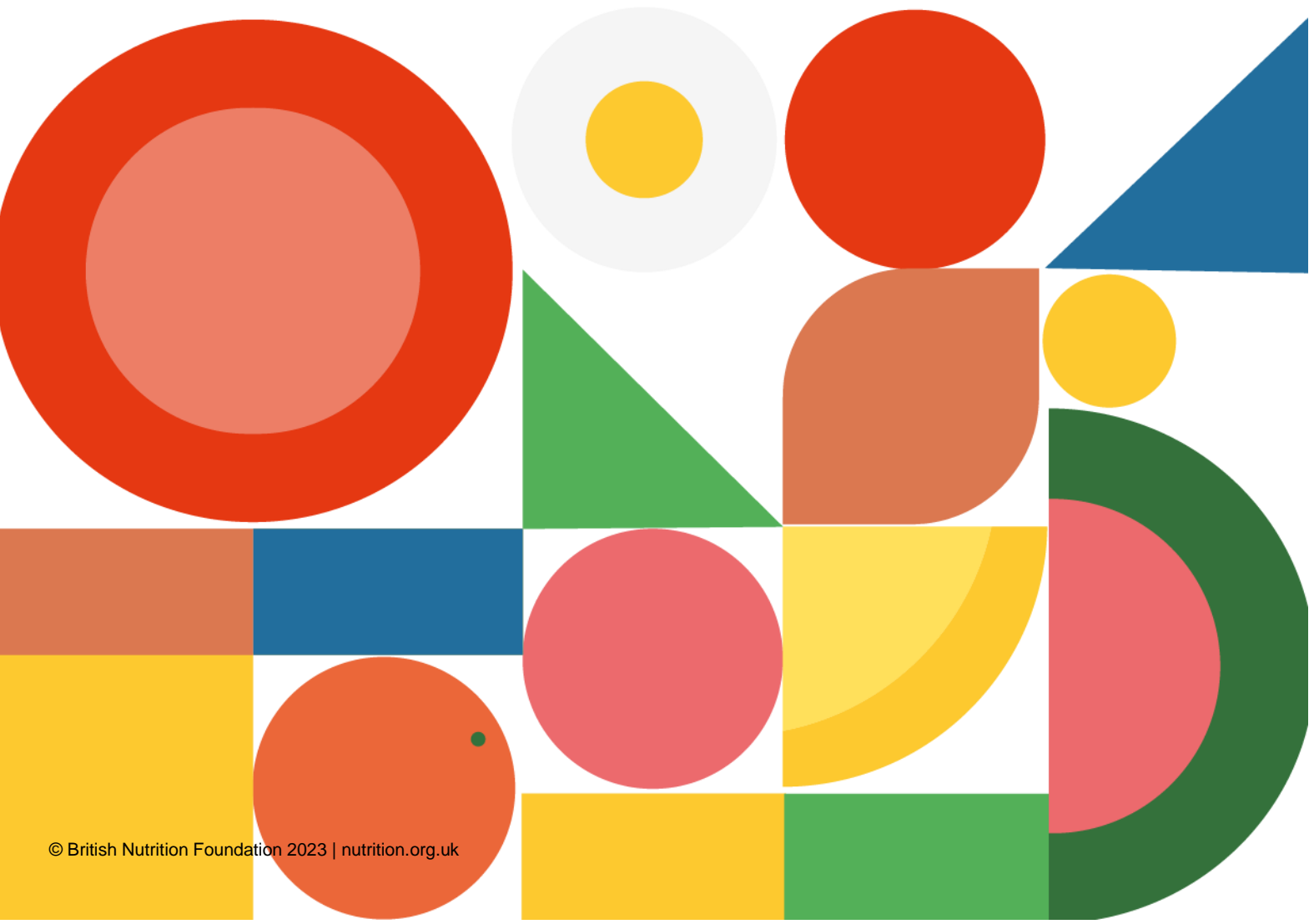


British Nutrition Foundation's Healthy Eating Week 2023

For Everyone!

Early years guide



Welcome to the British Nutrition Foundation's Healthy Eating Week 2023

This year's 11th Healthy Eating Week will take place from 12 - 16 June 2023. This guide will provide you with the information and resources you will need to take part in the Week.

