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Red meat and a balanced diet

Lean red meat (beef, pork and lamb) can play an important part in a healthy balanced diet. It has a high nutrient density containing high biological value protein, key minerals particularly iron and zinc and is also an important source of B vitamins, including B12, which is not found naturally in foods of plant origin.

There are five main food groups: fruit & vegetables; bread, other cereals and potatoes; meat, fish and alternatives; milk and dairy foods; foods containing fat, foods and drinks containing fat and sugar. The food selection guide below shows the relative proportions of food that we eat should eat, including snacks, from each of the five food groups on a daily basis.



The Government recommends that at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables should be consumed each day. Foods containing fats and sugars should be eaten sparingly with lower fat options chosen where possible. It is also important to reduce consumption of saturated fat and salt and to drink plenty of fluid (6-8 glasses a day).

The National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS 2003) data indicates that average daily intake among adults in the UK is 96g for men and 57g for women. Most healthy balanced diets will include lean meat in moderate amounts, together with starchy carbohydrates (including wholegrain foods), plenty of fruit and vegetables and moderate amounts of milk and dairy foods.

On cooking, red meat loses on average about 30% of its raw weight. This means that a fresh quarter-pound (110g) burger weighs roughly 80g on cooking and would be the equivalent of the daily limit for red meat consumption.

Examples of typical red meat portions are as follows:

- **3 slices of roast lamb, 80g**
- **2 grilled lamb chops, excluding the bone, 80g**
- **Portion of stewed mince beef, 80g**
- **1 grilled sirloin steak, 160g**
- **1 grilled quarter pound burger, 80g**
- **2 grilled rashers of back bacon, 40g**
- **1 grilled premium sausage, 55g**

Consumed as part of a balanced diet, lean red meat can make an important contribution to good nutrition through out life including protein, iron, zinc and B vitamins.

Please visit www.meatandhealth.com for more information.