

Food groups

LEARNING OUTCOMES



- To understand why healthy eating is important
- To understand that different foods all contribute to healthy eating
- To categorise food into food groups
- To understand the concept of proportion in relation to foods

RESOURCES

- Pictures or photos of meals and other food items (Engage activity, Activity 1 ESOL)
- Colour copies of Resources 1 and 3
- Enlarged colour copy of Resource 1 (optional, Activity 1)
- Picture cards prepared from Resources 2A and 2B

- Copies of Resources 4 and 5 (optional)
- Sticky notes

RELATED THEMES

- Food labels (pages 13–23)
- Nutritional information (pages 24–33)
- What is a portion? (pages 34–43)

HEALTH SKILLS

Eating healthy food helps people to maintain good health and avoid nutrition-related conditions. Some learners will be interested in what constitutes a healthy diet in order to maintain their own health and the health of their families. Other learners may have specific conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure where a healthy approach to eating is essential. Healthy eating can be tasty and interesting. The key is to eat a variety of different foods.

Related health information

[www.nutrition.org.uk/upload/BNF%20Healthy%20Eating\(5\).pdf](http://www.nutrition.org.uk/upload/BNF%20Healthy%20Eating(5).pdf)

SKILLS FOR LIFE

In order to understand healthy eating, learners need to know that there are different food types. It is also important to realise that these food types should make up different proportions of the diet. Learners therefore need to:

- recognise and name different food groups
- understand and apply the concept of proportion.

Core curriculum

Activities in this theme will contribute to learning in the following curriculum areas:

- sort and classify food types (NHD1/E2.3)
- extract information from a simple diagram (e.g. the food plate) (NHD1/E2.1)
- understand the language used to compare size and proportion (LRw/E3.1)
- understand and use graphical information (e.g. the food plate) (LRt/E2.4).

Engage

- Set up a short discussion to share learners' ideas about food and healthy eating using pictures or real examples of healthy and less healthy meals.
- Bring in two contrasting examples of typical lunches – one which is apparently healthy and includes lots of vegetables and fruit but no protein or carbohydrate, and another which appears unhealthy such as fish and chips. Encourage learners to discuss which they feel is 'better for you' and why.
- Alternatively, base the discussion on pictures of a three-day menu of meals, some of which are unhealthy and others that are healthy (e.g. for day 1 a meal with lots of fatty foods, but few or no fruit and vegetables; for day 2 a meal with plenty of salad and fruit but not enough carbohydrate; for day 3 a balanced combination, etc.).
- Encourage discussion about problems that may occur as a result of eating unhealthy food for a long time. Support learners in thinking about the current issues of obesity and heart disease in the UK.

Do you think that some foods are better for you than others?

Think about the food in these meals. Is there too much or too little of anything?

What do you think are the risks to health if a person chooses to eat unhealthy food all the time?

Enable

ACTIVITY 1

Introduce the idea of different food groups and that healthy eating includes all of them

- Refer to Resource 1 for a visual representation of healthy eating (the food plate). Discuss each of the food groups and ask for additional examples for each category. Ask learners whether they are able to pick out which of the groups are carbohydrates and which are proteins. Ask if they have seen these words or heard them anywhere else, such as on food labels or TV programmes.
- Label the diagram appropriately. Use sticky notes to add other foods and learners' ideas. A larger version of the plate will be useful here.
- Suggest that learners work in pairs to sort the picture cards prepared from Resources 2A and 2B into the five food groups on Resource 3.
- Use digital photography if available to add other food items to the picture cards or ask learners to bring in pictures from food labels.

To which groups do these foods belong?

Support

- It is not essential for learners to use the correct terms for the food groups. If they prefer, they can use their own descriptions.
- Reduce the number of objects to be sorted.
- Give five items to sort at a time, with one item from each food group.

ESOL

- Learners may be unfamiliar with some of the nutritional concepts and terms used to describe the different food groups, such as 'full- / low-fat (sausages)', 'low- / high-calorie (drinks)', 'full-fat / semi-skimmed / skimmed (milk)'. Support learners by providing simple explanations and bringing in examples of products which can help to illustrate the terms.
- For the sorting task, encourage learners to think about foods that are an essential part of the diet in their culture.

ACTIVITY 2

Introduce the concept of proportion in order to select food items for healthy eating

- Use the divisions on the plate (Resource 1) to discuss the proportion of one food group to another. Ask learners 'Which groups of food should you eat the most of? ... the least of?'
- Remind learners that a combination of food types is important for healthy eating, but that you need them in different amounts. Return to Resource 1 and look at the proportion of one food to another. Ask questions that compare the proportion of one food type to another, for example, 'Should you eat more protein or carbohydrate?'

Support

- Check learners understand the categories before they begin to sort foods by proportion.
- Ask learners to think about all the items they ate yesterday and write / draw each item onto a sticky note. They can sort them into food groups and then transfer them to the blank plate on Resource 4.
- Discuss with learners whether their food intake constitutes a healthy eating pattern.

