

# HEALTH ACTION CAMPAIGN

because prevention is better than cure

## Eating more healthily



*“A healthy balanced diet is the foundation to good health.”*  
Dr Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at Public Health England

### Did you know?

There are at least nine different families of fruit and vegetables. Each one has potentially hundreds of different nutrients that are good for you. So why not challenge yourself to eat as many different varieties and colours as you can?

### Find a personal motivation

There are many reasons for eating a healthy diet, so there's bound to be one that resonates with you. Maybe it's losing weight, improving your skin, or wanting to feel more energetic. Or it might be something more surprising. For example, if you're trying for a family, research suggests that food can have a healthy impact on our genes.

Eating well could also improve your mental health. A study published in the *Public Health Nutrition* journal revealed that people who eat healthy food are less likely to develop depression compared to those who eat little or none. Eating healthily could have a positive effect on far more than your waistline.

### **Have a positive mind-set**

Remember a healthy diet is an exciting and nutritious way to give your body the fuel it needs. One study found that a positive attitude towards healthy eating was among the key predictors of a higher quality diet among supermarket shoppers.

### **Set SMART goals and measure success**

Depending on what's motivating your change, set yourself some measurable goals. For example, if you want to increase your fruit and veg intake, set yourself a target of "five a day" and keep track of how you're doing. Make sure you're well informed, so you know what your goals should be. Try the NHS *Eat Well* guide to get started.

### **Find what works for you**

There are all sorts of reasons we eat food that is bad for us. Keep a log of your triggers. For example what makes you crave junk food or when you find yourself overeating, so you can find ways of consciously making better choices. Try new habits such as shopping for fruit and veg in local shops, so you can get excited about what's in season.

### **Find support from those around you**

Get your family and friends on board with your positive changes and why you're adopting them. Encourage a group of colleagues at work to bring healthy home-cooked lunches in so you can all eat together rather than heading to the nearest sandwich shop. Meet other like-minded people – try attending a cookery course or a public talk on nutrition.

## Be flexible to stay on track

Make small sustainable changes that you can stick to over time. If you don't usually eat much fruit and veg, start by introducing a little bit into your ordinary meals and choosing fresh fruit for your snacks. And remember, there's nothing wrong with a treat from time to time.

## Case study

As reported in *The Telegraph*, James Carson needed to lose weight and change his diet but he didn't believe in complicated or strict regimes, which are unsustainable in the long term. He managed to lose a significant amount of weight by simply sticking to three principles: intense exercise, eating well, and limiting alcohol.

*Naomi Adams, December 2018*