

Bolder Healthier Workplace Champions

Eating Well Webinar

Birmingham Public Health 2023



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Eat well, live well!



As many people know, eating well can sometimes be **easier said than done!**

We live in a world where everything around us makes the easy choice, usually the unhealthy choice. Whether it's the content of the food, the portion size or even the risk of food having been stored unsafely, it can be difficult to eat well, even with the best of intentions. We are also seeing increasing evidence that ultra-processed food is more unhealthy for us because the processing breaks down the natural barriers within food that stop over-absorption, which in turn can affect our health.

Here we discuss why - and how - we can eat that little bit healthier.

What is eating well?



[Watch the WHO video on YouTube](#)

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Benefits of eating well

Maintain Healthy Weight

Provide Energy

Strong Immune System

Muscle Support

Strong Skeleton

Heart Health

Improve Sleep

Mental Health

Prevent/Manage Disease

Kinder to the Planet

What prevents people from eating well?

Social factors that are often outside the person's control.

Fixed Factors

Having a lack of understanding or awareness of what healthy eating is, and not having the correct information on how to eat healthily.

Knowledge

A person's preferences for food and habits that they have developed which they may not be aware of.

Food Choices

Fixed factors that can influence eating well

- Low income/finance
- Access to shops selling healthy food
- Time available to prepare food
- Reliance on others to prepare food
- Institution - school/ work/hospital controls food
- Kitchen facilities

How knowledge can affect a person's ability to eat well

- Cooking knowledge and confidence
- Confusion around food labels and messages
- Unaware of healthy eating guidance

Why does food choice affect people's ability to eat well?

- Taste preferences
- Cultural influences in cooking
- Family units with different preferences
- Children/family don't like healthy food
- Preference for unhealthy food/takeaways

Do you understand food labels?

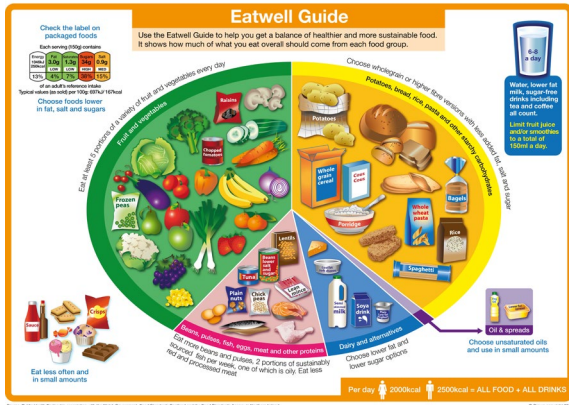
Understanding food labels



Colour-coded nutritional information tells you at a glance if the food has high, medium or low amounts of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt.

→ Download the [NHS Food Scanner App](#) for information on traffic light ratings, healthier swaps and 'good choice' items

What should I include in my diet?



5 or more portions of **fruit and vegetables** a day



Base meals on **starchy carbohydrates** (rice, pasta etc.)



Dairy or dairy alternatives (Paneer)

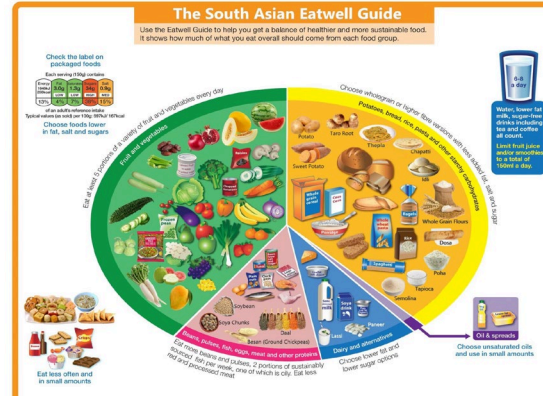
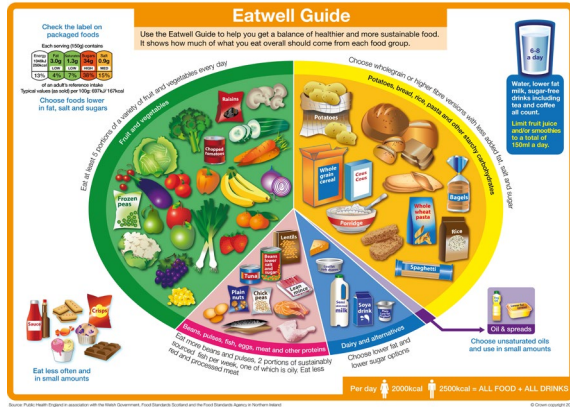


