



# Healthy Joint Group: Week 5 healthy eating

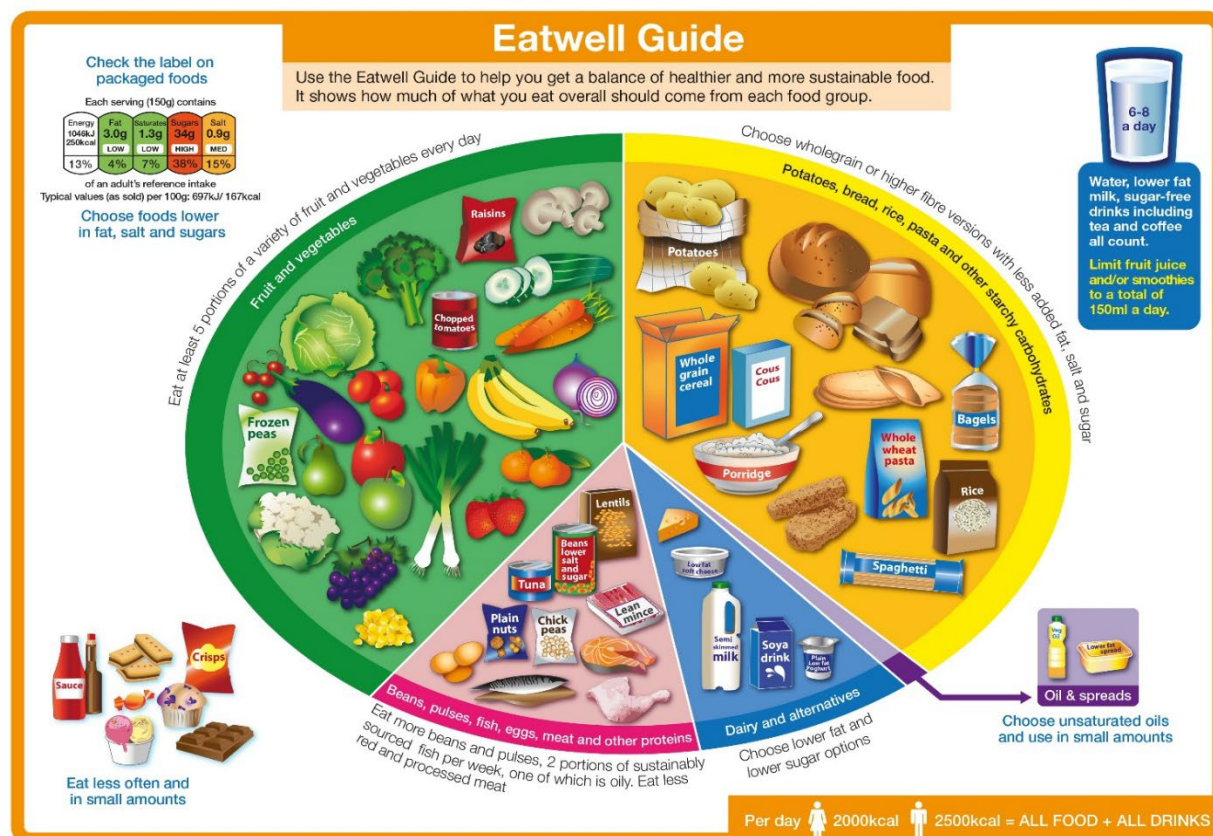
The Healthy Joint Programme is for patients with joint problems caused by osteoarthritis (OA). The group sessions offer expert advice to help you manage your symptoms and live well. This leaflet outlines what is covered in week 5 of your group sessions – healthy eating.

If you have any questions, please speak to your physiotherapist, who will be happy to help.

## Healthy eating

- Being overweight places a greater strain on your joints. This can lead to OA changes within your joints at an earlier age and the worsening of the OA changes more quickly.
- By following a healthy diet and exercising, a healthy weight can be maintained.
- The easiest way to maintain a healthy weight is to balance the amount of calories eaten with the amount of calories burned off through activity and exercise. If calorie intake is greater than calories burned off, your weight will increase.

## Public Health England's Eatwell Guide



Reference: Eatwell guide <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>

## **Why do we need to eat fruit and vegetables?**

- A large portion of our diet should include fruit and vegetables.
- The Department of Health recommends that we eat five portions of fruit and vegetables every day.
- Fruit and vegetables contain fibre and so can help to prevent digestive problems and constipation. Eating fruit and vegetables also help to reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers.

## **Why do we need to eat starchy food?**

- Starchy foods such as potatoes, pasta and cereals are a good source of energy and nutrients and should make up approximately one third of our diet.

## **Why do we eat protein?**

- Meat, fish, eggs and beans provide vitamins and minerals.
- Substituting red meat for fish or poultry can reduce the fat content in your diet.
- Grilling the fish or meat instead of frying, reduces the fat content.

## **Why do we need to eat dairy products?**

- Dairy and milk includes protein and calcium which is important for bone health.
- By using semi skimmed or skimmed milk instead of full fat milk reduces fat intake but maintains the calcium intake.

## **Why do we need to be concerned about fat and sugar in our food?**

- Most people in the UK eat too much fat and sugar.
- Even though they are used as a source of energy, over consumption of fat and sugar can lead to weight gain.

## **Why do we need vitamins and minerals?**

- Vitamin C, D and calcium all contribute to the health of our joints.
- If we eat a balanced diet, these vitamins should not be required unless you have been advised by your doctor.
- Vitamin C can be found in peppers, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, sweet potatoes, citrus fruits and kiwi fruit.
- Vitamin D is important in maintaining healthy muscles and bones.
- By exposing ourselves to the sun during the spring and summer months, our bodies can make Vitamin D.
- Vitamin D can also be found in oily fish e.g. salmon and sardines, eggs, fortified fat spreads, fortified breakfast cereals and powdered milk. However it is difficult to get enough Vitamin D from your diet.
- During the winter months when sunlight is less, it is recommended that we take 10 micrograms of Vitamin D per day.

## Why is keeping hydrated important?

- Drinking enough fluids is important to allow our bodies to work properly, e.g. it aids digestion.
- It is recommended that we drink between 6-8 glasses of liquid a day and limit the amount of fruit juices and smoothies we drink to 150ml.
- Reducing alcohol intake reduces calorie consumption and also decreases the risk of certain diseases.

## Food diary

- Some people may find keeping a food diary useful to record their food and drink intake and how much activity they do.
- It may help to spot simple things that can be changed to help with weight loss e.g. cutting out desserts or changing what you have for a snack.
- If you wish to discuss your diet further, it may be a beneficial to speak to your doctor, practice dietician or local weight loss / management services and groups.

## Supplements

For more information about the effectiveness and safety of dietary supplements for osteoarthritis please refer to the Versus Arthritis website.

Reference: Eatwell guide <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>

## Contacting Physiotherapy

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Next review due: May 2026