This year's Healthy Eating Week aims to help everyone learn more about what they can do to have a healthier and more sustainable diet by focusing on five themes:

- **Focus on fibre - for meals and snacks**
Have more wholegrain foods, fruit and vegetables, beans, peas, and lentils.
- **Get at least 5 A DAY – canned and frozen count too**
Have at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day.
- **Vary your protein - be more creative**
Eat a wider variety of protein foods and choose plant protein sources more often.
- **Stay hydrated- fill up from the tap**
Have about 6-8 drinks a day and choose reusable or recyclable drinks containers.
- **Reduce food waste – be food wise**
Aim for the right amount when you shop, cook and eat to avoid throwing food away.

Read on for background information about the Week's five themes, and activities and resources for use in your early years setting.

Get started!

Use these ideas to get your whole early years setting involved in Healthy Eating Week.

- Display the [Healthy Eating Week posters](#) in a communal area.
- Complete and display the [What's happening this week? sheet](#) to let everyone know what your setting will be doing during Healthy Eating Week. You could make this available on your website, or social media channels.
- Use the [What's happening today? signs](#) to highlight daily activities that will be taking place in your setting.
- Let your catering staff know about Healthy Eating Week. Perhaps they can plan meals and snacks for the Week to complement the themes!
- Award children (and staff!) with the [Healthy Eating Week certificate](#) for getting involved in the Week.

Share what you are doing during Healthy Eating Week on Twitter [@NutritionOrgUK](#) [#HEW23](#) or email us at postbox@nutrition.org.uk.

You can find all the early years resources above, here:

<https://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthy-eating-week-2023/early-years/>



Focus on fibre - for meals and snacks

Foods that provide fibre include wholegrain varieties* of starchy foods (such as wholegrain bread, breakfast cereals, brown rice, and wholewheat pasta) and potatoes with their skin on, fruit and vegetables and pulses (such as red kidney beans or lentils). Fibre is important for keeping the digestive system healthy. Most of us need to increase our fibre intake. (You can visit our [Fibre webpage](#) for more information about fibre.)

The resources below for early years have a particular focus on starchy foods (other themes in the Week cover fruit and vegetables and pulses).

- Set up a tasting activity to allow children to sample some different types of wholegrain breakfast cereals (aim for unsweetened varieties). Remember to check for allergies, intolerances or special dietary requirements before you do any tasting with children. Use the [Tasting guide](#) to help you set up the session. You could display the [Sensory vocabulary cards](#) to help children describe what they taste. The children could record their tasting experience on a print out of slide six from the [My food book](#) or the [Tasting ingredients sheet](#).
- Use the [Pleasing pasta session](#) to explore different types of pasta and pasta dishes. If you are working with children over the age of 2 years*, talk about how different types of pasta could be swapped to wholewheat varieties to add more fibre. Fibre helps our digestive system to stay healthy.
- Use the [Brilliant bread session](#) to help children learn more about bread and that we should have a starchy food like bread with every meal. As above, if you are working with children over the age of 2 years*, talk about how different types of bread could be swapped to wholemeal varieties to add more fibre.

Recipes

Try some of these simple recipes to support learning about different starchy foods.

- [Brilliant bread](#) - Wholemeal bread flour or a mix of white and wholemeal bread flour could be used in this recipe to add more fibre.
- [Soda bread](#) - This recipe is made partly with wholemeal flour, this is an opportunity to talk to children about how wholemeal flour increases the amount of fibre in the bread.
- [Pleasing pasta](#) - This recipe could be adapted to use wholewheat pasta.
- [Potato salad](#) - This recipe uses new potatoes with skins on, which adds more fibre to the dish compared with potatoes without skins.

*Wholegrain starchy foods should be introduced gradually from 2 years of age because children under 2 can fill up more easily on these bulky foods and may stop eating before they've eaten enough energy for their needs.



Get at least 5 A DAY – canned and frozen count too

Fruit and vegetables are an important part of the diet because they contain vitamins and minerals as well as fibre. We should all aim to have at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day. As a general rule, one portion for children is roughly what fits into their palm.

To help with eating a variety of fruit and vegetables, it might be useful to think about ‘eating a rainbow’ of colours (e.g. fruit and vegetables that are red, purple/blue, orange/yellow, green.)

Encouraging young children to eat lots of fruits and vegetables will not only help them get the nutrients they need but will also train their palate to like these foods, which will mean that they will be more likely to eat lots of fruits and vegetables throughout childhood and into adulthood.