Beans, pulses, lentils, fish, eggs, meat and other **proteins**



Choose unsaturated oils and spreads

Other options for a healthy diet



This gives a recommended guide to the categories and portion sizes of a healthy diet. There are examples of how a diet can vary between different cultures, preferences and provides examples of other ways to consume each category.

Food and Eating Disorders

- An eating disorder is a mental health condition where you use the control of food to cope with feelings and other situations.
- Getting help early when suffering from an eating disorder is really important.
- If you or someone you know needs advice contact your GP, or Forward Thinking Birmingham.

Forward thinking Birmingham is a service that offers mental health assessment and treatment for young people aged 0-25, this includes treatment for eating disorders.

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The link between eating and workplaces

Unhealthy foods are commonly associated with eating outside the home, which can include the workplace. There are several potential reasons for the workplace being a barrier to eating well, such as:

Co-workers'
influence

Snacking

Unhealthy foods

Healthy eating habits can begin at work



Watch [Health at work](#)

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Impact on Productivity

- Unhealthy foods are commonly associated with short attention spans and slow information processing because saturated fats can lead to the production of hormones that decrease alertness.
- A study conducted at Brigham Young University displayed employees with unhealthy diets are 66% more likely to report a productivity loss compared to healthy eaters (Brigham Young University).
- Hydration is key to maintaining cognitive function. Due to the high percentage of water in our brains, dehydration can lead to:
 - Fatigue
 - Lack of concentration
 - Inaccuracies

Impact on Mood

- Food can have an impact on people's mood, particularly healthy foods because they contain an array of vitamins and minerals.
- Healthy foods have been associated with increased levels of happiness, morale, and creativity around the workplace.
- On the other hand, unhealthy diets can lead to irritability, stress, and depression.
- Network Rail launched an initiative designed to support the Western route's predominantly male workforce to increase physical activity and reduce unhealthy eating habits such as frequent snacking. Their drive to support mental health and address fatigue, obesity and sleep-related issues among its 3000 employees including shift workers in particular, since shift work comes with specific wellbeing challenges and health risks. Read more at [SuperWellness](#)

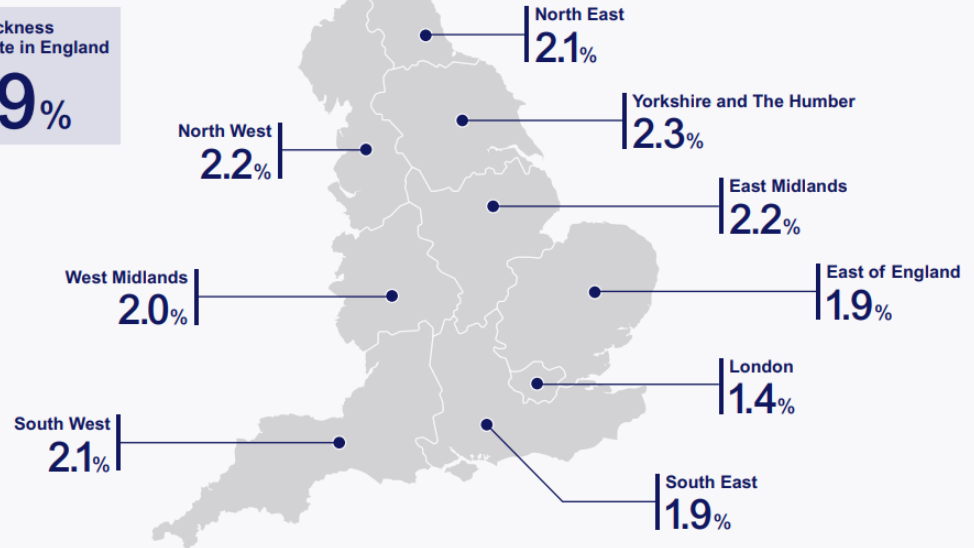
Impact on Absenteeism

- 2% of working days are lost to sickness absence in the West Midlands.
- Obese employees take an average of four extra sick days per year compared to healthy weight employees (NICE, 2012).
- Eating well can help to avoid future health concerns that can lead to time off, such as strengthening a person's immune system.