ESOL

- In order to discuss the relative proportions of the different food groups, learners may need to review phrases for talking about quantities and making comparisons, such as 'eat a little', 'eat a lot of', 'eat more / less ... than'.

Think about what you ate yesterday. Did you eat as much fruit and vegetables as the food plate suggests?

Why is it important to eat a variety of foods?

TIP

Encourage learners to use terms such as 'more, less, a lot, a little' rather than fractional terms such 'a third'.

Is there any kind of food you think you will eat more / less of in future?

Action

- Check learners' understanding of different food groups.
- As a step towards a possible change in eating patterns, ask learners whether there is one food group where they will make changes in the week to come, for example eat one piece of fruit each day.
- As an extension to this work, learners can be encouraged to keep a food and drink diary (Resource 5).

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RESOURCE 1

Your body relies on the goodness that food provides. By eating a **wide variety** of foods in the **proportions** shown below, you can achieve a balanced, healthy eating pattern.

Fruit and vegetables

Eat: lots.

Go for: lots of different fruits and vegetables.

Avoid: adding sugar to fruit, adding fat or rich sauces to vegetables.



Bread, cereal and potatoes

Eat: lots.

Go for: wholemeal, whole-grain, brown or high-fibre bread and cereals.

Avoid: frying or adding butter.



Meat, fish and alternatives

Eat: moderate amounts.

Go for: lower-fat versions (e.g. low-fat sausages, skinless chicken).

Avoid: cooking with fat.



Foods containing fat or sugar

Eat: very little.

Go for: low-fat or low-calorie versions.

Avoid: snacks and sweets between meals.



Milk and dairy foods

Eat: moderate amounts.

Go for: lower-fat versions (e.g. semi-skimmed milk, low-fat yogurt).

Avoid: full-fat versions and added sugar (e.g. in ice cream).



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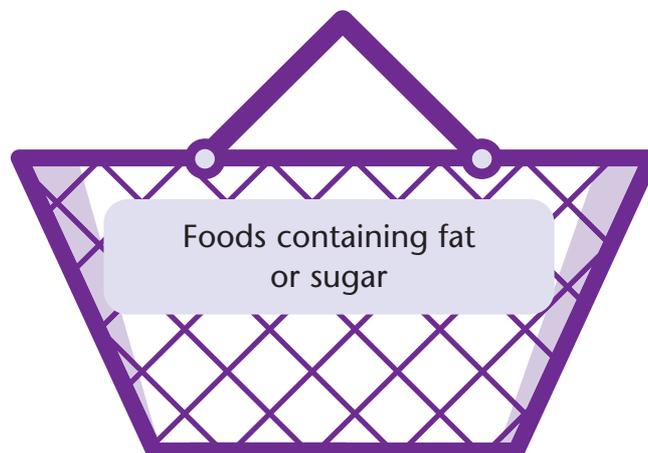
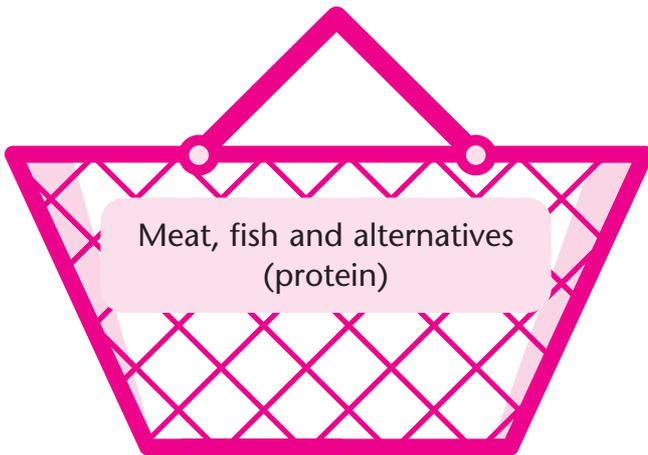
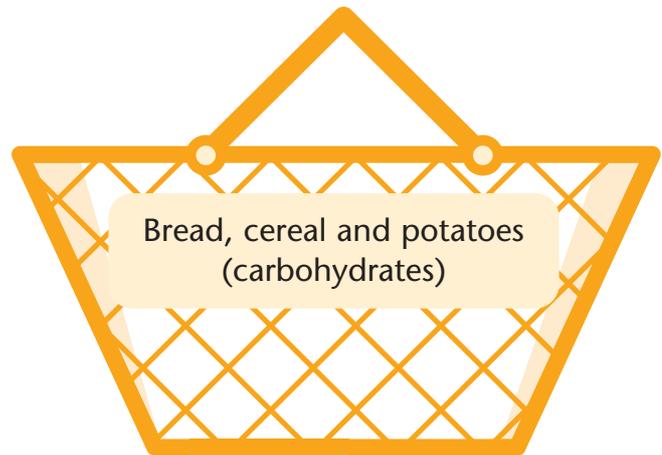
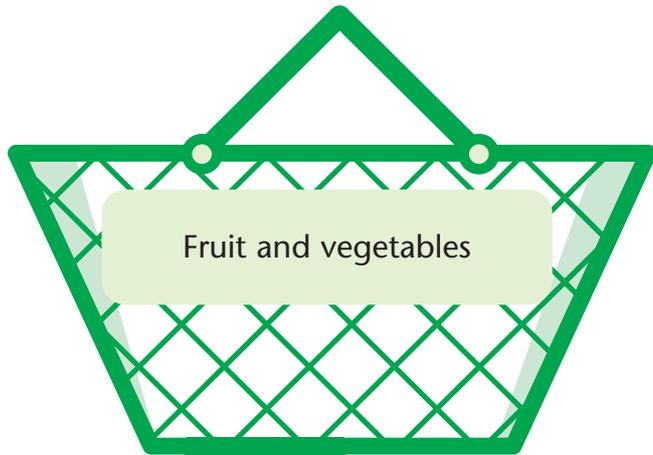
RESOURCE 2A

