

Food News

Volume 8, issue 6

June 2022

Welcome to Food News.

The commonwealth games are in July but we have added some information this month to help you plan food from participating countries. There will also be food traders at games venues giving you an opportunity to try something different.

Events will be held in Leamington Spa, Warwick and Coventry .



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Warwickshire Food Forum

Food News

is produced by the education & choice sub-group of Warwickshire Food forum

The forum is a multi-agency partnership aiming to improve

food choices for people in Warwickshire.

The focus is on making food affordable, sustainable and providing

information to help people make healthy choices. The group will also ensure that there is Warwickshire wide help for people who have difficulty affording food.

Truth or Myth

There have been a number of studies on this theory.

We often lose our appetite when we are ill. Some theories suggest this is so our bodies can focus on fighting the infection, but others say that not eating weakens your body so it is less able to fight the infection.

Fasting for a couple of days is not a problem, but not eating for a longer period, or repeated infections with fasting has a detrimental effect on the body.

What's crucial in combating both colds and a fever is staying hydrated. Fever dehydrates the body through increased sweating from an elevated temperature. Vomiting and diarrhoea also dehydrate the body. Dehydration makes mucus in the nose, throat, and lungs thicken which can make symptoms worse, but it also increases confusion and makes you more likely to fall.

Fever is part of the immune system's attempt to combat a virus. An increase in body temperature of 1 degree increases metabolism by 10—13% so you need more calories, often at a time when you don't feel like eating.

Unfortunately there is no cure for a cold. You can reduce your risk of getting flu by having an annual flu jab. Social distancing also reduces the chance of getting an infection.

Everyone agrees the best treatment is rest, hydration, and paracetamol or ibuprofen to lower your temperature and treat aches and pains.

Feed a cold, starve a fever

This is a well known saying, but is there any truth in it?

During the Middle Ages people believed there were two kinds of illnesses. Illness caused by low temperatures, such as a cold, needed to be fuelled to give the body heat. With illnesses causing a high temperature, such as a fever, the body needed to be cooled down, and fasting was thought to deprive the body of the energy to make heat.

One recent study suggested that fasting when you have a bacterial infection helps. They think that fasting deprives bacteria of the fuel it needs to multiply. Unfortunately the study was carried out in mice and they started the fast 3 days before giving the infection so they have no advice for humans. Mice with a virus had the opposite experience - Those who were fed did better.

A plan

Keep hydrated.

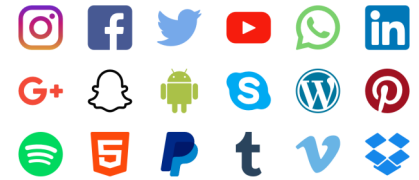
Water is good, as are fruit juices, milk, tea, coffee and electrolyte mixes. Juice and electrolytes are recommended if you are not eating. Check you're getting enough fluids by looking at the colour of your urine, which should be pale yellow.

If you feel nauseated, try taking small sips of liquids and food. Eat what you feel like. Plain foods like toast, soup or biscuits are often well tolerated as are cold foods like sandwiches or yoghurt.

If you have lost your appetite try having food or nourishing drinks such as milkshake in small quantities but between meals as well as at meal times.



Social Media Know-how



Cook the Commonwealth

The commonwealth games are coming to the West Midlands.

As part of the Commonwealth Games legacy work, the Food System team in the Public Health division of Birmingham City Council has put together free, online collections of more than 750 recipes from the 72 different Commonwealth countries. You'll find them on the Whisk app.

https://my.whisk.com/search/communities?search_query=cwg



There are recipes from less well know commonwealth countries such as Nauru, Mozambique, Brunei, Norfolk Islands and even Wales.

If you want to find out more about food habits in some of these countries the Food & Agriculture Organisation of the UN has details <https://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-dietary-guidelines/regions/en/>

All the dishes have health scores. These are calculated on a 1-10 scale based on nutrient density and USDA recommendations for a healthy diet. A higher Health Score means healthier food. The value is based on the impact of more than 28 nutrients.

Zambian Spinach with Ground Nuts scored 9.2, while English Eaton Mess scored just 2.7. Banana with Virgin Coconut Oil and Fresh Coconut from Tonga was the lowest we found at 2.4.

If you have diabetes the glycaemic index of each dish is also given.

Do check out these recipes. There are some with wonderful names such as Grand Vegetables with Vudi Dips and Crumbed Okra from Fiji or Dhall Puri a recipe from the Seychelles.



