

 **Mind Bath**

**Nutrition,
Physical Activity
and Mental Health
for over 55's**



 **Food for
Thought**

www.bathmind.org.uk

Nutrition ‘myth busting’

We may feel that there are mixed messages about what foods are good for our health. Here we explain some common ‘myths’ about nutrition.

“Low fat foods are healthier”

Fat is an essential part of a healthy, balanced diet. There are many different types of fat in the food we consume, such as saturated and unsaturated fats.

Saturated fats (unhealthy fats) are the type that raise blood cholesterol and are found in biscuits, cakes, pastries, butter, and processed meats.

Unsaturated fats (healthy fats) have been shown to lower the risk of the development of cardiovascular disease, and are found in nuts, seeds, and plant oils. Since the body does not make this type of fat on its own, it must be consumed through the diet.

Unsaturated fats help the body absorb vitamins, help with muscle movement and lower cholesterol levels.

“Fruit is bad for me because it has too much sugar”

Whole, unprocessed fruit contains two types of sugar - fructose and glucose, which are both a source of energy for the cells and are part of a healthy diet. Fruit is also rich in fibre as well as a range of different vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients.

Plenty of evidence shows that a high fruit intake is associated with a lower risk of serious diseases like heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

However, it is important to remember that whole fruits are always a better choice than packaged or processed fruits such as fruit juices, which contain large amounts of refined and added sugars.

Excess consumption of added sugar, such as high-fructose corn syrup, has been linked with increased weight gain and can contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes.

“Salt is bad for me”

Salt is an important nutrient for the human body. The body uses salt to maintain healthy blood pressure and to ensure correct nerve and muscle function.

However, it is important to monitor the amount of salt consumed. Adults should eat no more than 6g of salt a day (around 1 teaspoon). Eating more than this over time can contribute to high blood pressure, kidney problems, and heart failure.

Special nutrient needs in older adults

As a person gets older, they naturally begin to lose muscle mass and bodyweight, resulting in calories being burned at a lower rate (a lower metabolism).

Low appetite

Lower appetite in older people is normal.

As a person gets older, they most likely will not be as physically active as before.

The body will then adapt and lower the overall food intake.

However, maintaining a healthy bodyweight is very important to ensure that the body gets all the energy and nutrients it needs.



Tips for low appetite

- Eat smaller meals and more frequent snacks.
- Cook food that smells good, looks appetising, and tastes delicious! This will make you want to eat more.
- Avoid salty, greasy, and heavily processed foods. These foods can make you gassy or bloated, which can make you feel fuller.
- Eat in a social setting such as at a lunch club. Try to find out if a church, community group or charity local to you has anything like this on offer. These clubs provide delicious meals and give you the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. Socialising increases your sense of happiness and well-being and decreases feelings of loneliness.
- Increase your intake of nutritious, eat energy-dense snacks such as peanut butter on toast unsalted nuts; avocado on toast.
- Move your body! Exercise has been shown to reduce stress and increase metabolism, leading to an increase in appetite.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D plays a vital role in human health by helping regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body.

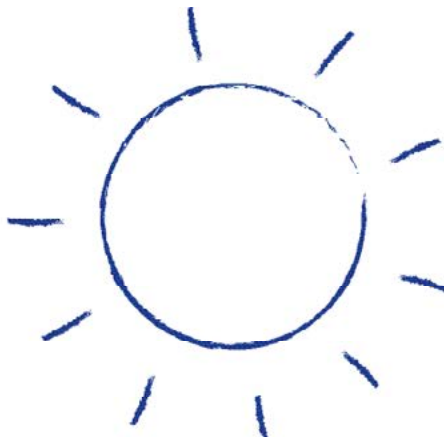
These nutrients are needed to keep bones, teeth and muscles healthy, which helps prevent falls as a person gets older.

Vitamin D also plays a role in healthy brain function.

Vitamin D deficiency may drastically impact a person's physical and mental wellbeing.

Sources of Vitamin D

Sunlight
Cod liver oil
Swordfish
Salmon
Fortified milk
Supplementation



In the UK, we do not make enough vitamin D from sunlight between October and late February.

