

## Red meat and a balanced diet

Lean red meat (beef, pork and lamb) can play an important part in a healthy balanced diet. It contains a wide variety of essential nutrients. This includes protein, key minerals, particularly iron and zinc, and B vitamins, including vitamin B12, which is not found naturally in green plants and conventional vegetables. Many of the nutrients found in red meat are known to be in short supply in the diets of some people.



There are five main food groups: fruit & vegetables; bread, other cereals and potatoes; meat, fish and alternatives; milk and dairy foods; foods containing fat, foods and drinks containing fat and sugar. The food selection guide (below) shows the relative proportions of food that we should eat from each of the five food groups.



It is recommended that we should eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Foods containing fats and sugars should be eaten sparingly with lower fat options chosen where possible. It is also important to reduce consumption of saturated fat and salt and to drink plenty of fluid (6-8 glasses a day).

Most healthy balanced diets will include lean meat in moderate amounts, together with starchy carbohydrates (including wholegrain foods), plenty of fruit and vegetables and moderate amounts of milk and dairy foods.

It has been suggested that people who consume more than 90g of cooked meat a day, should consider a reduction. On average, we should aim to eat about 70g (cooked) of meat and meat products per day, equivalent to roughly 500g over the week. This is in line with average consumption in the UK.

On cooking, red meat loses on average about 20-30% of its raw weight. This means that a fresh quarter-pound (100g) burger will weigh roughly between 70-80g on cooking.

Examples of typical red meat portions are as follows:

- **3 slices of roast lamb, 80g**
- **2 grilled lamb chops, excluding the bone, 70-80g**
- **Portion of stewed mince beef, 70-80g**
- **1 grilled sirloin steak, 160g**
- **1 grilled quarter pound burger, 70-80g**
- **2 grilled rashers of back bacon, 40g**
- **1 grilled premium sausage, 55g**

Consumed as part of a balanced diet, lean red meat can make an important contribution to health and wellbeing throughout life by contributing a variety of nutrients to the diet which includes protein, iron, zinc and B vitamins, particularly vitamin B12.

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