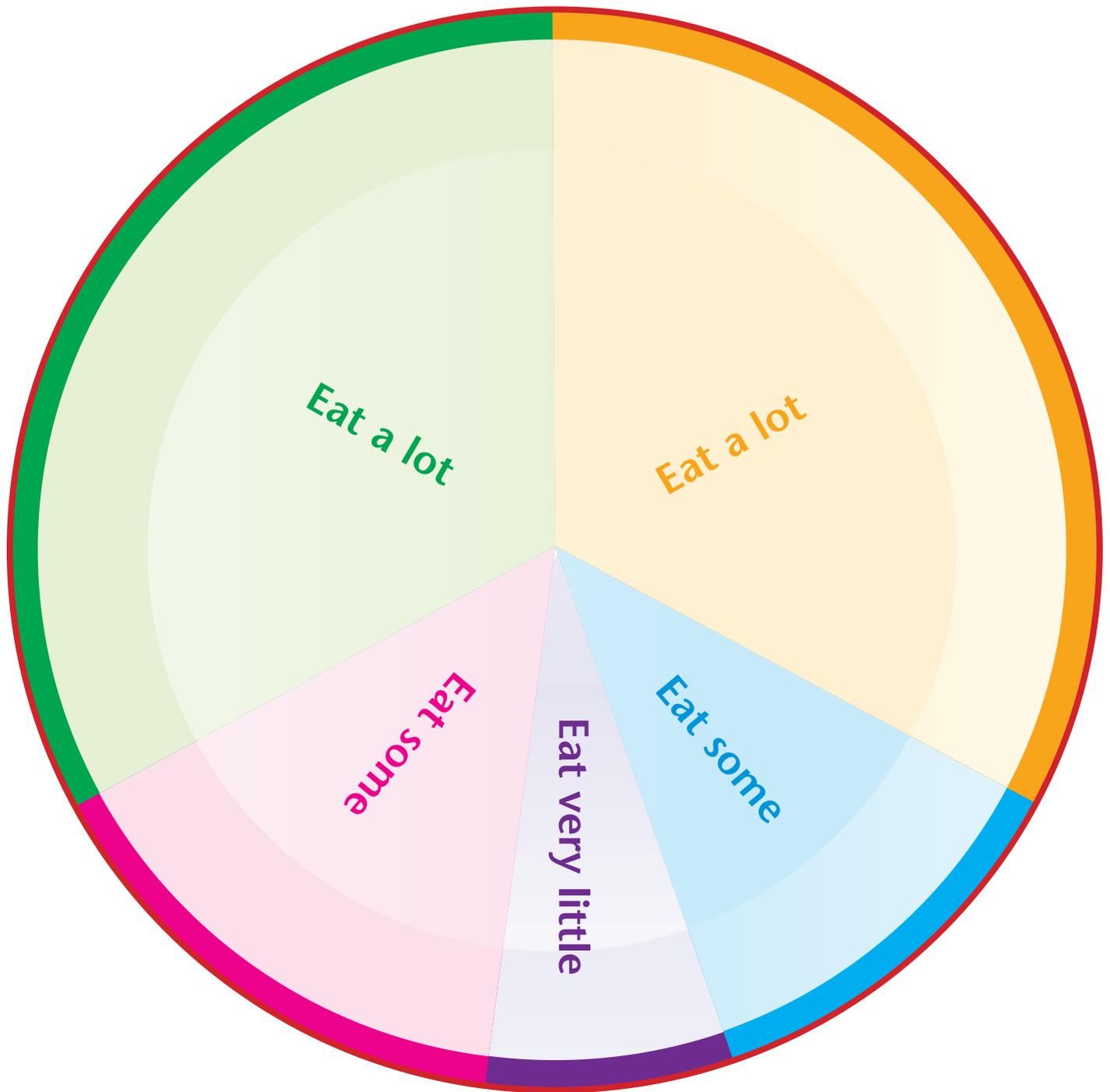


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RESOURCE 2B







Food and drink diary (include snacks)			
	Morning	Lunch time and afternoon	Evening
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			