Without enough exposure to sunlight, it is very difficult to achieve sufficient levels of vitamin D from nutritional sources.

Therefore, Vitamin D supplementation is a great option to ensure that a person reaches their daily recommended intake.

Important disclaimer

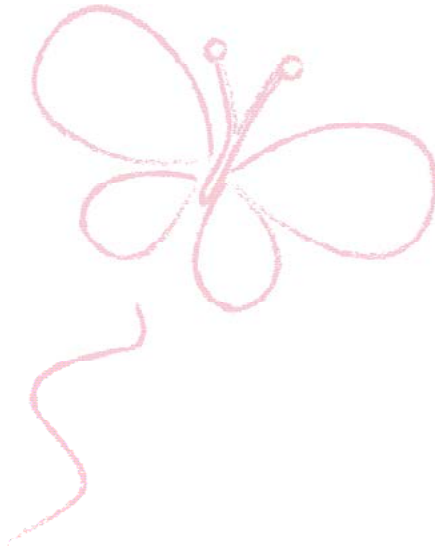
Some people may have a medical condition which means they may not be able to safely take a high dose of Vitamin D. Always consult your doctor before taking a supplement.

Menopause

The menopause is when a woman stops having periods and is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between the ages of 45-55.

It is caused by a change in the balance of the body's sex hormones, oestrogen and progesterone.

Menopausal symptoms, such as weight gain, hot flushes, night sweats and low mood, may begin months or even years before a woman's periods stop and can last around 4 years after their last period.



What can I do?

Avoid stimulants such as alcohol, coffee and spicy foods because they heavily contribute to setting off hot flushes. Opt for tea or water.

Avoid snacking on sugary foods such as cakes and biscuits. These foods cause a sharp increase in blood glucose level, followed by a sharp decrease, causing you to feel more tired. Snack on whole foods such as fruit and nuts instead!

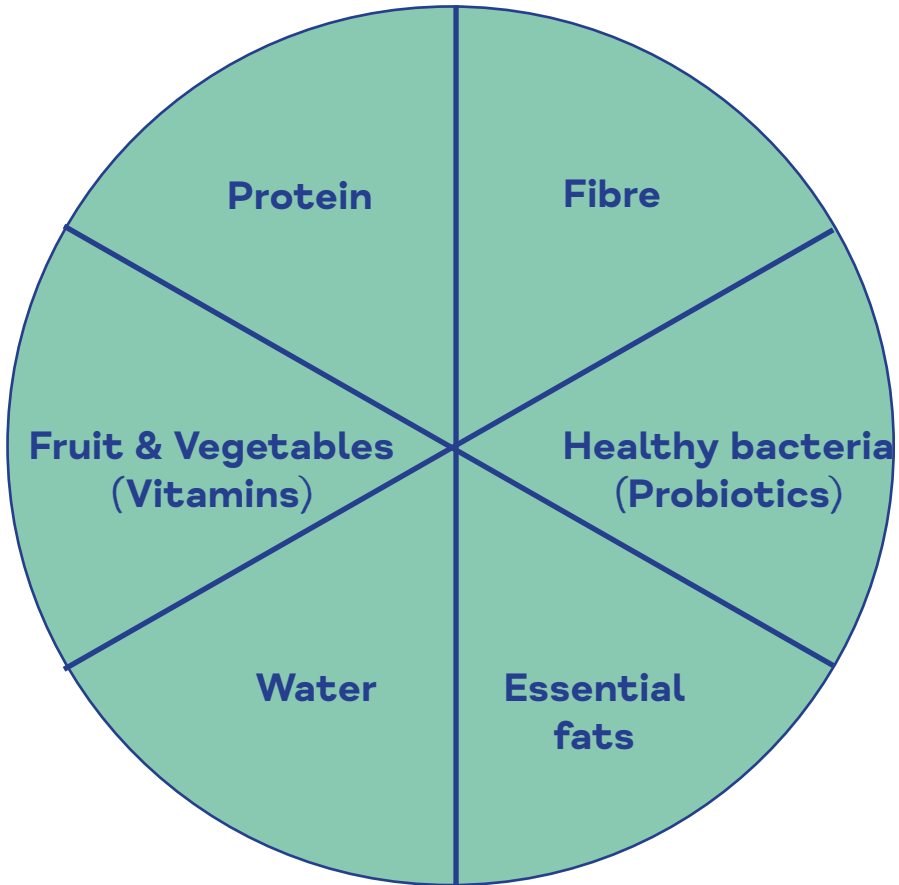
Increase your intake of complex carbohydrates, such as wholemeal bread, brown rice and wholemeal pasta. These will help you feel fuller for longer, and, therefore, reduce weight gain as you will not feel the need to constantly snack.

