



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

## **The Eatwell Guide**

How does it differ to the eatwell plate and why?

## About Public Health England

Public Health England exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health.

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# The Eatwell Guide – How does it differ to the eatwell plate and why?

PHE keeps dietary recommendations under review as part of its role in maintaining the evidence base and promoting evidence based public health. PHE committed to review healthy eating messages in July 2014 in light of, the then draft, conclusion of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition's Carbohydrate and Health report.

Although there are many similarities between the eatwell plate and the Eatwell Guide, however there are also some distinct differences:

- **Renamed the 'Eatwell Guide'**

Research found that the approach of having a plate with a knife and fork no longer resonated with the public. Testing without key aspects depicting a plate highlighted different features of the visual for consumers and concentrated their thinking as to the role of the depiction – namely that of a guide to the overall diet. As such, Eatwell Guide was considered to be a helpful term and PHE adopted this following the consumer research.

- **Removal of the knife and fork**

Consumer research highlighted that the knife and fork featured in the eatwell plate were no longer considered appealing aspects of the overall design. It was felt that these added little to the meaning of the model and could cause confusion when interpreting the plate to be a recommendation for every mealtime.

- **Drawn images instead of photographs of foods**

PHE has conducted consumer testing during the development of the guide; this research showed that those who are already engaged with food and nutrition tended to prefer photos, but those who are less engaged, and more likely to have a poor diet, preferred drawn images. In order to make the model accessible to the whole population drawn images have been used, which tested well with all consumers.

- **Updated segment names**

The names of the food group segments have been updated to place emphasis on certain food products within a food group that can be considered more environmentally sustainable. For example, the pink segment is named 'Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins' to highlight the contribution non-meat sources make to protein intake.

- **Food group segments resized**

The segment sizes of the food groups have been adjusted to reflect current government advice on a healthy balanced diet.

The revised segment sizes have been modelled using linear programming. This modelling process took the current intakes of the most commonly consumed foods in the UK (according to the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS)), applied the revised government dietary recommendations and modelled the fewest possible changes needed to achieve the proposed recommendations.

Using this method ensured that any adaptations made to the model were realistic and not too far removed from the current dietary habits of the UK population.

- **The purple segment now only contains 'oils and spreads'**

The new Eatwell Guide differentiates unsaturated oils (such as vegetable /olive) and lower fat spreads from other foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar. This is because some fat is essential in a healthy balanced diet, but other foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar are not and should be eaten less often and in small amounts.

The small size of the purple section reflects the fact that oils and spreads are high fat and contain a lot of calories, so these should only be consumed in small amounts.

- **High fat, salt and sugar foods have been removed from the purple section**

Foods high in fat and/or sugar, which previously featured in the purple section of the eatwell plate, have now been placed outside of the main image. Consumer research highlighted that the removal of these products from the main image aided consumer understanding of the role of these foods and drinks in the diet, as products to be consumed infrequently and in small amounts. It was also found that having these food products outside of the main image helped consumers to reflect the need to move their overall intakes towards a healthier lifestyle whilst feeling that the Eatwell Guide was an achievable target for their food consumption habits.

- **Inclusion of a hydration message**

Keeping hydrated is part of a healthy diet and so the Eatwell Guide reinforces fluid recommendations and the best drinks to choose - water, low fat milk and sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee.

- **Additional messages for further guidance**

Consumer testing highlighted that most people found it helpful to have additional messaging on the guide as this helped to answer some of the immediate questions raised when looking at the image alone. Consumer research tested several variations of supporting messaging to

understand what phrasing was best understood by consumers. The wording that was found to offer the greatest impact and understanding was adopted for the final model.

- **Inclusion of energy requirements**

An orange border featuring the energy requirements for men and women has been used to reinforce the message that all food and drinks consumed contribute to total energy intake. Consumer research revealed that the inclusion of an energy message provided adults with a useful benchmark for their own consumption.

- **Inclusion of a front of pack nutrition label**

A front of pack nutrition label has been added to the guide to respond to consumer comments regarding the lack of guidance on choosing foods lower in fat, salt and sugars when shopping. As there are several variations of the front of pack label, an amalgamation of the most commonly used features of the front of pack nutrition label was used on the Eatwell Guide to represent the information available on a variety of packaged foods.

- **Fruit juice has been removed from the fruit and vegetable segment**

Although fruit juice (at a maximum of 150ml/day) still counts towards one of your 5-a-day, the advice around drinks has been encompassed with the hydration message on the new Eatwell Guide.