In 2018, percentage of working days lost to sickness absence in England

Average sickness absence rate in England

1.9%



Office for National Statistics (2018), Sickness absence in the UK labour market

Remote working

As more employers embrace flexible working more people are now working from home. This presents opportunities as well as other challenges for workplace initiatives to encourage eating well.

As an employer it is important that you:





- Understand all your staffs working patterns.
- Ensure everyone is included in communications related to the workplace and wellbeing.
- Emphasise the importance of disconnecting from the workplace when they are not working.

Shift working

Shift work is associated with increased body mass index, prevalence of obesity and other health problems. People who work shifts sometimes skip meals, eat irregularly, eat unhealthy food, and may find it hard to keep up a regular exercise schedule

→ For further information on shift working visit [HSE](#)

Help shift workers stay healthy with an irregular work schedule. Encourage those on shift work to:

-  Eat small, frequent meals
-  Choose foods that are easily digestible (pasta, fruit and vegetables)
-  Avoid sugary foods
-  Drink plenty of fluids

Changes employers can make - Educational

- Create healthy **recipe newsletters** offering evidenced based information and signpost to support.
- Partner with **local health organisations and cooking schools** to offer employee discounts on classes and consultations.
- Offer **monthly lunch-and-learns** to educate employees on nutrition topics whilst they eat their lunch, which could include bringing in a qualified nutritionist.
- Take part in **health awareness dates/challenges**, such as Fizz Free February.
- **Ask your employees** what they would like to see in the workplace to help them eat healthier. This could include Wellbeing Champions whom you work with to identify what your employees want.

Changes employers can make - Physical

- Remove **vending machines** or provide healthier alternatives to foods in pre-existing machines.
- Offer **free fruit** that is easy to access.
- Improve the **kitchen facilities** e.g., provide microwaves.
- Enforce/ extend **lunch breaks** that are away from the employees' physical area of work.
- Encourage employees to bring in packed lunches.
- Start water drinking **challenges**.
- Consider corporate wellness **apps**.
- Provide free **water facilities** e.g., water fountains.

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How Can You Help?

Talk about the benefits of eating well to people in your community

Connect people in your community with to support through web pages and services

Feedback to us where more help is needed so we can continue to improve the support for citizens

Talk to people in your community

Bolder Healthier Champions **should not:**

- Provide anything other than approved information
- Receive personal information from people



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Talk to colleagues

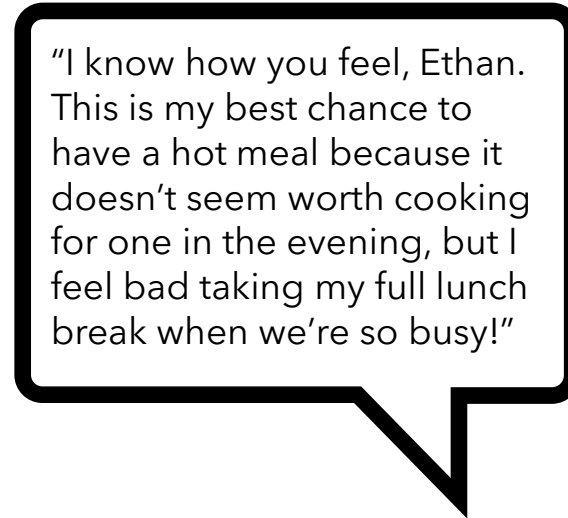


Case study 1 - part 1

Ethan is a Bolder Healthier Workplace Champion and comes across his colleague Raja in the work's canteen. She's grabbing a quick sandwich before going back to her desk.




"Hi Raja, our department's so busy at the moment! I don't know about you, but I barely have time to eat lunch these days!"




"I know how you feel, Ethan. This is my best chance to have a hot meal because it doesn't seem worth cooking for one in the evening, but I feel bad taking my full lunch break when we're so busy!"

