

TOOLBOX TALK

EAT WELL, FEEL BETTER

1. Put these breakfast cereals in order of healthiness

A. granola B. porridge oats C. crunchy nut cornflakes D. shredded wheat.

2. A pint of whole milk contains how many calories more than skimmed milk?

A. 107 B. 87 C. 67 D. 47

3. How many calories should the average male eat per day?

A. 4,500 B. 4,000 C. 3,500 D. 3,000 E. 2,500

4. Which of these foods contains the most calories per gram?

A. chicken B. potato C. lager D. olive oil

5. Wholemeal pasta or white?

6. Trans fat or monounsaturated fat?

7. Free Sugars are:

A. sugars you can eat freely B. sugars you should avoid C. a 60s girl group

Talking Points

Any tips to cut down on sugar?

How much meat do you eat a week?

What, if anything, can you cook?

Do you take vitamins or supplements?



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Top Tips

- Eat slowly, chew each mouthful
- Don't watch TV, read or surf when eating
- Learn to read food labels
- Think about healthy snacks as well as healthy meals
- Think about portion size
- Plate smart: 1/2 veg, 1/4 protein, 1/4 starch
- Drink water (not sugary drinks)
- Try to choose fresh over processed food
- Learn to cook

Quiz Answers

1. B (healthiest), D, A, C. Yes, granola contains healthy oats but often a lot of sugar too.
2. A – that adds up if you drink a lot of tea or coffee
3. E – it's about 2,000 for women.
4. D – all oils and fats contain about 9 calories per gram, alcohol 7 per gram and proteins and carbohydrates about 4.
5. Wholemeal or wholegrain beats the processed version in bread, pasta or other grains
6. Trans fats are the only fats you should avoid completely (look for hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated on labels)
7. B – free sugars are those added by a manufacturer, cook or consumer (that means you) and those found naturally in sugar in honey, syrups and fruit juice

The full SP

This toolbox talk doesn't try to cover all aspects of health eating just those which you might want to think about at work. There's a lot more on eating on the Men's Health Forum website.

Small changes in what you eat and how much exercise you take can make a real difference to how you feel.

Small changes?

The British Dietetic Association suggest some smart swaps to add variety, provide more nutrients and save calories. If you're interested in weight-loss, just these six swaps could help you shed up to a pound of fat (3500 calories) a week, every week. No hassle.

TAKE OFF: Fried bacon, egg, sausage, tomatoes & hash-browns

BRING ON: Grilled bacon, sausage & tomatoes, poached egg, wholemeal toast

SAVE: 56g of fat and 463 calories

OR BRING ON: Wholegrain breakfast cereal, semi-skimmed milk, glass of unsweetened orange juice

SAVE: 68g of fat and 466 calories

TAKE OFF: Standard BLT sandwich

BRING ON: BLT with reduced-fat mayo and lean bacon

SAVE: 25g of fat and 326 calories

TAKE OFF: Steak pie and chips

BRING ON: Shepherd's pie and veg

SAVE: 22g of fat and 268 calories

TAKE OFF: 150g whole milk creamy yoghurt

BRING ON: Low-fat yoghurt (can still taste creamy!)

SAVE: 5g of fat and 99 calories

TAKE OFF: half-pint full-cream milk

BRING ON: half-pint semi-skimmed milk

SAVE: 6g of fat and 57 calories

What about snacks?

If you don't increase your overall calorie intake, then eating little and often is not a bad policy as it helps keep your metabolism ticking over nicely. In other words, there's no problem with snacking as such. The French

have a 'goûter', a little snack late afternoon which means they eat a smaller evening meal - bread with plain chocolate or fruit is popular. The problem is when snacking between meals – especially when you're not hungry - leads to eating too much.

Even one small snack that's surplus to requirements will show on your waistline. Two plain biscuits or a can of sugary drink or a bag of crisps a day could each see you put on around half a stone (3-4kg) a year. In real money, this could add 4 or more inches to your waistline.

Save these for an occasional treat. There are plenty of feel-good alternatives: fruit (bananas and apples travel well), low-calorie drinks (water or tea), nuts (unsalted), baked rather than fried crisps or unsweetened yoghurt.

Check a snack attack isn't thirst - drink enough to keep urine a pale straw colour, not dark yellow or brown.

Some smarter snacking suggestions?

Swap a Danish pastry for a cereal bar, save 165 kcals, gain vitamins, minerals and fibre (check the label).

Swap a 34.5g bag of crisps for a 28g bag of reduced-fat crisps to save 55 kcals.

Swap a small carton of fruit juice for a glass of water and save 94 kcals as well as protecting your teeth.

Swap a can of sugary fizzy drink for a diet version and save 135 kcals while also reducing blood sugar swings.

Smart snacking saves money too - a supermarket banana is 20p, a Danish at least a quid.

Beat a snack attack with physical activity – a brisk walk, a cycle ride, gardening, housework (vacuuming is good) or DIY. If you can't get out and exercise, drinking water or herbal tea will take the edge off.

What should I look for on the labels?

A snack is likely to represent a healthy option if, per 100g, it contains: less than 3g fat, less than 2g sugar and less than 0.25g salt (or less than 0.1g sodium)

A snack is best avoided if, per 100g, it contains: 20g or more fat, 10g or more sugar or 1.25g or more salt

For snacks with values in-between, handle with care.

Why does breakfast matter?

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Having gone without fuel overnight, you need to fill the empty tank. If you don't, your body goes into emergency mode, breaking down muscle. Then, as you're hungry, you eat

more than you need later in the day, perhaps grabbing less healthy snacks because they're quick and easy.

What happens if I skip breakfast?

A 16-year study, involving almost 27,000 men, found those who skipped breakfast were more likely to have a fatal heart attack than those who didn't. Why? Because skipping breakfast increased their risk of obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes.

What are the best cereals to eat?

Go for unsweetened wholegrain cereals such as unsugared muesli, shredded wheat, weetabix or oatmeal porridge. (Granola too is full of good stuff but high in calories.)

Serve with semi-skimmed milk, unsweetened yoghurt/ fromage frais or dairy-free alternative such as soy, almond, rice or oat milks. Look for milk alternatives that are calcium-enriched. Add fresh berries, nuts or chopped fruit for extra flavour.

I work shifts.

Working shifts disrupts your natural body clock so set up a structured eating pattern to fight fatigue. This may mean taking meals and snacks with you. Eat regular smaller meals (eg. a before-shift 'breakfast' and a mid-shift 'lunch break') with planned snacks in-between rather than constantly snacking throughout your shift. Stay as active as possible to stay alert.

If commuting, carry decent snacking options such as fruit and water (add a slice of lemon for flavour).

What other life changes can affect diet?

Many. Leaving home is a challenge especially if you can't cook. Your diet is likely to change to whatever is offered in the canteen or local sandwich shop. Check our advice on labels and choices. Look for cook books offering quick, easy, cheap yet nutritious recipes.

When you move in with a partner, you are 3 times more likely to become overweight than if living separately.

Eating together as a family can encourage solid eating habits in your kids. You'll benefit even when families only sit down to eat together a couple of times a week.

At a time of emotional upheaval such as divorce or job loss, it's vital to eat well. Exercise is a great way to burn off the effects of stress hormones. For cheap fruit and veg, use local markets and go to supermarkets at the end of the day.