Bola Bach/ Little Tum

‘Starting and Eating Well’ Autumn & Winter

Nutrition Newsletter 2026

With autumn upon us and the cooler weather approaching, there are lots of fun and exciting food-based activities you can still enjoy with young children both indoors and outdoors in the crisp fresh air.



Harvesting foods that were planted during the summer months helps children to understand the growing process and where foods come from. Using your harvest for fun activities such as cooking simple, healthy recipes can support exposure to a variety of different foods. This may help children become familiar with a wider range of fruit and vegetables and increase their chances of achieving their 5-a-day fruit and vegetable target.

Being active and getting out and about helps children to explore their surroundings and immerse themselves in the changing environment around them. Why not try fun activities, including;

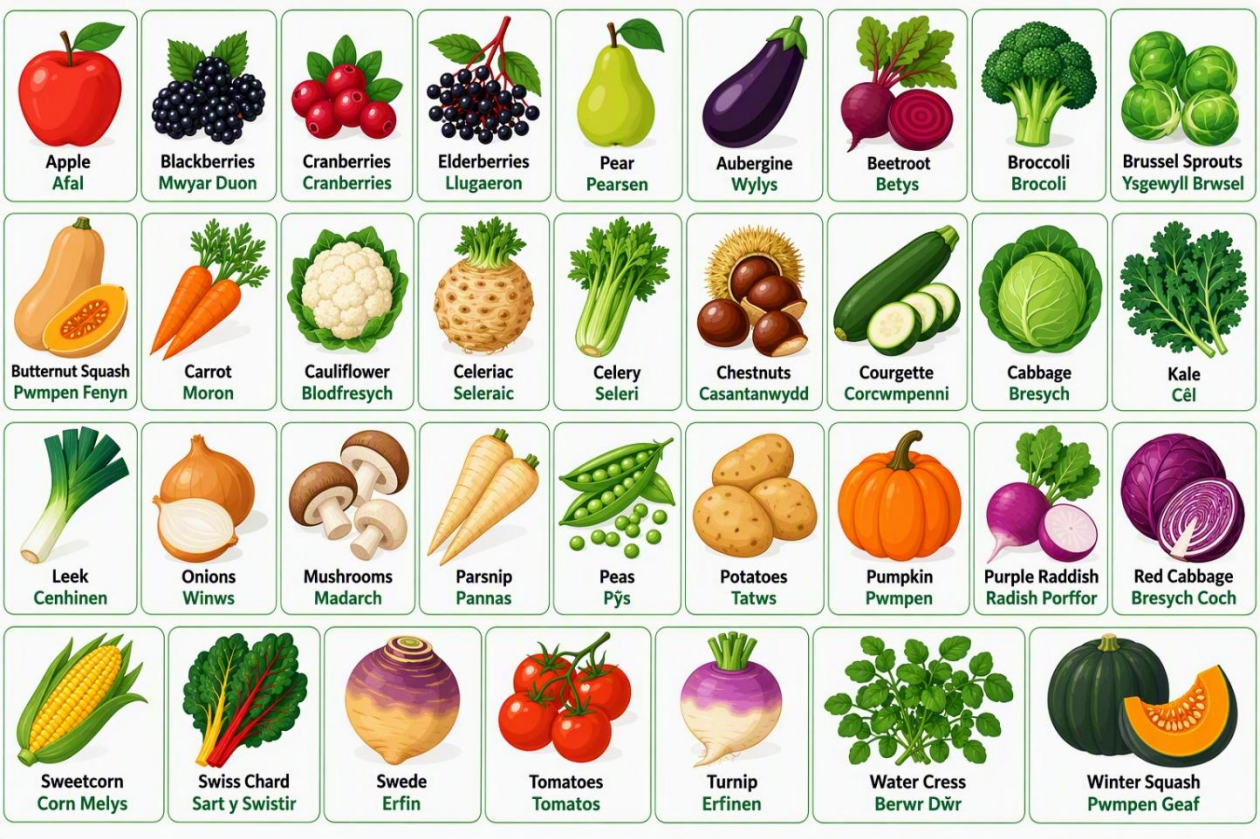
- Go apple picking at a local orchard and make a yummy apple crumble, baked apple or a bird feeder.
- Visit a pumpkin patch and create an autumn display or make a pumpkin soup.
- Go on a treasure hunt to find acorns, conkers, pinecones and different coloured leaves to use in fun craft activities such as making wands, people, snap cards or animal faces.
- Go for a walk and look out for minibeasts and squirrels while comparing tree bark/leaves or doing bark/leaf rubbings.
- Jump in a pile of leaves or throw them up in the air.
- Build dens or stick forts in the garden, park or woods.
- Jump and splash in puddles.
- Create potions using fallen leaves, petals, twigs and mud!



