

Children's

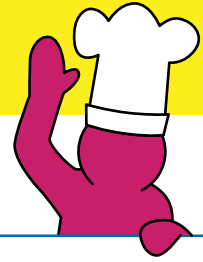
Healthier Eating Toolkit



This pack contains ten different activities to help you support families to make positive changes to their diet, with a particular focus on making healthier swaps. Activities are easy to run, require minimal preparation and no expert knowledge. They're perfect for children between the ages of 4-11, with some activities aimed at children as young as 2. This toolkit is perfect for use in a range of settings with children and young families, such as children's centres, libraries, leisure centres, breakfast and after school clubs and other similar locations.

**Better
Health**

**Let's
do this**



The importance of healthy eating

A healthy, balanced diet helps children achieve and maintain a healthy weight, and research shows children who stay a healthy weight tend to be fitter, healthier, better able to learn, and more self-confident. They're also much less likely to have health problems in later life.

Recent National Child Measurement Programme data shows that 14.4% of children aged 4-5 are now obese (rising from 9.9% in 2019/20) and 25.5% of children aged 10-11 are now obese (rising from 21.0% in 2019/20).

Whether you're using this toolkit in a children's centre, library, leisure centre or any other setting that works with children and young families, you can help make a difference. This toolkit will support you in improving children's health and wellbeing by encouraging children to explore what a balanced diet is, what is in their food and help their families make simple, healthier eating swaps.

This toolkit introduces children to the NHS Food Scanner app, giving them an awareness of how to find healthier options, and why it is important to know what is in our food.

Other resources to help deliver healthy eating sessions are available on the [Campaign Resource Centre \(search Campaign Resource Centre\)](#) and on the [School Zone](#) (search School Zone/healthy eating).

This toolkit includes:

- Activity 1: **The NHS Food Scanner app**
- Activity 2: **Read all about it!**
- Activity 3: **Highest to lowest**
- Activity 4: **The Eatwell Guide**
- Activity 5: **Be a healthier swaps influencer!**
- Activity 6: **Healthy eating characters**
- Activity 7: **Storybooks with a food theme**
- Activity 8: **Let's go shopping!**
- Activity 9: **5 A Day song!**
- Activity 10: **5 A Day fun!**

Activities 7-10 have pages that you can share directly with young people.

The activities are flexible and can be delivered individually or combined to best suit your setting and needs of the children and families you are working with.

Preparation

The activities in this toolkit are designed to be easy to use, require minimal preparation and can be used with children aged 4-11, with some activities aimed at children as young as 2. Each activity is clearly marked based on the suggested age group, and you will find suggestions for how to challenge children in certain activities, just look for the 'challenge' boxes.

Before running certain activities you may need to:

- Read through the activity and familiarise yourself with it
- Download the NHS Food Scanner app, if needed for the activity:
 - [Apple app store](#)
 - [Google Play store](#)
- Collect some suitable, clean, empty food and drink packaging, such as cereal boxes, tinned items, jars, packaged snacks. When gathering the product packaging be mindful of severe food allergies and cultural, religious or moral beliefs which mean certain foods cannot be handled. Check that the food products you have are available on the app, as not all are included yet.
- Download and watch the NHS Food Scanner app demo video from the Campaign Resource Centre to find out more about the app. You could also show this to children and their families, as a way to kickstart the session.

Activity 1: The NHS Food Scanner app

Ages 4-11

Demonstrate how the NHS Food Scanner app works to families and children by playing the [NHS Food Scanner app demo video](#) which you can find on the [Campaign Resource Centre](#). Use the pre-collected packaging to explore the features of the app and discover some healthier swaps!

Explain to children that there are surprising amounts of sugar, saturated fat and salt in everyday food and drinks we eat. Give children a selection of packaging and guide them to try out the features of the app on each piece of packaging. Ask them the following questions:

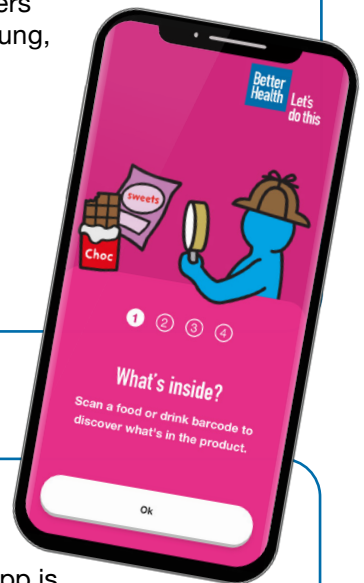
- What happens when you scan the product barcode?
- Can you see the amount of sugar, saturated fat or salt?
- What happens when you press the 'See it to believe it' button?
- Are there any products you can swap to?
- Is the product a Good Choice? If so, what happens when you press 'Let's celebrate'?
- What do you like best about the app?

