



What a Healthy Balanced Diet Really Needs

KS2 SCIENCE

INGESTION

NUTRITION

Ages 9-12



3 min read

The Six Essential Food Groups

Your body is like a machine that needs fuel and spare parts to work properly. A **healthy balanced diet** includes **six essential nutrients: carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water**. Each one does a different job to keep you growing, energetic, and healthy.

Think of it like building a house: carbohydrates are the bricks that give you energy, proteins are the workers who build and repair, fats are the insulation that protects, and vitamins and minerals are the special tools that make everything work smoothly.

Carbohydrates: Your Energy Source

Carbohydrates give your body energy to run, jump, and think. You'll find them in **bread, rice, pasta, potatoes, and cereal**. There are two types: **simple carbohydrates** (like sugar in sweets) give quick energy but don't last long, while **complex carbohydrates** (like wholemeal bread) keep you going for hours.

Proteins: The Builders

Proteins help build and repair your muscles, bones, skin, and hair. Good sources include **meat, fish, eggs, beans, lentils, and nuts**. As you grow, your body especially needs protein to get stronger.

Fats: More Than Just Energy

Don't think all **fats** are bad! Your brain, nerves, and heart all need healthy fats. Find them in **olive oil, avocados, fatty fish like salmon, and nuts**. Try to eat fewer **saturated fats** from butter and fried foods, and more **unsaturated fats** that help your heart.

Vitamins and Minerals: The Protectors

Vitamins and **minerals** protect your body and help it work properly. **Vitamin C** (in oranges and strawberries) helps fight colds. **Calcium** (in milk and cheese) makes your bones strong. **Iron** (in red meat and spinach) helps carry oxygen in your blood. Different coloured fruits and vegetables have different vitamins, so eat a **rainbow** every day!

Think of it like a computer: vitamins and minerals are the software updates that keep everything running smoothly and protect you from problems.

Water: The Essential Liquid

Water is just as important as food. Your body is about **60% water!** It helps digest food, keeps your skin healthy, and cools you down when you're hot. Most kids should drink about **6-8 glasses of water a day.**

Getting the Balance Right

A healthy diet doesn't mean eating tiny portions. It means eating the right **amounts** of each group. The **NHS Eatwell Guide** shows that about half your plate should be vegetables and fruit, one quarter starchy carbohydrates, one quarter protein, plus dairy and healthy fats. This balanced approach keeps your energy steady and your body strong.