

## Nutrition Forum

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**PAPER NF 02/12**

**DIETARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Members are invited to:**

Note the information provided.

June 2002

## DIETARY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Current dietary recommendations

1. Government's strategic objectives for improving nutrition are based on the advice of expert bodies such as the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition Policy (COMA), the World Health Organisation, and expert bodies in the USA (whose recommendations are translated into the Dietary Guidelines for Americans). These are consistent in their recommendations for dietary change. The clear message is to eat a diet based on a wide variety of food and containing plenty of fruit and vegetables and starchy foods, such as bread, potatoes, rice and pasta. It is recommended that the amount of fat (particularly saturated fat), salt and added sugars are kept to a minimum. The key recommendations for the UK were translated into a national food guide known as the *Balance of Good Health*, shown below.

**Figure one: The Balance of Good Health**



### Current dietary consumption

2. Consumption within the UK population differs from these recommendations, as shown below.

**Table one: Recommended vs actual dietary consumption**

Key nutrient recommendations	Baseline average intakes	Current average intakes ( with updated figures )
<b>Saturated fat</b> - reduce to no more than 10% energy	16%	14%
<b>Total fat</b> - reduce to no more than 35% energy	40%	37%
<b>N-3 PUFAs</b> - increase to 0.2 g/day (1.5g/week)	0.1g	
<b>Complex carbohydrate</b> - increase to approximately 50% energy	45%	
<b>Sugars (added)</b> - no more than 10% energy per day	13%	
<b>Dietary fibre</b> - increase in non-starch polysaccharides to 18g per day	12g per day	12g per day
<b>Sodium (salt)</b> - reduce to no more than 6g salt per day	9g per day	
<b>No rise in dietary cholesterol</b> Maintain a <b>healthy body weight</b> (BMI 20-25 kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	245mg	217mg / day 40% of adults are overweight and 21% are obese
Increase <b>fruit and vegetable consumption</b> by 50% to at least 5 portions per day	3-4 portions	
Increase intakes of <b>dietary fibre</b> from a variety of sources	See COMA 1994	
Adults who eat <b>more than the average</b> amount of <b>red and processed meat</b> , especially might benefit from and should consider a reduction		
Follow recommendations in the context of a balanced diet	See Balance of Good Health	

**Notes:**

Nutrient recommendations and baseline average intakes based on COMA (1994) Nutritional Aspects of Cardiovascular Disease and COMA (1998) Nutritional Aspects of the Development of cancer.

The National Food Survey 1999 only assesses foods eaten in the home and may therefore underestimate intakes.

Health Survey for England 2000. Overweight is classified as BMI 25-30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and obesity is classified as a BMI >30kg/m<sup>2</sup>

**Action**

- Members are invited to note the information provided.