.1, Rw/L1.3, Rt/E3.8			69–75
Writing a list	Rw/E1.1, Ww/E1.1, Rt/E1.2, Rw/E2.3			76–83
Are you drinking enough fluid?	Rt/E3.7, Rt/E3.8		MSS1/E3.7	84–88

Highlighted curriculum items [ ] = included in National Tests