Increase your intake of food sources high in calcium (green leafy vegetables, dairy products) and magnesium (pumpkin seeds, almonds). These minerals contribute to improved sleep quality.

Increased intake of phyto-oestrogens may reduce the occurrence of hot flushes. Phyto-oestrogens are found in soya milk, linseeds, tofu, temph, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds.

Increase your intake of vitamin D and Omega-3, for example, by eating more oily fish such as salmon. This can help boost your mood.

The “Mental Health” Healthy Eating Plate



The Benefits of Meal Planning

Saves time

Helps with portion control

Reduces food waste

Reduces stress of last minute cooking

Saves money

Avoids unhealthy options

Enables you to enjoy more variety

How can this help me?

Whether your goal is to eat more variety, lose weight, generally increase vegetable intake, etc, meal planning can help you to achieve this, improving your overall health and reducing stress at mealtimes.

Remember: base each meal around protein and try to include essential fats where possible, some vegetables/fruit and slow-releasing carbohydrate (wholegrains).

One Pot Tomato and Chickpea Stew

This delicious one pot stew comes together incredibly quickly, making it a great dish for busy or lazy nights. Not only is this meal easy to make, it's also high in zinc and magnesium, which support the immune system and muscles.

This recipe makes ONE serving, but can be doubled, tripled or even quadrupled to make many meals in bulk. Store it in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days, and reheat in a microwave until piping hot.

*This recipe is suitable for vegetarians. To make vegan, leave out the parmesan or switch it for any plant-based cheese.

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp olive oil
1/2 a medium onion, chopped
1/2 a red pepper, chopped
1 small carrot, diced
1 garlic clove, crushed
1/2 tsp cumin
1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp chilli flakes
A pinch of black pepper
200g chopped tomatoes
100g canned chickpeas
A handful of basil
10g of Parmesan (or vegan alternative) finely grated.

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a pot over a high heat. Add the onion, pepper and carrot. Cook for approximately 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onion starts to go golden brown.
2. Add the garlic and cook for 3-4 more minutes.
3. Add the cumin, salt, chilli flakes and black pepper and cook for 1 minute more.
4. Add the chopped tomatoes and chickpeas. Mix well, then reduce the heat to medium. Allow to cook for 5 more minutes. At the very last minute, add the basil.
5. Serve with parmesan.

One Pot Fruit and Nut Porridge

A delicious 10 minute energy-boosting alternative to cereal that will keep you full until lunchtime. This meal is high in fibre and healthy unsaturated fats which help lower cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of heart disease.

This recipe makes ONE serving but can be doubled, tripled or even quadrupled to make many meals in bulk. Store it in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 4 days and reheat in a microwave until piping hot.

Suitable for vegetarians. This recipe can be made vegan by switching the milk for any plant-based milk.

INGREDIENTS

50g oats
1/2 tbsp chia seeds
1tsp cinnamon
150ml milk
A handful of blueberries
A handful of almonds

METHOD

1. Add the oats, chia seeds and cinnamon to a pot and mix.
2. Add the milk and mix well. Heat over a medium-high heat for around 7-8 minutes, until most of the liquid has been absorbed.
3. Serve the porridge with the blueberries and almonds.

**Tip: If you like your porridge runnier,
just add more milk!**

One Pan Butter Salmon and Asparagus

A delicious and nutritious meal ready in under 15 minutes. Salmon is high in omega 3, which has been shown to play an important role in improving mood and protecting the brain against cognitive decline.