Challenge:

Ask children why we need to be careful how much sugar, saturated fat and salt we eat?

Example answers:

- Over time, having too much sugar, saturated fat and salt can make you ill and harm your health.
- Too much salt can be bad for our heart as we get older
- Saturated fat can cause serious diseases when we're grown up, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers
- Even now when we're young, too much sugar can lead to painful tooth decay



Activity 2: Read all about it!

Ages 5-11

Challenge children to tell other people about the NHS Food Scanner app.

You could:

- create a poster about the NHS Food Scanner app
- write a newspaper article to tell others about healthier eating and the NHS Food Scanner app.

It could include:

- a sentence or introduction to explain the importance of healthier eating
- a description of what the Food Scanner is and how it works
- a sentence to tell people how it helps you make healthier eating choices
- a picture
- one thing you really like about the app.

Sentence starters

- The NHS Food Scanner app is...
- It has taught me about...
- I can use it to...
- It helps me...
- One thing I like about it is...

Challenge:

Can you make this a piece of persuasive writing? Help your audience understand what a healthy, balanced diet is and persuade them to make healthier snacking choices. Try including:

- facts and evidence to back up your argument
- a strong introduction to grab the reader's attention
- linking words and phrases (e.g. firstly, secondly, yet, another point)
- persuasive devices, like rhetorical questions.

Activity 3: Highest to lowest

Ages 7-11

Bring food labels to life and try some fun number activities. Use the pre-collected packaging to see how much sugar, saturated fat and salt are in children's favourite food and drinks.

Place the packaging in order from high to low, depending on whether you think it has:

- more saturated fat
- more sugar
- more salt

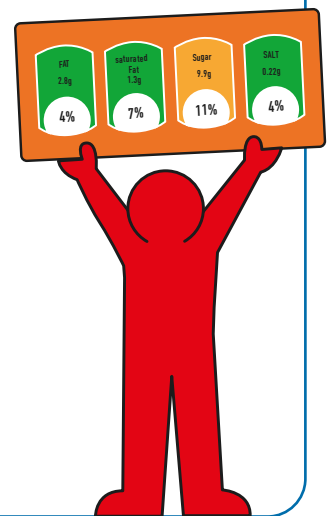
Use the NHS Food Scanner app or look at the labels to check whether you are correct.

Note that if a product contains a healthier amount of sugar, salt and fat it is a Good Choice, and so the NHS Food Scanner app won't show you the amount of sugar, salt and fat in the product. You could look at the label if you want to find these values (be careful to compare the correct amounts, e.g. per 100g or per serving).

Challenge:

Write some number sentences to show what you found out. Try using these symbols $<$, $>$ and $=$.

For example, 1 salt sachet $<$ 3 salt sachets



Activity 4: The Eatwell Guide

Ages 5-11

Educate children about balanced diets using the **Eatwell Guide**. You will need to print a copy of the **Eatwell Guide on page 5** to support this activity.

Explain to children that this is a picture of the types of food and how much of them we should all eat to make sure we have a healthy, balanced diet.

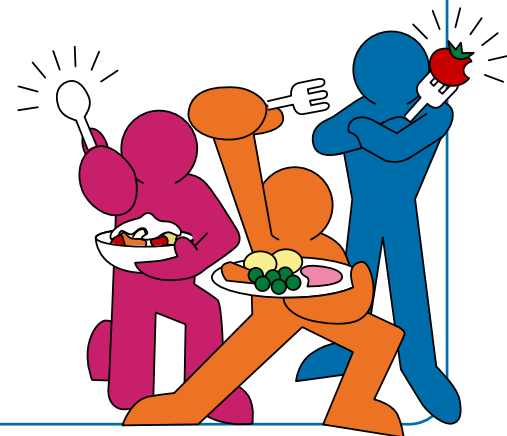
Draw or write a healthy, balanced meal. You could include a main course and a pudding too, and use pictures to help you.

