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# What Makes a Balanced and Healthy Diet

KS2 DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

KS3 SCIENCE

Ages 9-14 ⌚ 3 min read

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## Why Your Body Needs Different Foods

Your body is like a complex machine that needs different kinds of fuel to work properly. A **balanced diet** means eating a variety of foods in the right amounts so you get all the nutrients you need to grow, have energy, and stay healthy.

Think about everything your body does every day: running, thinking, fighting off germs, building bones, and healing cuts. Each of these needs different nutrients, which is why you can't just eat one type of food.

## The Five Main Food Groups

Nutritionists divide foods into five main groups, and a healthy diet includes foods from all of them.

**Carbohydrates** (bread, rice, pasta, potatoes) give you energy for playing and learning. **Proteins** (chicken, fish, eggs, beans, nuts) help build and repair your muscles and bones. **Fats** (olive oil, avocados, fish) are important for your brain and absorbing certain vitamins. **Fruits and vegetables** contain **vitamins** and **minerals** that protect your body and keep you strong. **Dairy products** (milk, cheese, yogurt) provide calcium for strong bones.

Think of it like building a house: carbohydrates are the tools that help you work, proteins are the bricks and cement that build the structure, fats are the insulation, fruits and vegetables are the safety inspectors keeping everything in good condition, and dairy is the foundation underneath.

## Getting the Right Amounts

Eating a balanced diet doesn't mean eating equal amounts of each group. Most health experts recommend filling about half your plate with fruits and vegetables, a quarter with **whole grains** (like brown rice or wholemeal bread), and a quarter with protein. Add a small amount of dairy or plant-based alternatives.

It's also important to drink plenty of water, limit sugary drinks, and eat sweet treats only occasionally.

## **Why Balance Matters**

Eating the same unhealthy foods over and over can lead to problems like obesity, weak bones, or poor concentration at school. When you eat a balanced diet, your body has everything it needs to fight illness, concentrate better, grow properly, and feel energetic. Small, healthy choices now can lead to a healthier life when you're older.