Seasonal Spotlight

Eating and cooking with seasonal produce is a great opportunity to teach children about the different seasons while tasting and eating locally grown foods and highlighting the importance of food sustainability.

Foods that are in season in the UK during autumn and winter (October- February) include:



Eat Well, Feel Well



Eating a balanced, nutrient rich diet containing a variety of vitamins and minerals is important all year round. As winter approaches, many people worry about getting poorly and catching coughs and colds. As well as receiving important seasonal vaccinations (like the flu vaccination), including foods from the 4 main food groups found in the Eatwell Guide; Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starch foods, Fruit and vegetables, Dairy and alternatives, Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins provides children's bodies with vitamins and minerals they need to help boost and strengthen the immune system to help fight off illness.

Some key nutrients which are important to include in your diet in winter months include;

Vitamin D

Helps the body to absorb calcium and supports strong teeth and bones. It also helps maintain muscle strength and your immune system to fight infection.

Commonly known as the sunshine vitamin, vitamin D is a hormone created in the body when skin is exposed to sunlight (while ensuring safe sun practices). This happens between the months of April and September. In the autumn and winter months, vitamin D comes from food sources. It can be difficult to

get enough vitamin D from food alone, so it is recommended that children aged 1-5yrs are given a daily supplement of 10 micrograms (µg) of vitamin D (unless they are consuming 500ml or more of formula milk per day). Adults and children over 5 years should also consider taking 10µg vitamin D in winter months.

Foods that contain some vitamin D include oily fish such as salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines or herring, egg yolks, red meats and foods fortified with vitamin D such as some breakfast cereals, fat spreads and fortified milk alternatives (always check the label).



- **For more information on Vitamin D**

Vitamin D - NHS
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/

Vitamin D - BDA
https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/vitamin-d.html

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Some delicious recipes with ingredients containing vitamin D include:

Cheesy Frittata



Fancy Fish Pie



Salmon Fishcakes



Salmon Chilli Noodles



Tasty Bolognaise





Cottage/ Shepherd's Pie



Fruit and Muesli Breakfast Pot

Vitamin C

Important for healthy growth and development. It helps protect cells, supports the immune system, keeps skin healthy, and helps cuts and wounds heal properly.

Vitamin C is found in fruit and vegetables. Fresh, frozen and tinned (in natural juice or water) or *dried fruit and vegetables all count towards your 5-a-day. When foods are not in season, using frozen or tinned varieties can be a cost-effective way of enjoying foods all year round. Choosing local and seasonal foods supports local producers while reducing air miles, supporting the environment and promotes food sustainability.

Foods that contain some vitamin C include citrus fruits (such as oranges), kiwi, strawberries, raspberries, apples, melon, pineapple, mango, tomatoes, broccoli, brussels sprouts, *white and sweet potato, peas.



*Keeping dried fruit to mealtimes helps to protect teeth from dental decay

*Remember; white potatoes are a starchy food and don't count as1 of your 5-a-day!

- **For more information on Vitamin C**

Vitamins and minerals - Vitamin C - NHS

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-c/

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Some delicious recipes with ingredients containing vitamin C include:

Mexican Stuffed Peppers



Chinese Pork





Steamed Vegetables



Simple Salad

Irish Colcannon



Herby Sweet Potato Wedges





Fruit Muffins



Fruit Crumble

Beta-carotene

Supports your immune system by helping fight off coughs and colds, supports eye health (by helping you to see in dim light) and helps to maintain healthy skin.

Beta-carotene is what gives fruit and vegetables their yellow and/or orange colour. It is converted into vitamin A by the body, so it works in a similar way. Sources of vitamin A include cheese, eggs, oily fish (salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines, herring), fortified spreads, milk and yoghurt.