Show your healthy meal to someone else. Do they think it is healthy too?

Is there anything you could do to make your meal healthier?

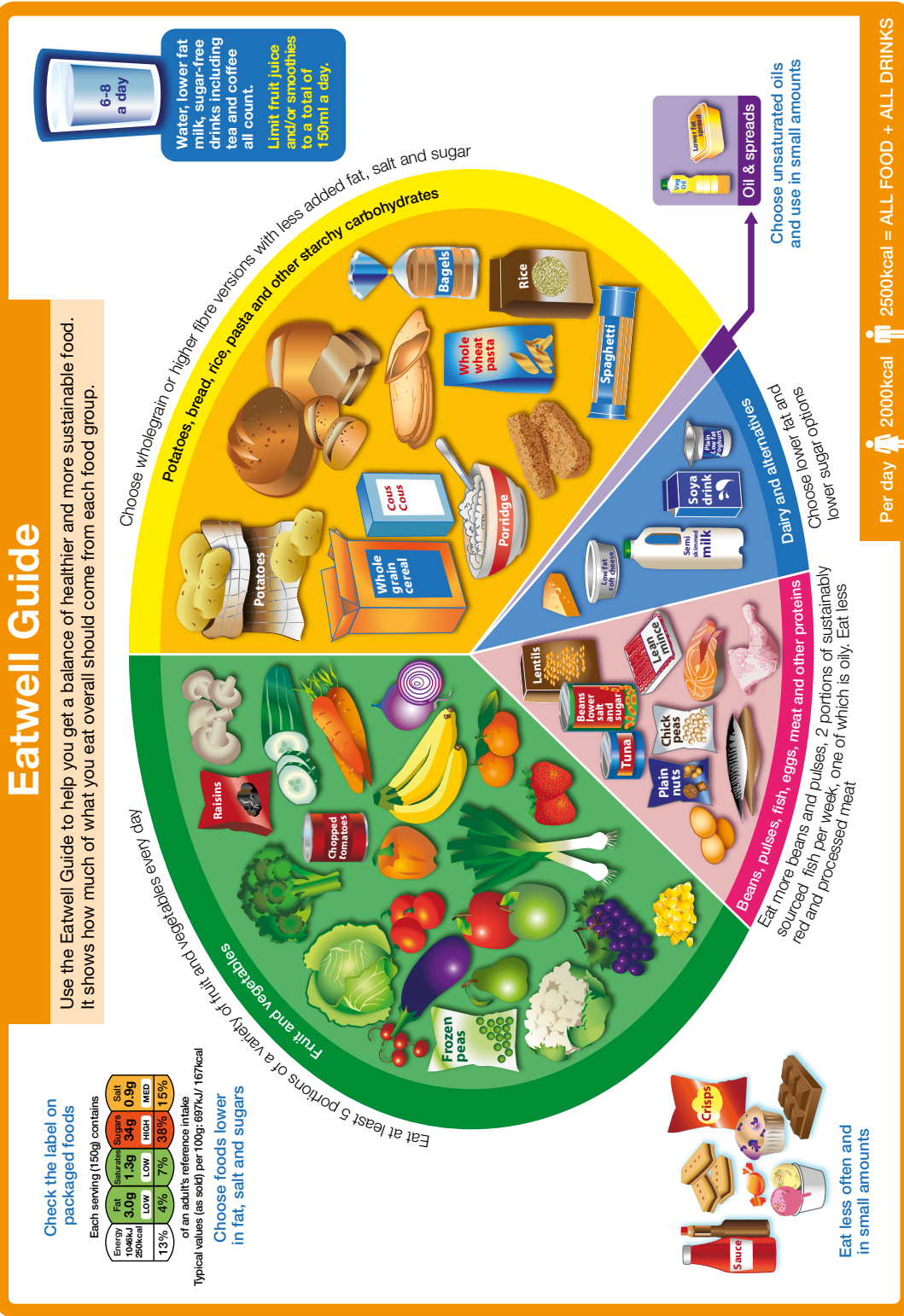
Challenge:

Try creating meals for a whole day; breakfast, lunch and dinner. Make sure you cover all food groups across the day.



