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6. Investigating Food Energy

What makes a healthy diet?

All food contains substances called nutrients which our bodies need if we are to stay alive and healthy. There are seven different kinds of nutrients:

- **protein**
- **fat**
- **carbohydrates (simple and complex)**
- **vitamins**
- **minerals**
- **fibre**
- **water**

Each of these nutrients has its functions, but for a healthy diet we need a balance of all of them. Carbohydrates for example, are good sources of energy.

Bread is high in complex carbohydrates, so it is a good source of energy. People who need a lot of physical energy, such as athletes, eat plenty of complex carbohydrates such as bread and pasta. To keep fit, healthy and full of energy, we should all do the same.

No fuel, no fire

It is important to eat enough energy to provide fuel for exercise, studying and general every day activities. During exercise (e.g. running, swimming, football etc.) the best energy providers are carbohydrate foods, such as bread and wholegrain cereals. Whilst it is important to take in enough energy through our diet, it is also important to balance the energy intake with output. Different people have different energy needs in terms of how active they are. Most people are not active enough. The more active you are the more energy you burn off.

The secret is filling up with high performance fuel, like **carbohydrates**.

• **Cereal foods, such as bread, make a great energy booster especially after sport.** Carbohydrates give your body the fuel for endurance type activities and for intense physical activity. They can also help replenish your energy stores afterwards. That's because carbohydrates help replace muscle fuel (glycogen) when it becomes depleted during prolonged or exhausting physical activity. By consuming larger portions of carbohydrate rich foods, like bread, and moderate amounts of protein and fat, glycogen stores are better replenished, providing fuel whenever your body needs it.



• **Cereal foods are great "Brain foods" boosting energy levels for general studies and exam revision.**

Consuming carbohydrate based foods like bread and cereals, especially in the mornings can aid the processes involved in the formation and retrieval of memories and managing complex or challenging information.



• **Cereal foods are an ideal part of a low fat high energy balanced diet.**

Cereal and flour based products can help you maintain a healthy weight because they satisfy, and delay hunger. Cereal foods are lower in fat and higher in carbohydrate and so can help control weight (fat provides twice the amount of energy than carbohydrate). Fat is easy to store as fat, whereas it is more difficult to store carbohydrate as fat. Yet again cereal foods help your weight.



• **Cereal foods make a great, healthy, quick and easy snack.**

Anytime, anywhere, no matter how hectic your lifestyle you can give your body an energy boost with any number of cereal and flour based products from a slice of toast, to a cereal bar. There is a massive range and variety of cereal based foods with which to create nutritious, balanced meals to get you through the day.

