

EATING THE RIGHT FOOD IS PART OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Having a healthy diet means getting the balance of foods right. A healthy diet should include:

- **PLENTY** of fruit and vegetables;
- **PLENTY** of starchy foods, such as wholemeal bread, rice, pasta and potatoes;
- **SOME** protein-rich foods such as meat, fish, eggs, beans and lentils;
- **SOME** dairy foods; **AND**
- **BE LOW** in fat (especially saturated fat), salt and sugar.

It is important to eat a variety of foods to make sure your body gets all the nutrients it needs to keep healthy. Eating a healthy diet that is high in fruit and vegetables, high in fibre, low in salt and saturated fat can help to:

- Reduce your blood pressure
- Reduce your cholesterol
- Reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers.

A good way to make sure you are eating a balanced diet is to base your meals on starchy foods, such as pasta or rice, then add plenty of fruit and/or vegetables together with a small amount of meat, fish or an alternative.

GETTING HELP

GDAS have a team of qualified nurses that are able to offer you help and advice around health eating.

We also have a health promotion nurse that visits many of Gwent bases

Remember that our help is free and completely confidential



GDAS
GWENT DRUG AND
ALCOHOL SERVICE

**HEALTHY
EATING**



POOR NUTRITION IS LINKED TO A VARIETY OF PROBLEMS SUCH AS:

gastric complications

dental decay

weight loss and gain

impaired management of HIV and Hep C,

psychological and neurological health problems

And these are problems that are closely linked with substance misuse itself.

For example, heroin, cocaine, and alcohol misuse all impact on appetite, metabolism, and mental and physical health.

At its extreme, alcohol misuse can cause enough of a nutrition deficiency to lead to neurological damage such as that seen in Wernicke/Korsakoff syndrome.

Positive eating habits are often not a priority or possibility for many due to circumstances (money for and intake of drugs prioritised over food, lack of cooking facilities, lack of appetite, etc) and eating disorders are relatively common, particularly amongst the female substance misusing population.

WHAT CAN I DO?

During recovery from substance abuse, dehydration is common.

It is important to get enough fluids during and in between meals.

Appetite usually returns during recovery. People in recovery are often more likely to overeat, particularly if they were taking stimulants.

Eat healthy meals and snacks and avoid high-calorie foods with low nutritional value (such as sweets), if possible.

The following tips can help improve the odds of a lasting and healthy recovery:

Eat nutritious meals and snacks.

Get physical activity and enough rest.

Reduce caffeine intake and stop smoking, if possible.

Seek help from your nurse or keyworker or support groups on a regular basis.

Take vitamin and mineral supplements.