Activity 4: Eatwell guide

Ages 5-11



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland © Crown copyright 2016

Activity 5: Be a healthier swaps influencer! Ages 7-11

Make a TV advert to tell people why it is important to eat a healthy, balanced diet, and to demonstrate the NHS Food Scanner app.

Use the following to help you:

- Decide on your target audience, will it be younger children or parents and carers?
- Write a storyboard to show what will be in your advert. You could also draw a cartoon strip.
- Make sure you include an introduction to tell people what the app is for, and why it is important to make healthy swaps. Show how to use the app too.

Challenge:

Can you film your TV advert? Try acting it out, using props and costumes if you can!

Activity 6: Healthy eating characters Ages 4-11

Empower readers to use book, film or TV characters to spread the word about healthy eating and making healthier swaps with the NHS Food Scanner app.

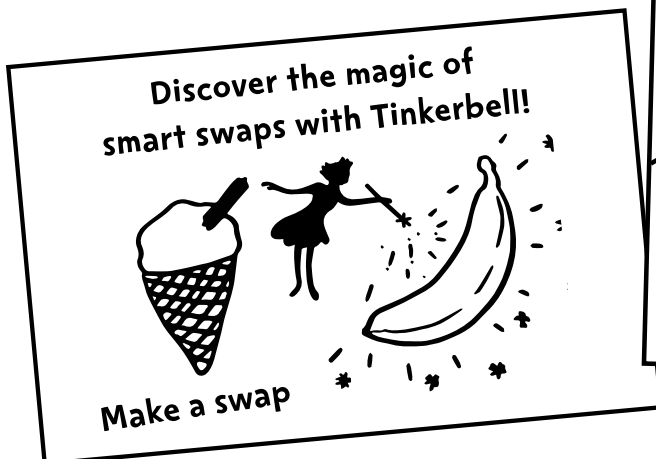
Design a healthy eating poster using a character from your favourite books, TV programmes or films.

- How can children use a character from their favourite book, TV programme or film to spread a healthier eating message to others?
- Help others to make healthier choices with their favourite characters, such as:
 - Discover the magic of healthier swaps with Tinkerbell!
 - Help Alice to drink less sugar!

Challenge:

Can you include some top tips for making healthier choices:

- Eat less sugar by making smart swaps!
- Try to eat at least 5 fruit and vegetables a day!
- Try to eat as many different colours of fruit and veg as you can.



Activity 7: Storybooks with a food theme

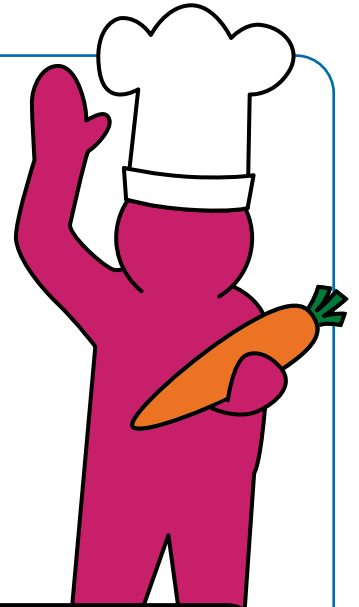
Ages 4-11



Storybooks with a food theme

You can use storybooks to introduce and discuss healthy eating themes or create a display.

You could do this alongside the children's healthy eating posters.

