

# New recommendations for food-based dietary guidelines for healthy eating in Ireland

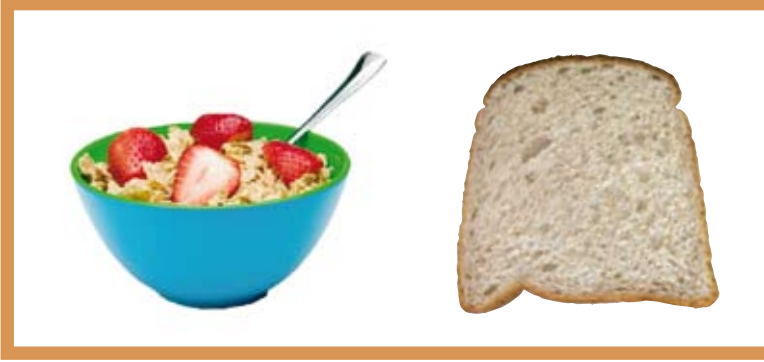





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## 1. Introduction

- Evaluation of Ireland's food pyramid in 2008-9 highlighted a need for guidance on energy requirements for different age and gender groups and the need for adequate provision of vitamin D<sup>1</sup>.
- Ireland's food guide should provide an "optimal" diet for chronic disease and obesity prevention.
- This study aims to do this by making new recommendations for food-based dietary guidelines.

## 3. Results

(i) **New recommendations for healthy eating food-based dietary guidelines were devised and are presented in the figure below.**

Age Gender Energy range (MJ)	5-13 years		14-18 years		19-50 years		51+ years		
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	
	5.9-9.2	5.9-8.4	9.2-11.7	7.5-8.4	9.2-11.7	7.5-9.2	9.2-10	6.7-7.5	
<b>Bread, Cereals etc Servings</b> <i>Moderately active</i> <i>Sedentary</i>	3-5	3-4	5-7 4-5	4 3	5-7 4-6	4-5 3-4	4-5 4	3-4 3	
<b>Fruit &amp; Vegetables Servings</b>	5	5	5-6	5	5-7	5-6	5	5	
<b>Dairy Food Servings</b>	3-5	3-5	5	5	3-5	3	3	3	
<b>Meat &amp; Alternatives Servings</b> <i>Main Meal servings</i> <i>Light Meal servings</i>	1 1	1 1	1 1-2	1 1	1 1-2	1	1 1	1 1	
<b>Fats &amp; Oils</b>	One portion pack of 7-10g low-fat unsaturated spread is more than enough for 1 slice of bread. Oils are better than solid fats but are just as fattening – use sparingly								
<b>"Other Foods"</b>	Sugar and jam should be used sparingly to sweeten high fibre food e.g. wholegrain cereal bread, stewed fruit etc. Confectionery etc. should be limited to 'sometimes'.								

(ii) **The new food based dietary guidelines were considered appropriate as:**

- Energy levels provided were within 0.04MJ of the energy goals
- Total fat provided 26-35% energy
- Saturated fat provided 8-11% energy
- Non-milk extrinsic sugar intakes were ≤10% energy<sup>7</sup>
- Iron levels provided the Estimated Average Requirements (EARs) for all age and sex groups
- Calcium levels provided were adequate except for 9-10 year olds who have a higher requirement (1300mg per day) relative to their energy needs

However:

- Recommended fibre levels provided for women with lower energy requirements (≤8.4MJ) did not reach the goal of 25g/day
- Vitamin D levels provided remained inadequate for all age and gender groups

## 2. Methods

- Twenty-two sets of 4-day food intake patterns were developed iteratively with the input of dietitians specialising in pediatrics, geriatrics and public health.
- Portion sizes and categorisation of foods in certain food groups were addressed in consultation with dietitians/nutritionists.
- The patterns met age and gender specific requirements at sedentary and moderate activity levels for energy<sup>1</sup>, macronutrients<sup>2</sup>, fibre<sup>3,4</sup>, iron<sup>5</sup>, calcium<sup>6</sup> and vitamin D<sup>6</sup>.
- The food intake patterns were used to develop healthy eating guidance on the number of servings required from each food group for males and females aged ≥ 5 years.

## 4. Conclusion

**Newly revised food based dietary guidelines were generated and are proposed for Ireland:**

- Enjoy a wide variety of foods from the 5 food groups
- Watch your portion sizes
- Breads, cereals etc., are the best source of calories to fuel the body
- Eat at least 5 fruit and vegetables a day
- Choose reduced-fat milk, yoghurts and cheese more often
- Choose lean meat and poultry
- Use polyunsaturated or monounsaturated spreads and oils sparingly – reduced fat spreads are best
- Grill, bake, steam or boil food instead of frying
- Cakes, biscuits confectionery, savoury snacks etc – limit these foods to 'sometimes' but not everyday
- Limit salt intake
- Drink plenty of water
- Find an enjoyable way to keep physically active everyday
- Everyone should take a vitamin D supplement daily (5µg for 5-50 years, 10µg for 51+ years)
- All women of childbearing age who are sexually active should take a folic acid supplement (400µg per day)
- Breastfeeding should be encouraged and supported

### REFERENCES

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