Case study 1 - part 2

Ethan is a Bolder Healthier Workplace Champion and comes across his colleague Raja in the work's canteen. She's grabbing a quick sandwich before going back to her desk.



"I live on my own too. I know a good website with some quick and easy recipes. I cook in the evening then bring the leftovers to work the next day and warm them up for my lunch."



"That sounds like a really good idea, Ethan. Then I could have a proper meal in the evening and also a decent lunch the following day. Could you send me the link to the website please?"

How can you provide brief support in everyday interactions?

- Use open questions with the [Ask](#), [Advise](#), [Act](#) model

Example: A colleague who's living alone

Ask

Can you get all the food you need from the local shops?

Do you feel confident cooking a meal for yourself?

Are you aware of the government's healthy eating guidelines?

Advise

There are local services that could help, do you know where to access?

Do you know that there are healthy and simple recipes for one

There's lots of information online about government recommendations.

Act

Suggest [Local Pantries](#) or similar resources mentioned in this presentation.

Signpost them to cooking courses such as [Bags of Taste](#)

Encourage them to read [The Eatwell guide](#) or watch the [Eatwell Guide video](#) from earlier.

Connect colleagues to support



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Resources for Employers

- A booklet produced by the Public Health Agency to support healthy workplaces: [Promoting healthy eating at work: a guide for employers | HSC Public Health Agency \(hscni.net\)](#)
- A thorough toolkit to help employers achieve a healthier workplace environment: [Physical Activity, Healthy Eating and Healthier Weight: A Toolkit For Employers \(bitc.org.uk\)](#)
- More tips to encourage eating well at work: [Health at Work - Healthy eating top tips - BHF](#)

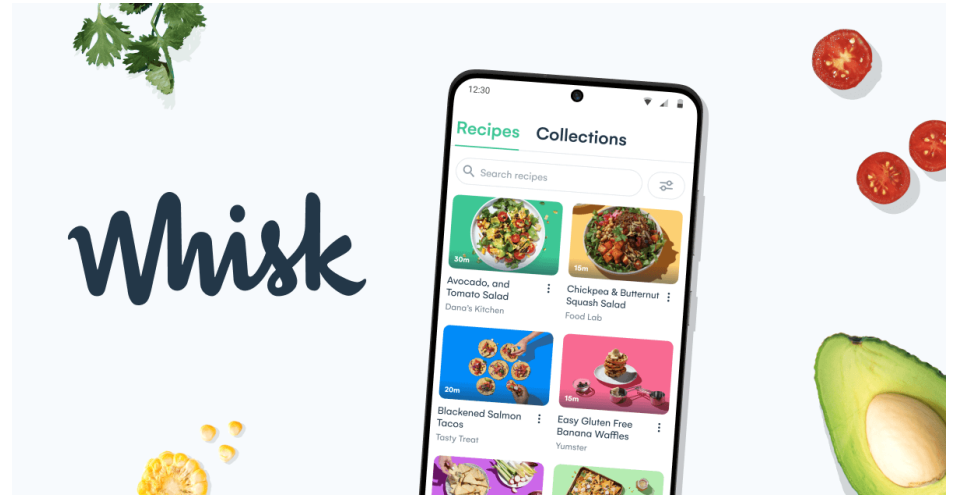
Are there any useful apps I can use to help me eat well?

→ [Whisk](#) is the all-in-one app for recipe saving, meal planning, grocery shopping and recipe sharing.

Whisk's meal planner makes it easy to achieve goals.

You can set up communities to share healthy recipes with those in your community.

Whisk also calculates a health score for each recipe, with a score of 7 being the minimum to be classed as healthy. This allows you to pick and recommend recipes based on this score.



Healthy Start vitamin scheme

- You can get lots of vitamins from a healthy diet but you may not get enough vitamins at certain times of your life, such as when you are breastfeeding or pregnant. By taking a supplement it will boost vitamin levels for growth and development.