- Use the [5 A DAY notes and resources](#) to teach children that we need to have at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables each day to help us stay healthy.
- Help children become more familiar with the wide variety of fruit and vegetables available by using the [Find the fruit and vegetable sheet](#) and [questions](#). Make a colour copy of sheet showing the fruit and vegetables and use the questions provided to support discussion about the different fruit and vegetables that can be seen. You could display this resource for the children to use independently and they can make up their own questions to ask each other.
- Print a large copy of the [Fruit and vegetable tracker](#) to display in your setting. Allow the children (and adults!) to add a coloured dot to the salad bowl every time they have a portion of fruit or vegetables. You can use the tracker for a day or a week. Alternatively, you could give each child their own tracker to complete.
- Use the [Vegetable activity pack](#) to help children explore different types of vegetables.
- Use some of the [Food journey cards](#) (e.g. tomatoes, strawberries) to talk about the journey of different fruit and vegetables from growing to eating.

Recipes

Try these simple recipes to support learning about fruit and vegetables.

- [Fruit kebabs](#)
- [Perfect plant salad](#)
- [Awesome overnight oats](#)



Vary your protein – be more creative

Young children need protein in their diet to help them grow and develop, for example, for muscle and bone growth.

Protein foods can include pulses (such as beans, lentils or chickpeas), foods made from pulses (such as tofu, dahl or soya mince), fish, eggs, nuts and seeds (if no allergies, and only ground or as a nut or seed butter to avoid choking), lean meat and poultry. These foods also provide iron which is essential for a growing child. Oily fish (such as salmon, mackerel, trout, and sardines) are also an important source of omega 3 fatty acids and vitamin D.

We are all encouraged to eat a wider variety of protein foods and choose plant protein sources more often, to improve not only our health but also the health of the planet.

Use these ideas to help children explore the variety of different protein foods available, with a particular focus on protein foods from plants, such as beans, lentils and chickpeas.

Activities using the [Protein cards](#):

- Print the [Protein cards](#), remove and discard the section of each card which shows the grams of protein in each food (leave the names of the foods attached to the images). Show each card and ask the children to name the food. Briefly discuss each food, e.g. Have you tried this before, what is it like? What do you know about this food? Hand out the cards to the children. Task them to group themselves in different ways, for example: sort themselves into plant or animal sources of protein; order the cards alphabetically; sort themselves into the following groups – beans, lentils, peas, nuts and seeds, fish, meat and other.
- Use the [Protein cards](#) as above, but now separate the name labels from the images. Show the children the different foods and ask them what they are called. Can they match the name labels to the images? Question them about the foods. Have you eaten this before? Did you have it with other foods? What was it like? Explain that we get protein from these foods and protein helps muscles and bones to grow.
- Display the [Protein cards](#). Give the children a copy of the [Colourful pulses sheet](#). Task them to look at the [Protein cards](#) to find the pulses on their sheet and colour them correctly. They can then draw, or list, other foods that are the same colour as each pulse.
- Show the [Protein meal cards](#). Ask the children to identify the protein food in each meal. Which of these meals have they eaten? Which of these meals would they like to try? You could challenge the children to try matching some of the [Protein cards](#) to the different meals.

Note: with younger children, you may wish to select some examples from the [Protein cards](#) and [Protein meal cards](#) to use in the activities above, rather than using all the cards. If you do this, make sure the cards you select show a variety of different types of protein, e.g. beans, lentils, meat, fish.

Other activities:

- Show the [Pulses cards](#). Question the children about each food. What is this called? Have you eaten this before? What is it like? Have you seen it at home or in the shops? Explain that these protein foods are called pulses and they come from plants.
- Hide, or display, the [Pulses cards](#) around your setting. Provide children with a copy of the [Perfect pulses sheet](#). Explain that they need to find each pulse image to help them complete their sheet. Alternatively, instead of using the [Pulses cards](#), for this activity, you could provide the pulses shown on the sheet in sealed packages or cans.
- Children could draw or paint their favourite protein meal or a protein meal or food they'd like to try.

Recipes

Try these two recipes to explore different pulses.

- [Royal rice](#) - This recipe is a rice salad with red kidney beans. You could experiment with swapping the red kidney beans for other types of canned beans (in water).
- [Crunchy chickpea sandwich](#) - Try this tasty alternative to coronation chicken.



