



# The Importance of Good Nutrition & Hydration for Unpaid Carers

Eating well means enjoying a variety of foods which contain all of the essential nutrients, including vitamins and minerals that our bodies need to help maintain good health, maintain a healthy weight and stay well hydrated.

As a Carer, (caring for someone in your family or a friend that can't manage without your help) finding time to prepare healthy, balanced meals may be challenging because of your many commitments and day-to-day tasks.



The 'Eatwell guide' shows the different types of foods and drinks we should aim to eat every day or over a week, and in what proportions they should be eaten to achieve a healthy, balanced diet. Visit the website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) to find out more about the 'Eatwell guide' and explore the interactive tools designed to help you achieve and maintain a healthy, balanced diet.

## Are you eating well?

On most days of the week do you:

- Eat at least **five portions** of fruit and vegetables.
- Include higher fibre starchy wholegrains foods such as wholemeal pasta, brown rice, or leave skins on potatoes.
- Eat lean sources of protein such as chicken, fish, and lean cuts of meat, trimming off any excess fat and eating less processed meat such as; sausages, ham and bacon.
- Eat dairy products such as milk, cheese, yoghurts or dairy alternatives such as soya drink products which are an important source of calcium to help keep our bones strong.
- Drink plenty of fluids: the recommended amount is 6 to 8 cups or glasses a day.

Do you, or someone you care for struggle to eat enough?

If you struggle to eat enough or find that you've lost your appetite, lost interest in food, and/or have noticed unintentional weight loss or a low body weight, you may be at risk of undernutrition. Undernutrition means not getting enough of all of the essential nutrients, vitamins and minerals that your body needs to maintain good health. Other symptoms may include feeling tired all the time with low mood, or feeling weak and unable to carry out day-to-day tasks.

Where to get help?

If you feel that you, or someone you care for is struggling to eat enough and have been experiencing some of the points mentioned above it is best to seek advice from your \*GP or practice nurse in the first instance, or contact your local Nutrition & Dietetic department for further support on 01267 227 067. Please quote reference: Community carer self-referral.

\*Unpaid Carers can also register as a Carer with their GP surgery, please ask the receptionist for a form. This will enable you to access information on support for Carers through your local Carers Information Service.