What's in Season?

Here is a list of what fruit and veg are in season this June

Fruit

Blackcurrants, Cherries,
Gooseberries, Raspberries,
Redcurrants, Rhubarb,
Strawberries, Tayberries.



Vegetables

Asparagus, Aubergine, Beetroot, Broad Beans, Broccoli,
Cauliflower, Chicory, Chillies, Courgettes, Cucumber,
Elderflowers, Lettuce, Marrow, New Potatoes, Peas,
Peppers, Radishes, Rocket, Runner Beans, Samphire, Sorrel,
Spring Greens, Spring Onions, Summer Squash, Swiss
Chard, Turnips, Watercress.

Broad beans have a short season, so its best to enjoy them while you can. You can buy them frozen, but the texture is not quite the same. In many Mediterranean countries they are dried as a way of dealing with a large harvest. You'll also find them as a "healthy" snack in supermarkets, but check the fat and salt content as they are often roasted with salt or fried in oils.

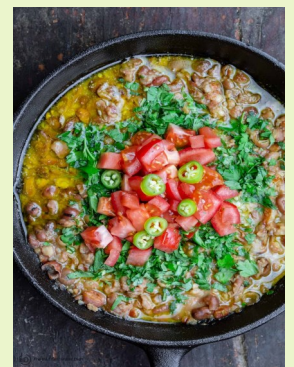
Broad beans are also known as fava beans (as featured in a well known film).

They are high in fibre and contain more protein than a lot of vegetables. They contain iron, but it's the type of iron that needs vitamin C to enable absorption, so eat with fresh salad, vegetables or fruit.

To prepare broad beans, remove them from the large pod. They have a skin. Many recipes remove the skin, but it is edible and gives you more fibre. Then you can prepare them according to the tips below.

Five ways to have broad beans

1. Lightly steam or boil and serve as a side dish with any meal.
2. Take off the outer skin and puree raw broad beans with a little oil and mint to make a dip or pesto. You can add cheese such as feta if you want.
3. Roast the beans in their pod in a little oil and serve as a snack. You can also roast or air fry them after removing from the pod.
4. Make into Foul Mudammas, an Egyptian stew. See picture.
5. Add to any stew or curry.



Nutrition and shift work

Shift work is common in workplaces such as health and social care, emergency and security services as well as many manufacturing industries, but with the move towards a 24-7 economy, this has expanded rapidly to include areas such as retail, road transport and communications. Currently, around 18% of UK employees have some form of shift work and there are over 3 million UK employees who work permanent or rotating night shifts.

Working from home, longer shifts and trying to balance family life with work may also be a cause of people working late at night and eating at different times.

Around 60% of the food we eat is consumed during “normal” working hours, so changing what you eat due to shift work can have a big impact on what you eat.

This can affect fatigue, concentration, mood and longer-term physical and mental health. Shift workers are more likely to report at least one longstanding medical condition. There appears to be a higher prevalence of central obesity and cardiovascular disease as well as type 2 diabetes, particularly in those working rotating shifts.



What factors might affect what shift workers eat and drink?

1. Timing of eating (chrono nutrition).

There is increasing evidence that time of eating may influence health risks in both the general population and in shift workers. Eating a greater proportion of one's daily food later in the day appears to impair glucose tolerance and blood fat levels. The evidence is not yet strong enough to make firm recommendations as to the optimal timing of meals but the following may help:

- Eat your main meal earlier in the day e.g. before your shift starts rather than during the night.
- Take breaks which include drinks, lighter meals and/or healthy snacks during the night (rather than avoiding food & drink completely).
- Have a light rather than a heavy meal 1-2 hours before bed.

2. Diet quality.

Food surveys have shown shift workers often report lower fruit and vegetable and higher free sugars and saturated fat intakes. This might be due to poor access to healthy food when facilities such as staff canteens are closed or reliance on sweetened caffeinated drinks to stay awake.

Eating more wholegrains, reducing sugar and saturated fat, choosing healthier snacks and drinks and limiting caffeine to within recommended levels can all improve diet quality. If suitable food is not



Shift work continued

3. Irregular meal patterns.

Shift work, and in particular rotating shifts, can cause disruption to family life and meal patterns. Shift workers may take fewer or shorter breaks at work due to lack of opportunities and facilities or as a result of fewer prompts and cues from fellow co-workers. Irregular eating patterns have been linked to a higher risk of central obesity and impaired glucose tolerance. We also know that missing meals, eating quickly and distracted eating or grazing can lead to overeating.

