

A good diet is important

The PPG chairs would like to stay connected with you during this period as we self-isolate. We would like to send you information to help you stay healthy and active.

The first subject is our food and drink. The food and drink we consume is critical to our physical and mental health.

The first feature is written by **Isabel Hooley, BSc, PgDip, HCPC, HEE Wessex QI Fellow Dietitian at Dorset County Hospital Nutrition and Dietetics Service**

It is well worth reading and if you think some of your neighbours or friends in Weymouth & Portland would benefit from this advice please forward it to them.

We will try to stay connected with you during this crisis via emails and the internet. Please remember the NHS cares for us and the PPGs are trying to support our local NHS.

Stay safe. Peter Greensmith Chair Weymouth & Portland PPG Chairs

Nutrition Advice for Covid-19

1. If you become ill, you may lose your appetite. Eat what you can and drink plenty of fluids until you feel better. If what you eat is critical to your health, such as kidney dialysis, diabetes or malnutrition, please get information from your healthcare team now so that you know what to do if you become unwell and lose your appetite.

2. There is no special nutrient or vitamin that will protect from Covid-19; a balanced diet is best. The British Dietetic Association website and the NHS website have good information about that.

During a day, your body will need some fruit and vegetables, some starchy foods (preferably wholegrain), some protein foods (meat, fish, eggs, vegetarian/vegan alternatives, beans and pulses), some healthy fats (oily fish, nuts, seeds) and some calcium (dairy foods, fortified plant milks, green leafy veg). For pleasure you may also need some alcohol, food that is high in sugar or fried foods.

You may need to pay attention to particular foods because of a health condition; please continue to do that as much as you can. This time of year, is the start of when our bodies can make vitamin D from sunlight. Try to get outside every day (but not long enough to get sunburn). If you are not getting outside, you may need to take a Vitamin D supplement that gives you 10 micrograms per day.

3. Be thrifty with your food to avoid extra shopping trips. Dig to the back of your cupboards and see what is in there! Don't worry if your meals are an unusual mix of foods; if it tastes ok and gives you a balance of nutrients (see point 1 above), then it is healthy.

4. Dried, frozen, tinned and fresh fruit and vegetables are all nutritious. Try different types if your usual ones aren't available. If you can't get fruit; one glass of fruit juice will give you your daily dose of vitamin C.

5. Dealing with the impact of Covid-19 can be stressful and you may feel the need to comfort eat or you may have lost your appetite. If so, be kind to yourself and don't let food add to your stress. Take steps to manage your stress and then your eating will return to normal. There is good information on the MIND website

6. Keep well hydrated. Water is best but any drinks count, except alcohol. You will know if you are dehydrated by the colour of your pee – if it is very yellow or darker then you are dehydrated and need to drink more.

7. Are you less active than usual because you are staying at home? If you are, you might need slightly less food than usual if you are someone who wants to avoid gaining weight. If you are elderly, it is important to keep strength in your muscles: If it is safe to do so, get up and down in your chair as often as you can in a day without using your hands – see if you can do more times for each week that you are staying indoors.

Being active helps keep healthy bones and a healthy heart; why not put on some music and dance!

Websites

British Dietetic Association

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/covid-19-corona-virus-advice-for-the-general-public.html> <https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/covid-19-corona-virus-advice-for-the-general-public.html>

NHS balanced diet information <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

Vitamin D <https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/vitamin-d.html>

MIND <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

Hydration pee colour guide

<https://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/content/uploads/2018/12/Urine-colour-guide-for-GPs.pdf>

Royal Osteoporosis Society (exercise) <https://theros.org.uk/information-and-support/looking-after-your-bones/exercise-for-bones>