Foods that contain some beta-carotene include dark green leafy vegetables (such as spinach, kale, cabbage, broccoli, brussels sprouts), carrots, sweet potato, butternut squash, pumpkin, red peppers, sweetcorn, mango, melon (honeydew/cantaloupe), apricots and peach.



- **For more information on beta-carotene and vitamin A**

Vitamins and minerals - Others - NHS

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/others/#beta-carotene

Vitamins and minerals - Vitamin A - NHS

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-a/

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Some delicious recipes with ingredients containing beta-carotene include:

Chicken Fajitas



Hearty Sausage Casserole





Vegetable and Lentil Soup



Indian Style Rice Salad

Fibre

Supports healthy digestion, helps reduce constipation, keeps you feeling full for longer, and can help maintain a healthy weight.

Fibre is important for growing children. It helps keep them feeling fuller for longer, supports steady energy levels, and promotes healthy digestion by helping to prevent constipation. Fibre also supports long-term health by helping to maintain a healthy weight and reduces the risk of conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, and stroke later in life.

Most children do not eat enough fibre, so aim to include plenty of fruit, vegetables, beans, pulses, and wholegrains in their diet each day. Children aged 2-5 years need around 15g of fibre daily**,** while those aged 5-11 years should aim for around 20g per day. If increasing a child's fibre intake, do so gradually and ensure they drink enough fluids to help the fibre work effectively. Children should aim to drink around 6-8 cups of fluid a day (100-150ml per cup) but more if it is hot or they have been active.

Foods that contain fibre include wholegrain starchy carbohydrates such as wholemeal bread, pitta, chapatti, crackers, wholewheat rice, pasta, weet-bix, shredded wheat, oats, fruit and vegetables (especially with the skins on) as well as beans such as chickpeas, kidney beans, butter beans and lentils



- **For more information on fibre**

How to get more fibre into your diet - NHS

https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/digestive-health/how-to-get-more-fibre-into-your-diet/

Fibre - BDA

https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/fibre.html

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Some delicious recipes with ingredients containing fibre include:

Spicy Bean Casserole



Mexican Bean Enchiladas





Falafel Burger



Lentil Lasagne

All recipes suggested above can be found on the Nutrition Skills for Life® website

Healthy Recipes – Nutrition Skills for Life®

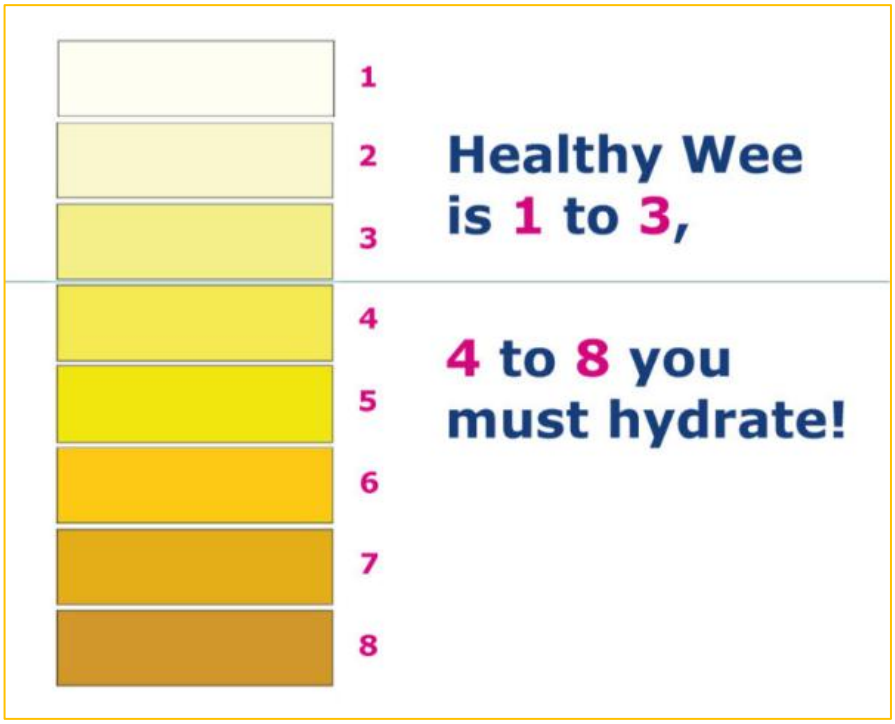
https://nutritionskillsforlife.com/healthy-recipes/