- Try to avoid skipping meals and spread food intake more evenly throughout the waking period with a mix of light or heavy meals, snacks and drinks.
- Focus on what you are eating and drinking during your break rather than on your phone and social media. This will help stop overeating.
- If you work with colleagues, arrange to meet them at least once during your shift so you get a break for a drink, snack and a chance to switch off.
- Your manager or union can help set up scheduled breaks, time to meet colleagues and access to healthy food if you want this.

4. Short sleep duration

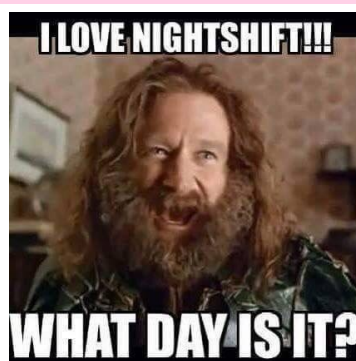
Short sleep is a known risk factor for weight gain and shift workers may be at particular risk if sleep is disrupted by light or noise during the day. A recent study looked at overweight adults who routinely slept for less than 6.5 hours. It found that interventions to increase sleep duration by 1.2 hours led to reduced appetite and a decrease in daily energy intake of 270 calories (15). Improving sleep quality in shift workers may therefore be a strategy to help reduce weight gain.

To find out more

The British Heart Foundation and health.com have articles on the timing of meals and health.

The Sleep Foundation has a section on Caffeine, sleep and the effects of increased caffeine intake.

See also links on the final page



Thanks to the British Dietetic Association Work Ready Programme for much of this information

Meal frequency: Does it make a difference how often we eat?

In this edition we've talked about what time you should eat, but does it matter how often you eat?

There is a theory that if you eat just 3 times a day, you will control your intake better, and so be a healthy weight, while another theory suggests more frequent meals (6—8 times a day) stops you feeling hungry and so prevents overeating.

There has been a review of the evidence regarding this, collated over the last 7 years. Here is a summary of what they found. As usual it's a mixed picture as the authors found that different parameters were measured in the original studies so its hard to see if the frequency of meals had the effect or what was eaten.

For women, eating frequency has not been shown to independently influence energy intake or anthropometric outcomes (BMI or weight circumference). A pattern of higher eating frequency has been associated with reduced body weight and waist circumference in men. This relationship needs further investigation to identify what frequency has the effect as this was not mentioned in the review and some studies had contradictory results.



Frequent grazing that starts and ends relatively late in the day has been associated with decreased dietary quality and an increased consumption of discretionary foods (i.e. foods high in sugar and fat) and may be associated with increased BMI and waist circumference.

None of the studies could say if there was a link between meal frequency and the energy used up in eating the meal. Meal frequency and the effect on appetite has been rarely studied, with the little evidence that exists suggesting that higher eating frequency does not decrease appetite.

So what can we conclude?

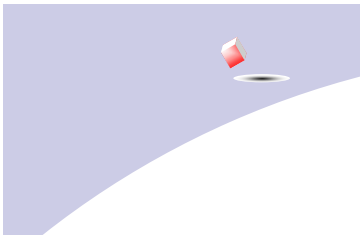
At the moment no recommendations can be made for populations.

If you want to improve your anthropometric outcomes and normal changes in diet have not helped, maybe look at your eating frequency and make a change. If you are a grazer, try keeping to 3 meals a day, if you eat just 3 meals a day, divide up the meals to eat 6 times.

Be honest about what you are eating. A lot of these studies concluded that people underestimated their intakes which affected the results

As mentioned in the working shifts article, you could ensure that you do not eat after 19:00hrs.

Make changes for at least 2 months to see if a different style of eating suits you.



Warwickshire eating and drinking for health group.

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If you have an interest in food , hydration, food costs, sustainability and health, and would like to join the food forum, please contact the editor.

If you would like more information about any of the articles in this newsletter, please contact the editor who will pass this on to the author of the article.

References and further reading

Broadbean recipes

<https://www.fearlessdining.com/roasted-fava-beans-recipe/?nowprocket=1>

Flu information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu/>

Shift working

<https://www.health.com/nutrition/meal-timing-when-to-eat>

There are a lot of articles on the quality of diet for shift workers on pub med: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30088659/>