

Healthy Eating

When you are caring for someone it can be hard to find the time and motivation to keep to a healthy diet. We asked David Malone of Real Food Works for some useful information and tips on healthy eating.

Here's what he said "It's Not Rocket Science!"

In general, the foods and ways of eating which sustained generations of our ancestors are largely still suitable in the 21st century and boil down to three key messages: Variety, Balance and Moderation.

Variety:

Variety is the spice of life - so the saying goes and this certainly applies to food.

Eating a wide variety of dishes and ingredients ensures that we not only get the essential nutrients for our bodies, both macro (fats, carbohydrates, protein etc) and micro (vitamins, minerals etc) but also adds variety - 'spice', to our eating.

The adage 'eat a rainbow' is appropriate for us all, as nature has kindly 'wrapped' the vitamins in fruit and vegetables in different colours. In addition, the stronger the (natural) colour, the higher the levels of vitamins, hence foods like beetroot, spinach, blueberries being labelled 'superfoods'.

Balance:

We need to make sure that we take in the nutrients mentioned above, in sufficient but not excess quantities i.e.

- One third of our daily food intake should come from fruit and vegetables (eat your five-a-day!)
- One third from starchy carbohydrate foods – e.g. bread/cereals/rice/potatoes
- About 15% from milk and dairy foods e.g.; milk/yoghurt/cream
- 12% from non-dairy sources of protein e.g. meat/fish/eggs/pulses/beans

And the balance (less than 10%) can come from foods high in fats/salt/sugar e.g. pies/cakes/snacks/sugary drinks

Moderation:

Our basic food metabolism still operates on the feast/famine principle which sustained our ancestors. However, whereas they did not know when the next meal would come along and consequently gorged themselves, storing nutrients (internally) against the day food would be scarce, we have food available 24 hrs a day. The result of this for many is an increasing waistline leading to a risk of serious illness such as coronary heart disease, diabetes and many cancers.

Some useful strategies for reducing food intake include: reducing portion sizes, cutting down on snacking, no eating in front of the TV and eat more slowly .You can find more useful information on our website: www.realfoodworks.co.uk and you can download a copy of our 'Eatwell Placemat' from www.tinyurl.com/realfoodworks.

David will be running Cook and Eat workshops for carers in Hexham, Bedington and Belford in June – see the enclosed activities sheet for details and book your place now!