**I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato,**

by Lauren Child

Daisy: Eat your Peas,

by Kes Gray

Kitchen Disco,

by Clare Foges and Al Murphy

Handa's Surprise,

by Eileen Browne

Supertato,

by Sue Hendra

Eating the Alphabet,

by Lois Ehlert

Oliver's Vegetables,

by Vivian French

Oliver's Fruit Salad,

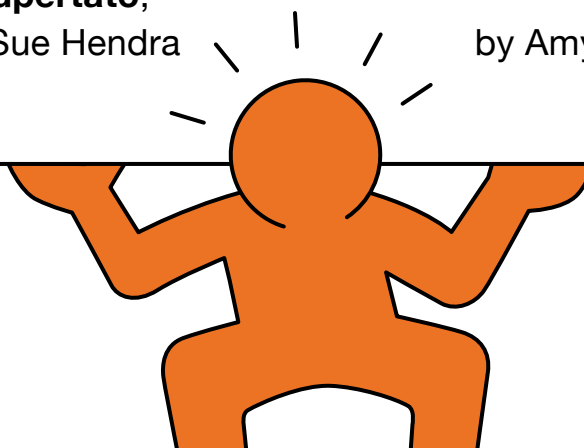
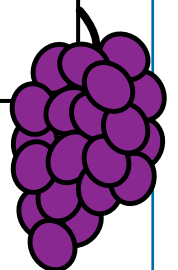
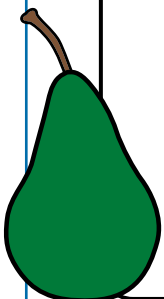
by Vivian French

Little Sweet Potato,

by Amy Bloom

Little Pea,

by Amy Krouse Rosenthal



Activity 8: Let's go shopping!

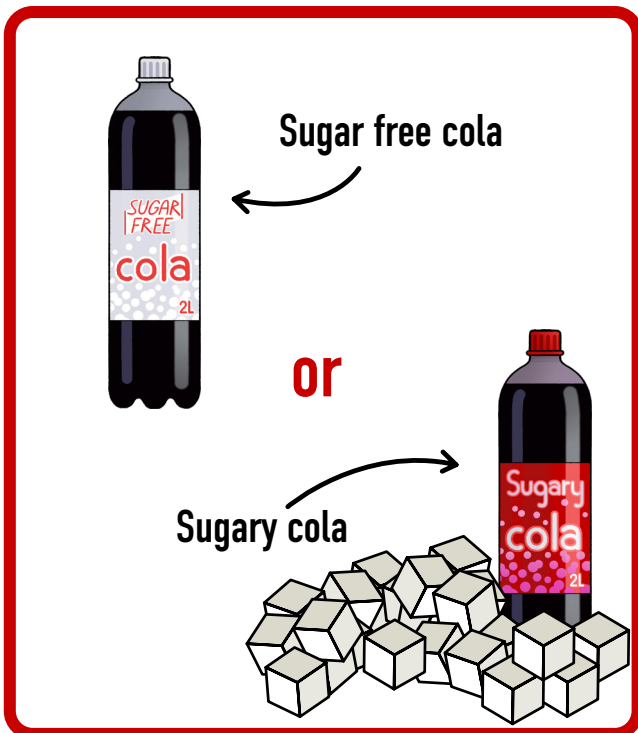
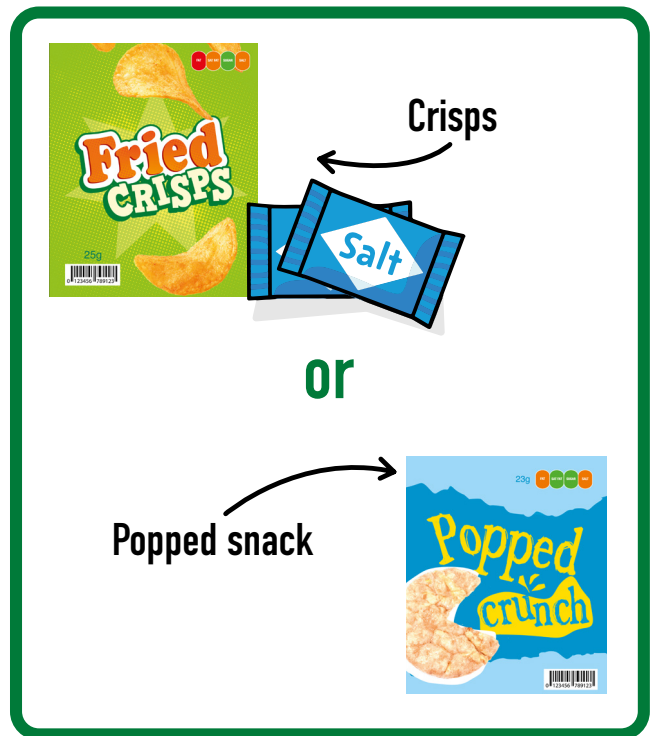
Ages 4-6

Let's go shopping!

Jayden is going shopping with his nan. He wants to buy food with less sugar, saturated fat and salt.

Can you help him choose the ones with less sugar, saturated fat and salt? Have a look at the foods below.

- Which has the most sugar/saturated fat/salt?
- Which has the least?