INGREDIENTS

1 medium salmon fillet
1/4 tsp salt
A pinch of black pepper
1/2 tsp olive oil
1 clove of garlic, minced
60ml low sodium vegetable stock
1 tbsp butter
20ml lemon juice
Chopped parsley
1 bunch of asparagus - washed and trimmed.
1/4 tsp chilli flakes
Slices of lemon to garnish.

This recipe makes ONE serving, but can be doubled, tripled or even quadrupled to make many meals in bulk. Store it in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days, and reheat in a microwave until piping hot.

METHOD

1. Season the salmon with salt and pepper.
2. Add the olive oil to a pan over medium heat. Gently cook salmon on both sides until golden brown.
3. Remove the salmon from the pan and set it aside on a plate.
4. In the same pan, over medium heat add the minced garlic and vegetable stock. Bring to a simmer.
5. Add the butter, lemon juice and parsley to the pan. Mix well to ensure the butter is melted and evenly combined.
6. Add the asparagus to the pan and toss for 2 minutes to cook.
7. Add the salmon back to the pan to re heat for another minute.
8. Serve the garlic butter, salmon and lemon asparagus with chilli flakes and lemon slices.

Lentil Bolognese Pasta

Lentil Bolognese pasta that is full of flavour, easy to make and ready in under 30 minutes! This meal is high in plant-based protein which is an essential macronutrient that helps build muscle, repair tissue and make enzymes in the body.

INGREDIENTS

1 small white onion, chopped
1 clove of garlic, minced
1 tbsp olive oil
1 small carrot, peeled and diced
1 small stalk celery, chopped
250g chopped tomatoes
45g green lentils
160ml low sodium veg stock
1/2 tsp dried basil
1/2 tsp dried parsley
1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp chilli flakes (optional)
70g uncooked spaghetti
A pinch of black pepper
Fresh basil to serve.

This recipe makes ONE serving, but can be doubled, tripled or even quadrupled to make many meals in bulk. Store it in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days, and reheat in a microwave until piping hot.

Suitable for vegans.

METHOD

1. Add the olive oil, onion and garlic to a large pot over medium heat and cook for 5 minutes until the onion begins to brown.
2. Add the carrot and celery and cook for approx 8 minutes until the carrots soften and brown slightly.
3. Add the chopped tomatoes, green lentils, vegetable stock, dried basil, dried parsley, salt, chilli flakes and black pepper. Stir well to incorporate then cook over high heat.
4. Once boiling, reduce the heat to low. Cover and let simmer for approximately 25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the lentils are fully cooked.
5. About half way through, bring a large pot of water to the boil and cook the pasta according to the package instructions.
6. Serve the sauce over pasta with fresh basil and a pinch of black pepper.

One Pot Spanish Chicken and Rice

A super easy, hassle-free meal, perfect for a mid-week dinner. Not only is this meal high in protein, it also contains Vitamin C, which is necessary for the development, growth and repair of body tissues.

This recipe makes ONE serving, but can be doubled, tripled or even quadrupled to make many meals in bulk. Store it in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days, and reheat in a microwave until piping hot.

This recipe can be made vegan by switching the chicken for plant-based chicken pieces and the chicken stock for vegetable stock.

INGREDIENTS

1 chicken breast
2 tbsp olive oil
1/2 tsp smoked paprika
1/4 tsp garlic powder
1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp ground cumin
1/4 tsp chilli flakes (optional)
30g rice (uncooked)
150ml low sodium chicken stock
20ml lemon juice
Coriander to serve
Lemon slices to serve

METHOD

1. Place the chicken breast in a pot and drizzle with olive oil, paprika, garlic powder, salt, ground cumin and chilli flakes. Toss to coat well.
2. Heat the pot over high heat. Cook the chicken for 2-3 minutes on each side until browned. Transfer to a plate.
3. To the pot, add the rice, chicken stock and lemon juice. Stir to combine.
4. Return the chicken to the pot on top of the rice. Cover and cook for 20-25 minutes until all the liquid is absorbed by the rice and the chicken is cooked through.
5. Serve with lemon slices and coriander.