→ [Find out more about the scheme here](#)

Healthy Start vitamins are for:



All pregnant people



All women with a child under 12 months



All children aged 4 years who are on the healthy start scheme

Eating well on a budget

Local Support

- Spaces available for people to use and visit during the winter period and beyond.
- Offers support and guidance, access to computers and charging points
- Foodbanks, pantries and free refreshments

Warm Welcome
Spaces



- Budget Resources:
 - TV programmes like [Eat Well for Less](#)
 - Martin Lewis - [MoneySavingExpert](#)
 - Jack Monroe - [Budget Recipes](#)
 - [A-Z of food storage](#) to reduce food waste
- Ensure all eligible benefits are claimed using a [benefit calculator](#).
 - About £15 billion of benefits **remain unclaimed** each year

Foodbanks

- Foodbanks typically work using a **voucher referral system**
 - Once a voucher has been issued, a minimum of 3 days of emergency food can be claimed
 - Usually only open for a short period, usually 1-2 days weekly
- [Foodbank voucher request](#)
- [Find a food bank](#)

Food Parcels Typically Include



Non-perishable foods
(not fresh)



Pasta, rice, pasta sauce,
soup



Tinned food (beans,
meat, vegetables, fruit)



Tea or coffee, sugar,
biscuits, snacks, cereals

Local Services

Some of the available support includes:

- [The Active Wellbeing Society](#) : free meals at Big Feed Community Cafes
- [FoodCycle](#): free meat-free meals across Birmingham
- Olio and Too Good To Go App: free/reduced price surplus food collection
- [Incredible Surplus](#) : 'pay as you feel' by cash, time or skill either at time of collection or a later date
- [Local Pantries](#): small weekly fees (~£4) for collection of food items worth £15-£20

Free Hot Meals

Free Food Collection

Surplus Food Collection

Foodbanks

Pantries

Community Centres

Places of Worship

Directory of resources

- **NHS Resources -**
- [Eat well](#) and [Better Health](#) resources available to provide information on getting a healthy, balanced diet.
- [Healthy eating](#) places in Birmingham
- [NHS Food Scanner App](#)
- **Local resources -**
- [Health for Life](#) is a community programme which aims to make a sustained difference to healthy lifestyles in local communities across Birmingham.
- [FoodCycle](#): free meat-free meals across Birmingham
- [Startwell](#) is an obesity prevention programme targeting early years settings such as children's centres, nurseries, nursery schools and pre-school play groups in Birmingham
- [Birmingham Community Healthcare](#): The Birmingham Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service produce and recommend a number of key resources and [recipes](#).
- [The Active Wellbeing Society](#) free meals at Big Feed Community Cafes
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- Ensure all eligible benefits are claimed using a [benefit calculator](#).
- **Food banks -**
- [Foodbank voucher request](#)
- [Find a food bank](#)
- [Bounce Back Food](#) fights food poverty all over the UK and has several local partnerships including Birmingham Central Foodbank and Smethwick Foodbank.

Directory of resources

Eating disorders -

- [Eating Disorder Service | Forward Thinking Birmingham](#) Forward thinking Birmingham is a service that offers mental health assessment and treatment for young people from ages 0-25.
- [Eating Disorders Service - Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- The service is for people (aged 16+ in Solihull and 25+ in Birmingham) who have severe and/or complex cases of eating disorders

Resources for employers -

- A booklet produced by the Public Health Agency to support healthy workplaces: [Promoting healthy eating at work: a guide for employers | HSC Public Health Agency \(hscni.net\)](#)
- A thorough toolkit to help employers achieve a healthier workplace environment: [Physical Activity, Healthy Eating and Healthier Weight: A Toolkit For Employers \(bitc.org.uk\)](#)
- More tips to encourage eating well at work: [Health at Work - Healthy eating top tips - BHF](#)

Feedback to us where more help is needed so we can continue to improve the support for citizens

Email the Bolder Healthier team on:
BolderHealthierChampions@birmingham.gov.uk



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Thank you for being a Bolder Healthier Champion!



We look forward to working together to improve the wellbeing of everyone in Birmingham.

By volunteering to receive the latest health information, you can use these messages to help you support yourself, your family, your friends and your wider community with:

- **Monthly themed webinars**
- **Tailored resource packs**
- **Health awareness training**

If you know someone else who might like to get involved, they can read more about the Programme at [Bolder Healthier Champions](#)



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Thank you for your time!



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