Activity 9: 5 A Day song!

Ages 2-6

5 A Day song!

Sing to the melody of 'I can sing a rainbow'.

Beans, bananas and strawberries

Grapes, carrots, plums too

I can eat a rainbow

Eat a rainbow

Eat a rainbow too.

Eat my five a day

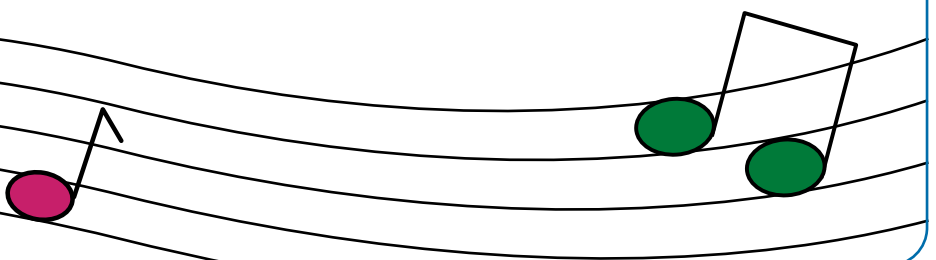
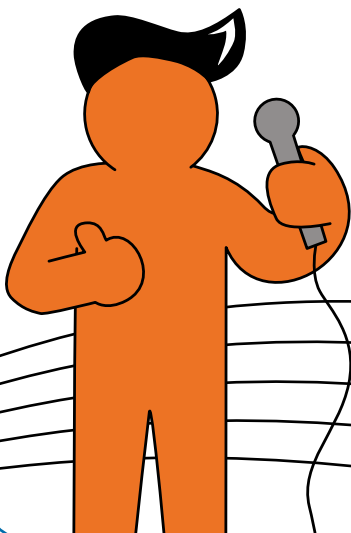
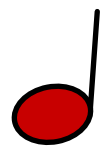
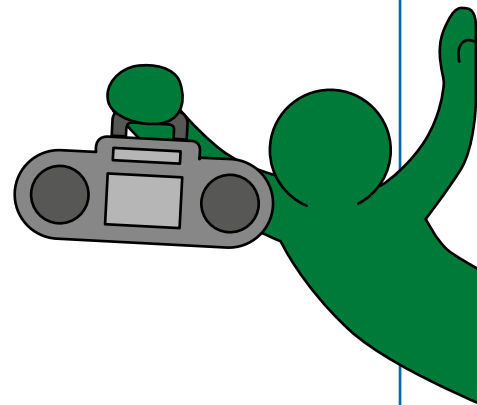
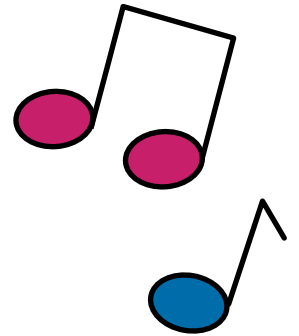
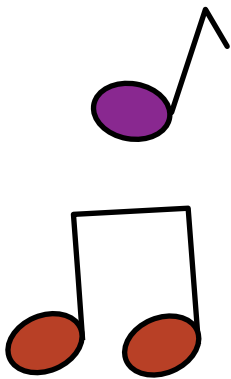
Eat my five a day

And taste every colour too

I can eat a rainbow

Eat a rainbow

Eat a rainbow too.



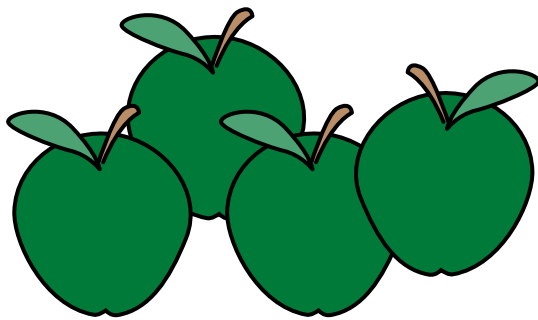
Activity 10: 5 A Day fun!