My Recipes



Sleep and mental health

Sleep and mental health are very closely linked. Most adults need around 7-9 hours of sleep every night.

Sleep deprivation has been shown to significantly worsen the symptoms of many mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety.

Sleep deprivation may lead to:

Increased feelings of anxiety and depression

Decreased energy

Increased feelings of loneliness (eg. decreased energy makes it alot harder to see people)

Decreased ability to concentrate, focus or make decisions

Increased feelings of irritability, anger and frustration

Tips for improved sleep

- Reduce bedroom distractions, such as televisions, mobile phones and bright lights
- Avoid substances that discourage sleep, such as alcohol, tobacco and caffeine
- Keep a regular sleep schedule, eg. wake up and go to bed at the same time every day
- Move your body during daylight hours. People who exercise regularly fall asleep faster and report better quality of sleep.
- Avoid eating a large meal before bedtime as this can cause hormone disruption. Eat your dinner around 3-4 hours before you go to bed
- Take a relaxing bath or shower before bed
- Avoid drinking fluids 1-2 hours before bed as this can cause excessive urination during the night. Aim to drink enough during the day to stay hydrated.

Water and mental health

There is a close relationship between hydration and mental health. This is because mental health is driven primarily by the brain.

Insufficient water consumption may result in brain function slowing down. Therefore, it is important to think of water as an essential nutrient for the brain.

Aim to drink around 6-8 glasses per day. This includes liquids like tea and sugar-free drinks.

Dehydration may lead to:

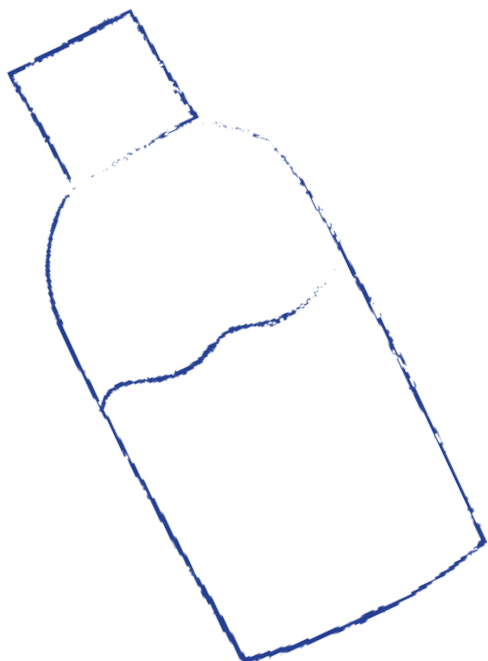
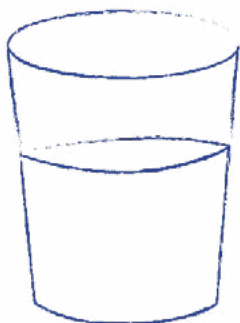
Increased feelings of tension and confusion

Increased risk of developing of anxiety and depression

Decreased energy / increased fatigue

Tips to help improve hydration

- Adding flavour to your drink, e.g. fruits, vegetables or herbs.
- Eating water-rich foods, e.g. cucumber and lettuce.
- Use a water bottle, keep it close by and sip throughout the day.
- Make a note in your diary, on your calendar or leave a note near the tap at the sink.
- Set a reminder on your phone, eg. through a water tracking app or on the alarm app.



Physical activity and mental health

The physical benefits of exercise, such as increased muscle mass, healthy weight and increased energy, are commonly talked about.

However, research has also shown that physical activity positively affects a person's mental health.

Psychological benefits of physical activity

A reduction in stress levels.

When we exercise, our heart rate increases, stimulating the release of hormones such as norepinephrine. This hormone improves mood, cognition and brain fog.



A reduction in feelings of depression and anxiety

This is due to increasing endorphin levels in the body. Increased endorphins produces feelings of happiness and euphoria, even through moderate or low-intensity exercise.

An improvement in sleep quality.

When we exercise, our body temperature increases, which can have calming effects on the mind, resulting in better sleep quality.

Physical activity boosts brain power and creativity.

Exercising helps stimulate the creation of new brain cells. This improves overall brain performance and prevents memory loss and cognitive decline by strengthening the part of the brain responsible for memory and learning.

