

Oral Health and Nutrition Guidance for Professionals

Quick Reference Guide

Nutrition

The recommendations for between-meal healthy snacks and drinks for the general population are categorised as healthy choice, occasional and not recommended.

Healthy snack choice	Occasional snack choice	Not recommended as a snack choice
<p>Fruit and vegetables</p> <p>Vegetable- and pulse-based soups</p> <p>Baked beans</p> <p>Semi-skimmed, skimmed or other lower-fat milks (e.g. 1% milks are now available) are recommended for adults and children aged 5-plus¹</p> <p>Water</p> <p>Tea and coffee (without sugar or syrup)²</p> <p>Bread: wholemeal, brown, granary, white, high-fibre and rye bread, pitta, chapatti, rolls, baguettes, bagels³</p> <p>Sandwich fillings: salad, fish, banana, lettuce, salad leaves, cucumber, tomatoes, carrot, pepper, sweetcorn, spring onion, oily fish (fresh or canned in water), egg (not egg mayonnaise)</p> <p>Wholegrain breakfast cereals that are low in salt and sugar and high in fibre⁴</p>	<p>Soya, rice and oat drinks that are low in fat and sugar</p> <p>Flavoured milk drinks that are low in fat and low in added sugar or artificially sweetened</p> <p>Reduced-fat cheeses</p> <p>Full-fat cheeses⁵</p> <p>Natural yoghurt/plain fromage frais, with the possible addition of either fresh or frozen fruit or fruit in natural juices</p> <p>Sugar-free fruit squash, diet fizzy drinks, and unsweetened, sparkling fruit-flavoured water²</p> <p>Small, plain scones and pancakes/crumpets⁶</p> <p>Breadsticks, oatcakes, savoury scones, e.g. potato, cheese, soda⁵</p> <p>Crisps and savoury snacks, dry and instant pot snacks</p> <p>Nuts and seeds⁷</p> <p>Ciabatta, focaccia, naan, tortillas, wheaten bread, olive bread and sun-dried tomato bread</p>	<p>Fruit juice and fruit smoothies</p> <p>Dried fruit</p> <p>Fruit juices and dried fruit all contain a high concentration of sugars that can cause decay – these should be consumed at mealtimes only.</p> <p>Sugary fizzy drinks, fruit squashes/ cordials, sports drinks</p> <p>Confectionery, savoury snacks and high-sugar or high-fat baked products, which include: chocolate, sweets, chocolate-coated products and cereal bars, processed fruit sweets and bars, sugared or yoghurt-coated fruit or nuts, cakes, biscuits, ice creams and ice lollies, tray bakes</p> <p>Artificially sweetened chocolate confectionery (e.g. diabetic products)</p> <p>Sugar-free confectionery (e.g. sugar-free lozenges, sugar-free mints)</p> <p>Processed meat products, i.e. hot dogs, frankfurters, sausages, processed beef burgers, meatballs, haggis and shaped poultry products (e.g. nuggets), pastry products (e.g. bridies, sausage rolls, pasties, Scotch pies)</p> <p>Bread products with added fat like garlic bread, butteries, croissants, pain au chocolat and brioche</p> <p>Breakfast cereals that are high in fat, salt and sugar</p>
<p>As professionals, you can help individuals chose low-sugar foods by advising them to check food labels.</p>		

¹ For children younger than 2, whole milk is recommended. Between the ages of 2 and 5, children can gradually move from whole milk to semi-skimmed milk, as long as they are eating a good and varied diet (see full guidance).

² They are not suitable for infants and young children.

³ High-sugar and/or high-fat spreads on bread are not recommended (including jam, marmalade, chocolate spread, honey, mayonnaise, salad cream, tomato ketchup, pickle).

⁴ The addition of table sugar to any cereal should be discouraged.

⁵ For children younger than 2, full-fat cheeses are recommended as an occasional snack (see full guidance).

⁶ Avoid high-fat or sugar toppings like jam and cream.

⁷ See full guidance for exceptions.

Oral health

The most common oral diseases are tooth decay and gum disease, with plaque linked to both. Gum disease is prevented by regular toothbrushing. Tooth decay can be reduced by regular use of fluoride toothpaste and a low-sugar diet.

Dental disease is not inevitable and can be prevented by changes in behaviour. Effective and evidence-based messages to prevent dental disease are included below and can be used in a 'step change' way if required.

Key oral health advice:

- Brushing should start as soon as the first tooth erupts using a smear of fluoride toothpaste.
- Brush teeth twice a day – morning and especially last thing at night.
- Children at increased risk of dental decay may need higher concentrations of fluoride – this should be discussed with a dentist.
- Spit out excess toothpaste and do not rinse with water, which will wash away the fluoride and reduce the benefits.
- Reducing sugar intake must be combined with the thorough and regular practice of toothbrushing with fluoride toothpaste.
- Sugary food and drinks should only be consumed at mealtimes if at all, rather than between meals. Mealtimes stimulate saliva production, which may help prevent tooth decay.
- Avoid sugar-containing foods and drinks at bedtime.
- Plain milk or tap water between meals are ideal drinks.

(For further advice, see p. 14 of main document.)

Oral health and nutrition recommendations for specific groups:

This section provides some key oral health and nutrition recommendations for two specific groups: the under-5s and nutritionally vulnerable older people. These life stages have specific nutritional and oral health needs and are priority groups for prevention efforts. Please see the main document for a more expansive list of recommendations.

- Children under 5 need small snacks between meals due to their small stomach size and higher energy needs for growth (see under-5s section on p. 39 of main document).
- Children need energy to grow and develop and keep them active so snack choices should be high in nutrients but low in sugar (to help prevent tooth decay), fat and salt.
- Foods and drinks containing non-milk extrinsic sugars (NMEs) should be kept to a minimum and are best given at mealtimes. Many foods and drinks that contain NMEs can lead to tooth decay and to a liking for sweeter foods, which may contribute to obesity.

- Where older people need additional calories (energy) or encouragement to drink for hydration, frequent sugar-sweetened drinks may be required. Encourage additional toothbrushing at different times during the day as well as normal brushing morning and night – fluoride in the mouth is the most important factor in preventing tooth decay.
- Dentures should be removed and cleaned after each meal, and removed and rinsed after snacks.

For more detailed information on oral health and nutrition recommendations for these specific groups, see from p. 37 of main document.

This Quick Reference Guide summarises the recommendations from the ***Oral Health and Nutrition Guidance for Professionals*** document. The main guidance document provides agreed, consistent, evidence-based guidance on oral health and nutrition advice.

To view the main guidance document, visit: www.healthscotland.com/documents/5885.aspx

This Quick Reference Guide highlights recommendations for between-meal healthy choices for the general population. A higher frequency of sugar intake between meals causes more tooth decay. This guide highlights oral health and nutrition recommendations for two specific groups, under-5s and nutritionally vulnerable older people.

Healthy eating advice should be given to the public to promote good oral and general health. Current guidance is to reduce the amount of fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar in our diet, and to try to choose foods labelled:

low in sugar

low in salt (sodium)

low in fat

low in saturated fat

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