



The Food Pyramid

For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over

Not needed for good health.

Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt

! Most people consume snacks high in fat, sugar and salt and sugar sweetened drinks up to 6 times a day (Healthy Ireland Survey 2016). There are no recommended servings for Top Shelf foods and drinks because they are not needed for good health.



NOT every day

Small or fun-size servings of chocolate, biscuits, cakes, sweets, crisps and other savoury snacks, ice cream and sugary drinks – **not every day, maximum once or twice a week.**

Need it for good health. Enjoy a variety every day.

Fats, spreads and oils

Use as little as possible. Choose mono or polyunsaturated reduced-fat or light spreads. Choose rapeseed, olive, canola, sunflower or corn oils. Limit mayonnaise, coleslaw and salad dressings as they also contain oil. Always cook with as little fat or oil as possible – grilling, oven-baking, steaming, boiling or stir-frying.



In very small amounts

1 serving size is:

1 portion pack reduced-fat or light spread for 2 slices of bread
1 teaspoon oil per person when cooking

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

Choose lean meat, poultry (without skin) and fish. Eat oily fish up to twice a week. Choose eggs, beans and nuts. Limit processed salty meats such as sausages, bacon and ham.



2 Servings a day

50-75g cooked lean beef, lamb, pork, mince or poultry (half size of palm of hand)
100g cooked fish, soya or tofu
¼ cup beans or lentils
2 eggs
40g unsalted nuts or seeds

Milk, yogurt and cheese

Choose reduced-fat or low-fat varieties. Choose low-fat milk and yogurt more often than cheese. Enjoy cheese in small amounts. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding need 3 servings a day.



3 Servings a day

5 for children age 9-12 and teenagers age 13-18
1 glass (200ml) milk
1 carton (125g) yogurt
1 bottle (200ml) yogurt drink
2 thumbs (25g) hard or semi-hard cheese such as cheddar or edam
2 thumbs (25g) soft cheese such as brie or camembert

Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

Wholemeal and wholegrain cereals are best. Enjoy at each meal. The number of servings depends on age, size, if you are a man or a woman and on activity levels. Watch your serving size and use the Daily Servings Guide below.*



3-5 Servings a day

Up to 7* for teenage boys and men age 19-50
2 thin slices wholemeal bread, 1½ slices wholemeal soda bread or 1 pitta pocket
¼ cup dry porridge oats or ¼ cup unsweetened muesli
1 cup flaked type breakfast cereal
1 cup cooked rice, pasta, noodles or cous cous
2 medium or 4 small potatoes, 1 cup yam or plantain

Vegetables, salad and fruit

Base your meals on these and enjoy a variety of colours. More is better. Limit fruit juice to unsweetened, once a day.



5-7 Servings a day

1 medium sized fruit – apple, orange, pear or banana
2 small fruits – plums, kiwis or mandarin oranges
Small fruits – 6 strawberries, 10 grapes or 16 raspberries
½ cup cooked vegetables – fresh or frozen
1 bowl salad – lettuce, tomato, cucumber
1 bowl homemade vegetable soup
150ml unsweetened fruit juice

*Daily Servings Guide – wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

Active	Child (5-12)	Teenager (13-18)	Adult (19-50)	Adult (51+)	Inactive	Teenager (13-18)	Adult (19-50)	Adult (51+)
	3-4	4	4-5	3-4		3	3-4	3
	3-5	5-7	5-7	4-5		4-5	4-6	4

There is no guideline for inactive children as it is essential that all children are active.

Serving size guide



Cereals, cooked rice and pasta, and vegetables, salad and fruit
Use a 200ml disposable plastic cup to guide serving size.



Cheese
Use two thumbs, width and depth to guide serving size.



Meat, poultry, fish
The palm of the hand, width and depth without fingers and thumbs, shows how much you need in a day.



Reduced-fat spread
Portion packs found in cafes can guide the amount you use. One pack should be enough for two slices of bread.



Oils
Use one teaspoon of oil per person when cooking or in salads.

Average daily calorie needs for all foods and drinks for adults

Active 2000kcal **Inactive** 1800kcal **Active** 2500kcal **Inactive** 2000kcal



Drink at least 8 cups of fluid a day – water is best



Get Active!
To maintain a healthy weight adults need at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on 5 days a week (or 150 minutes a week); children need to be active at a moderate to vigorous level for at least 60 minutes every day.