Ages 2-6

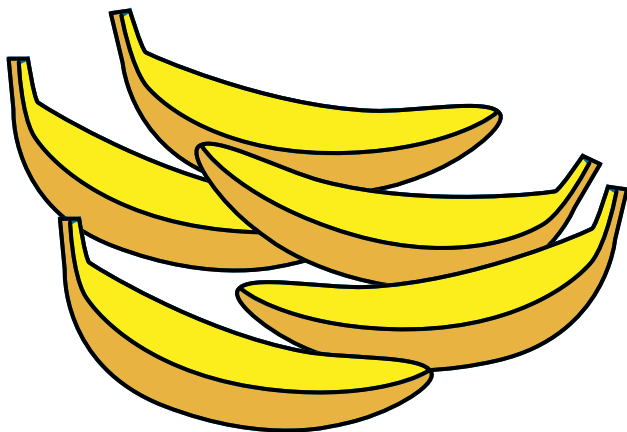
5 A Day fun!

We should eat at least 5 fruit or vegetables a day.

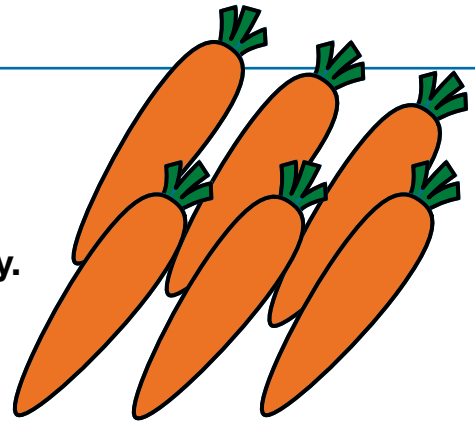
Can you count the fruit and vegetables below?



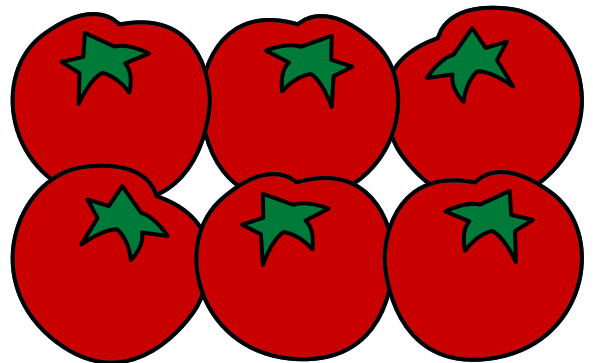
4 green apples



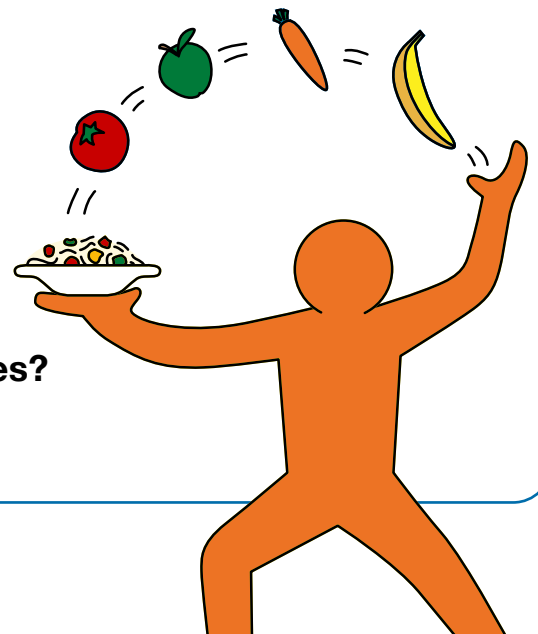
5 yellow bananas



6 orange carrots



6 red tomatoes



Have you tried any of these fruits and vegetables?

What are your favourite fruits and vegetables?

Useful websites

Campaign Resource Centre
(search campaign resource centre)

You'll find a range of free orderable and downloadable resources about eating well and moving more on the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities Campaign Resource Centre.

School Zone
(search School Zone/healthy eating)

Explore our flexible, curriculum-linked teaching resources for schools.

Better Health
(search Better Health Healthier Families)

Healthy recipes, nutritional advice, and top tips and activities to help families stay healthy.



Thank you for helping to improve children's health. We hope you found the toolkit useful.

Let us know what you're up to

Don't forget to post your activity on social media using #betterhealthfamilies at:

 @betterhealthfamilies

 @BH_Families

 @betterhealthfamilies

or share with us at partnerships@phe.gov.uk.