Stay hydrated – fill up from the tap

Water plays many different roles in the body including helping to control body temperature and removing waste products in the urine.

Our bodies lose water throughout the day in urine and sweat as well as small amounts through breathing. If we do not drink enough fluids we can become dehydrated, which can cause symptoms like headaches and poor concentration. Young children are most at risk of dehydration.

We are all recommended to have about 6-8 drinks (glasses or cups of fluid) a day and more if the weather is hot or we are being physically active. There aren't specific recommendations in the UK for how much fluid children should get in a day, but based on guidance from the EU, younger children need relatively smaller drinks (about 120–150ml per drink).

Water and milk are the best drinks for children as they do not contain free sugars. For children between one and two, whole milk is recommended. From two onwards, semi-skimmed milk can be introduced gradually. Fresh tap water should be available and accessible to children throughout the day. Children should be encouraged to drink water as their main drink. Water and plain milk should be the only drinks offered at and between mealtimes. Take a look at the [Healthy hydration for children aged 1-4 poster](#) for more guidance.

Choose reusable or recyclable containers for our drinks to help reduce single-use packaging. The Drinks container activity encourages children to explore recycling instructions on drinks containers.

- Use the [Hydration station set up guide](#) and [Hydration station sign](#) to set up a hydration station in your setting. Show the children how they can create their own water infusion and encourage them to help themselves throughout the day.
- Play the [Drink pairs](#) game with small groups of children. You could also use the cards for other activities. For example, asking children to sort the cards according to whether they are water, milk or made with fruit, or sorting them by the container they are in.
- Print a large copy of the [Water tracker](#) to display in your setting. Allow the children (and adults!) to add a blue dot to the water jug every time they have a drink of tap water. You can use the tracker for a day or the whole week. (Alternatively, you could give each child their own tracker to complete.)
- Provide a selection of different drink containers (empty and clean, or sealed). For example, a milk carton, orange juice carton, plastic water bottle, squash bottle. Show the [Recycling signs sheet](#) and explain that we can find these signs on packaging to tell us if it can be recycled. Get the children to find the recycling information on each drink container. Talk about the information, e.g. can the container (or part of the container) be recycled? Give children a copy of the [Drinks containers sheet](#) to complete.



Reduce food waste – be food wise

In the UK, households are responsible for 70% of UK food waste. According to Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP)**, three commonly wasted food and drink items in UK households include fresh potatoes, bread and milk.

So much goes into producing our food - water, energy, land, and transport. Reducing the amount of food we waste is therefore important to make our diets more sustainable, not only to help save money but also to save wasting the planet's resources. To help children get the right amount of food and reduce food waste, take a look at the [5532 a-day resource](#).

The activities below are design to get children thinking about how to reduce food waste.

- Print the [Food waste or food wasted?](#) sheet. Cut out the images on the first sheet and display sheets showing the plate and food waste bin. Show the images one at a time and talk to the children about what they are and whether they could have been eaten, or if they should be in the food waste bin. Attach the images to the appropriate sheet. Explain to children that lots of food is wasted which means all the things (e.g. water, energy, land, transport) used to make the food are wasted too. Talk about ways we can reduce food waste. Food safety and hygiene should also be discussed when talking about ideas for reducing food waste with the children.
- To help children be more aware of food waste, print and display the [Food saver tracker](#). Allow the children (and adults!) to add a green dot to the bowl every time they save food from being wasted. There is space to make a note of food that has been saved.
- You could talk to the children about charities such as [UK Harvest](#) that rescue and redistribute food.

Recipes

Try these simple recipes that can be adapted to use up ingredients and save food from being wasted.

- [Picturesque pizza](#) – This simple recipe provides lots of opportunities to use up ingredients such as vegetables, cheese and herbs.
- [Fruit salad](#) – This recipe is idea for using up fruit that may be becoming a bit soft.
- [Vegetable soup](#) – This versatile soup recipe can be adapted to include any leftover vegetables.

**WRAP - Food surplus and waste in the UK

Remember! There is a [What's happening today? sign](#) for each of the Week's themes. You can edit these signs to share information or instructions with your early years community about what is happening on each day of Healthy Eating Week.

There is also a [Healthy Eating Week certificate](#) that can be awarded to children and staff who have participated in Healthy Eating Week activities.

Why not share what your school is doing for Healthy Eating Week on twitter? @NutritionOrgUK #HEW23



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