



# EAT WELL POLICY



EAT WELL

December 2020

Our menus are designed around the NHS Eat Well Guide to ensure our students and staff get a balance of healthier, more sustainable food. The NHS Eat Well Guide will be displayed in our restaurants to encourage our students and staff to make informed decisions about what they eat.

In September 2020, we introduced new kitchen software which will enable our customers to obtain menu and nutritional information from January 2021.

- **Stay hydrated**

- WHY? Our bodies are about 60% water and it performs a crucial role in carrying nutrients to cells, helping to remove waste products from our major organs and helping to regulate our body's temperature. Water affects how our bodies and brain function; studies show that dehydration can reduce our ability to concentrate, our cognitive and physical performance and increase feelings of aggression or irritation. Water is essential for getting the benefits from fibre (below).

- **Eat a range of fruit and vegetables a day**

- WHY? Fruit and vegetables are high in fibre, low in fat and contain a wide range of vitamins and minerals. The more varied a diet the more likely it is that we get a full range of vitamins and minerals essential to effective body and brain function. The health benefits of these vitamins and minerals are thought to deliver a wide range of health benefits including supporting the immune system (vitamin C), combatting stress and anxiety, relieving insomnia (magnesium) and relieving mood swings (Vitamin B). The fibre in fruit and vegetables help support dietary health as given below.

- **Increase consumption of fibre**

- WHY? Fibre not only helps support dietary health but also helps your body moderate blood sugar levels which support consistent energy levels and reduce mood swings. Fibre "feeds" gut bacteria; gut health is being increasing seen as beneficial in reducing the symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorders, but research in this area is in the early stages.
  - **We have added whole wheat pasta to the menus in our dining halls**
  - **We use a brown/white rice mix (with the exception of risotto and Indian dishes)**
  - **We have increased the ratio of wholemeal and seeded breads to white bread available at our bread stations**
  - **We have created recipes with more vegetable content to increase fibre intake**

- In January 2020, we increased the selection of vegetables from 2 to 3 per service and we promote high fibre vegetables daily with an Eat Well logo (this is currently suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to minimise waste)
    - All “Eat Well” dishes are highlighted on our menus
- **Reduce red meat**
  - WHY? While red meat is a great source of iron and vitamin B12 both essential for healthy blood and nervous system, too much of it can lead to high consumption of saturated fat, elevated cholesterol and digestive complaints. Red meat is a good source of tryptophan, an amino acid that is believed to be a precursor to mood-regulating neurotransmitter serotonin, which helps keep moods and sleep well balanced.
    - We have reduced the portion size of red meat in recipes by 17%
    - Since February 2020 we only have beef/pork on the menu three times a week in catered halls
    - In March 2020, we reduced beef burgers on our daily menus to three times a week
    - We have introduced more pulses and beans into recipes as a substitute to meat to offer an alternative source of protein
    - In February 2020, we increased our offering of fish to 3 times a week in our dining halls in line with our [Marine Stewardship Council \(MSC\) accreditation](#)
    - Our street food van has been accredited by the Vegetarian Society and serves a choice of plant-based Moving Mountains burgers, vegetarian toasted sandwiches and vegan soup every week day.
- **Reduce consumption of sugar**
  - WHY? Sugar is in many of the foods we eat and is often hidden; it is also in many of the foods that are eaten as treats. Sugar is a source of instant energy but is also a source of energy “crashes” and cravings. Sugar can release positive feelings in the short term but has also been linked to lack of energy, mood swings, and depression. This is thought to be because it decreases the effects of feel-good neurotransmitters, such as lower levels of serotonin accessing the brain.
    - We have reviewed our breakfast cereals and have increased our wholegrain cereal offer in line with the [Eat Well guidelines](#) regarding wholegrain
    - We no longer purchase tinned fruit in syrup and have replaced it with tinned fruit in juice
    - We serve one low sugar dessert at each service and have introduced new dessert recipes with a lower sugar content. Our in-house offer is currently suspended due to COVID-19, however fruit and low sugar yogurts remain available at every service.
- **Reduce consumption of salt**

- WHY? Eating salt makes your body hold onto water which will increase blood pressure. This increase in blood pressure puts a strain on heart, liver, kidneys and brain function.
  - **We have reduced salt and increased our use of alternative seasoning including fresh herbs, black pepper, stock, garlic, ginger, chilli and lime**
  - **We have replaced canned products with low salt alternatives eg baked beans**
- **Reduce consumption of alcohol**
  - WHY? The negative effects of over imbibing are obvious but alcohol in smaller amounts can also have a negative impact. Alcohol affects sleep patterns leading to feeling tired and sluggish despite sleeping. It also adds to sugar intake, is a diuretic so reduces water and water borne vitamins and can induce migraines.
    - **We clearly indicate when alcohol is added to our cooking**
    - **We no longer serve alcohol in our Kingswood Hall of residence**
- **Food allergies and intolerances**
  - WHY? The number of people reporting food allergies and intolerances is increasing. As the effects of food are being researched more, there is greater awareness of the negative impact that some foods can have on some people. In serious cases, allergies can be life threatening but even food intolerances can impact health and mood. There are 14 foods that must be identified under allergy legislation but food intolerances may cover a much wider range of food. Common allergies and intolerances are gluten, dairy, nuts, caffeine, sulphites, fructose, yeast and food colourings. The impact will be individual but include anaphylaxis, itching, fatigue, stomach pains and headaches
- **Allow yourself occasional treats**
  - WHY? It can sometimes feel like there are no healthy foods. However for most people (without allergies) there are no unhealthy foods, just an unhealthy diet. A healthy diet is about balance, the wider the range of foods you eat, the more likely you will get the range of proteins, vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates your body and brain need to function. Also, food should be enjoyable and including treats in your diet will add to the balance and help reduce stress.

### **We will support this policy by**

- **Ensuring we have water available at all out outlets free of charge.**
- **Ensuring we have fresh fruit available in all outlets.**
- **Having vegetarian and vegan options in all outlets.**
- **Reducing our consumption of fats by removing butter on vegetables and new potatoes**

- Offering alcohol free venues and having a range of non-alcoholic options.
- Ensuring we have products that are free from major allergens in all outlets, including gluten free products.

Additionally, we have introduced the following initiatives:

- We have added an “Eat Well” dish to our daily menus, which is easily identifiable by our Eat Well logo
- We introduced new kitchen software in September 2020, which will enable our customers to obtain menu and nutritional information in the future
- We hold monthly “Eat Well Wednesdays”, where 70% of the menu is suitable for vegetarians and reduce the meat in the other dishes that are served, replacing where necessary with pulses, beans and other sources of protein that are not of animal origin