Healthy Hydration

Feeling thirsty is one way hydration is regulated in the body and children don't always recognise the sensation of thirst. When we drink, we stop feeling thirsty before the body is fully hydrated. Therefore, thirst cues are not a reliable way to ensure a child is hydrated. This is why caregivers should promote regular fluid intake rather than waiting until a child asks for a drink. Encourage young children to drink throughout the day as they can often forget to drink especially if they are having fun and are distracted by other activities. Ensure that water is freely available to children and that they are offered water in an open or free flow cup. To promote independence, aim to support children to pour their own water where possible.

Suitable drinks for children are water and plain milk. Pasteurised semi skimmed or full fat milk can be offered to children as their main drink from 1 year and above. Children should aim to drink around 6-8 cups of fluid a day (100-150 ml per cup) but more if it is hot or they have been active.





A quick and easy way to tell if a child is hydrated is by the colour of their urine. Check their nappy, potty or the toilet bowl when they have been to the bathroom– when hydrated, urine is a pale straw colour and should not have a strong odour. They should also be wanting to go to the toilet regularly throughout the day. Being hydrated (along with active play and a fibre rich diet) can also reduce the risk of constipation.

Being dehydrated can cause children to suffer with fatigue, headaches, confusion and/or irritability, be less attentive, experience tummy pain/ bloating linked to constipation and be at higher risk of developing urinary tract infections (UTI)

Oral Health

To keep children's teeth healthy (as well as brushing twice a day), it is advised that sugary foods and drinks are limited and kept to mealtimes. This protects their teeth from dental decay.

It is recommended that from 1 year of age, a maximum of 5% of children's daily energy intake (calories from food) should come from 'free sugar'.

1 year olds should have a maximum of 10g/2 ½ sugar cubes of free sugar per day



2-3 years olds should have a maximum of 14g/3 ½ cubes of free sugar per day



4-6 years olds should have a maximum of 19g/5 cubes of free sugar per day



- **For more information on sugar**

Sugar: the facts - NHS

https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-types/how-does-sugar-in-our-diet-affect-our-health/

Sugar in commonly eaten foods



175g 'share' bag of sweets = ~137.5g sugar/ 34 ½ sugar cubes

1 x Lollipop = ~12g sugar/ 3 cubes



Not recommended for children 3-7 years old due to choking risk



2 x chocolate biscuits = ~11g sugar/ 3 sugar cubes

3 teaspoons of jam = ~9g/ 2 sugar cubes



Not suitable for children under 12 months old



3 teaspoons of honey = ~12g/ 3 sugar cubes



1 x can of fizzy cola = ~40g/ 10 sugar cubes



1 x can of fizzy orange = ~15g/ 4 sugar cubes

Celebrations

With Halloween and bonfire night coming up, many children can eat more sugar than is recommended. Foods such as sweets, lollies, cakes, biscuits, chocolate, jam, honey and some fizzy drinks would be classed as 'free sugars'.

Try making fun party food and/or snacks to help keep children's diets balanced while still enjoying celebrations…











Learning though play

Young children have small tummies so need to eat regularly. It is recommended that children are offered 3 balanced meals each day with 2-3 nutritious snacks.

Whole or sliced fruits and vegetables, plain milk, yoghurt and dairy products (such as cheese, cream cheese, cottage cheese) and starchy foods (such as crackers, breadsticks, wraps, crumpets, English muffins) as well as protein foods (such as smooth nut butters, eggs, hummus, cooked lean meat or fish) are nutritious snacks that children can enjoy.

Aim for each snack to include a vegetable and/or fruit

A starchy food at 1 or more snacks per day

A dairy/ alternative food at 1 or more snacks per day

Protein foods 1-2 x week

Why not try encouraging children to create food art as part of their morning/afternoon activity and eat it as their snack?

Autumn trees





Woodland animals









Scarecrows





*Always ensure foods prepared are suitable for children in the Eary Years

Early Years Choking Hazards Table

Coming Soon!!!



Bola Bach/ Little Tum Christmas Special

For support or further information, please contact your Hywel Dda Starting and Developing Well Public Health Practitioner, Kate Smith

Kate.smith6@wales.nhs.uk