

The Food Circle



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The Food Circle – to help you make the right choice

We want the food we eat to be tasty and at the same time provide the energy, water and nutrients we need. Most foodstuffs contain many different nutrients, but some in only very small amounts. In the food circle foodstuffs are divided into groups with similar nutritional content.

The food circle helps us get all the nutrients we need. Eating an item from each group every day ensures a good variety of nutrients.

It is not necessary to consume the same amounts from each of the seven groups. Eat large portions of root vegetables, vegetables, fruit and berries, as well as bread, flour and cereals, but restrict the use of fat spreads and cooking fat.

Fruit and berries

primarily provide us with vitamin C, folate and fibre. Juice may be an alternative to fresh fruit, but contains less fibre. Choose fruit in season and don't forget the berries!

Vegetables

provide us with only small amounts of energy, but are still filling. They contain fibre, folate, vitamin C and carotene (carotene is converted into vitamin A in the body). Choose coarser varieties, such as broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts. Vary your vegetables according to season – white and red cabbage in the winter, rather than iceberg lettuce and cucumber. Most of us should eat more vegetables, raw as well as cooked. Peas, lentils and beans are rich in protein and can sometimes replace meat and fish.

Potatoes and root vegetables

are fibre-rich and contain important vitamins and minerals. Most of us should eat more of them than we do. Potatoes, swede, parsnips and celeriac can be prepared in many different ways – au gratin, mashed or in casseroles. Raw or cooked carrots can also be ingredients in salads.

Bread, cereals, pasta and rice

contribute energy as well as fibre, vitamin B and iron. They are also an important source of whole-grain. Other foodstuffs in this category are pearly wheat and oats, couscous and bulgur. Preferably choose the wholegrain alternatives.

Fats

contain polyunsaturated, monounsaturated and saturated fatty acids in different proportions. There are also vitamins A, D and E in fats. Spread a thin layer on bread and preferably choose low-fat margarine. If you use sandwich spread, no fat is needed. When cooking, soft or liquid cooking fat with a good fatty acid composition should be used. Low-fat margarine is, however, not suitable for frying.

Young children don't need to decrease their intake of fat and can be given spreads that contain 80 per cent fat.

Milk and cheese

provide us with calcium, zinc, and vitamins A, B and C. A 12 g slice of cheese contains about the same amount of calcium as one decilitre of milk. In order to avoid unnecessary fat, use low-fat cheese and milk products.

Meat, fish and eggs

are especially rich in protein, minerals and vitamins. Meat and fish stimulate the uptake of iron from other foods and the iron in meat is easily absorbed by the body. This group also comprises lamb, chicken and offal, as well as cured meats – try to choose lean alternatives! Fish is good food, and many don't eat enough of it. Eat more fish, including the more fatty species such as mackerel, Pacific Salmon and West Coast Herring – fish fat has a favourable fatty acid composition.

Some people must avoid certain foods due to allergies. Others, e.g. vegetarians, abstain for other reasons. They can choose other foodstuffs from the same

group. If foodstuffs from one group are totally excluded the diet should be composed in such a way that the nutritional requirements are still met.