Activities to try

Zumba Gold

A fun lesson featuring movements inspired by various styles of Latin American dance.

Water Aerobics

Fun, effective, but low-impact workouts in the water that are easy on the joints.

Dance

A great opportunity to learn different steps and styles, get those endorphins flowing and make new friends.

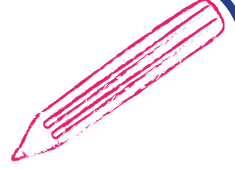
Pilates

A class focussing on concentration and muscle control, surrounded by individuals with mixed abilities.

Yoga

A class focussing on relaxation, breathing and gentle stretching, surrounded by individuals with mixed abilities.

Notes



Bath Mind very much appreciate Bila Chniouer's contribution to the content of this leaflet.

Online Support and Resources

You will find lots of support information, resources and information on how to get help, for you or for someone else, on our website.

Wellbeing Activities

Resources including colouring pages, puzzles, games, quizzes, gardening, cooking and craft activities.

www.bathmind.org.uk/resources/wellbeing-activities/

Breathing Exercises

Connecting with the breath can help us relax, unwind and reduce levels of stress. You can find different types of breathing exercises on our website.

www.bathmind.org.uk/resources/wellbeing-activities/breathing-exercises/

Sleep

Sleep plays a vital part in our mental and physical wellbeing. Read our tips on healthy sleeping habits and further resources on our website.

www.bathmind.org.uk/resources/information-and-tips/sleep-problems/

Physical Exercise, Sport and Mental Health

Exercise and relaxation are important to our mental health and wellbeing as well as our physical health. Find tips and resources on our website.

www.bathmind.org.uk/resources/information-and-tips/sport-and-mental-health/

LGBTQI+ Mental Health

Bath Mind stands with the LGBTQI+ community, allying with equal rights and acceptance for all. Those of us who identify as LGBTQI+ are more likely to experience a mental health problem.

www.bathmind.org.uk/resources/lgbtqi/

Support for Children and Young People

For those supporting young people, it can seem difficult to know where to start. Our website gives suggestions and resources for supporting children and young people.

www.bathmind.org.uk/resources/information-and-tips/children-and-young-people/

Get Involved

There are many different ways you can get involved with Bath Mind.

Volunteering

Volunteering can be a rewarding, beneficial experience. We provide appropriate training and ongoing support. You can find out more on our website, where you'll also see current volunteering vacancies:-

www.bathmind.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering/

Work for Bath Mind

With around 100 staff, Bath Mind work at different locations across Bath and North East Somerset, with our main offices in central Bath. Take a look at our current vacancies on our website.

www.bathmind.org.uk/get-involved/job-opportunities/

Join our Members' Panel

Our Members Panel is a group with lived experience of mental health difficulties having a say in how we work, empowering those involved to have a voice and ensuring that our services reflect the needs and views of people living with mental health difficulties in our local community.

www.bathmind.org.uk/get-involved/members-panel/

Share your Story with us

By contributing to the 'Your Stories' blog at Bath Mind, you can share your own lived experience. Speaking about mental health can be a powerful tool in changing people's perspective.

www.bathmind.org.uk/get-involved/blog-for-bath-mind/

Fundraising and Events

There are lots of ways you can support Bath Mind, whether it's by taking part in an event, taking on a challenge, holding a quiz night, selling cakes, or running a marathon, or simply donating. No matter how you fundraise, we are grateful for your vital donations and support and we are here to support you every step of the way.

www.bathmind.org.uk/support-us/fundraise-for-bath-mind/



Bath Mind is a local, independent charity.
We provide mental health services across
Bath and North East Somerset,

Whilst we are affiliated with National Mind,
we are responsible for our own funding.
Our services are funded through donations,
grants and income from the services which
we provide for BaNES council, the NHS
and private organisations.

If you'd like to support the services which we
deliver to people across Bath and North East Somerset,
you can donate via our website:
www.bathmind.org.uk/support-us/donate/

**You can find lots more
resources and information on
Bath Mind's website.**

www.bathmind.org.uk