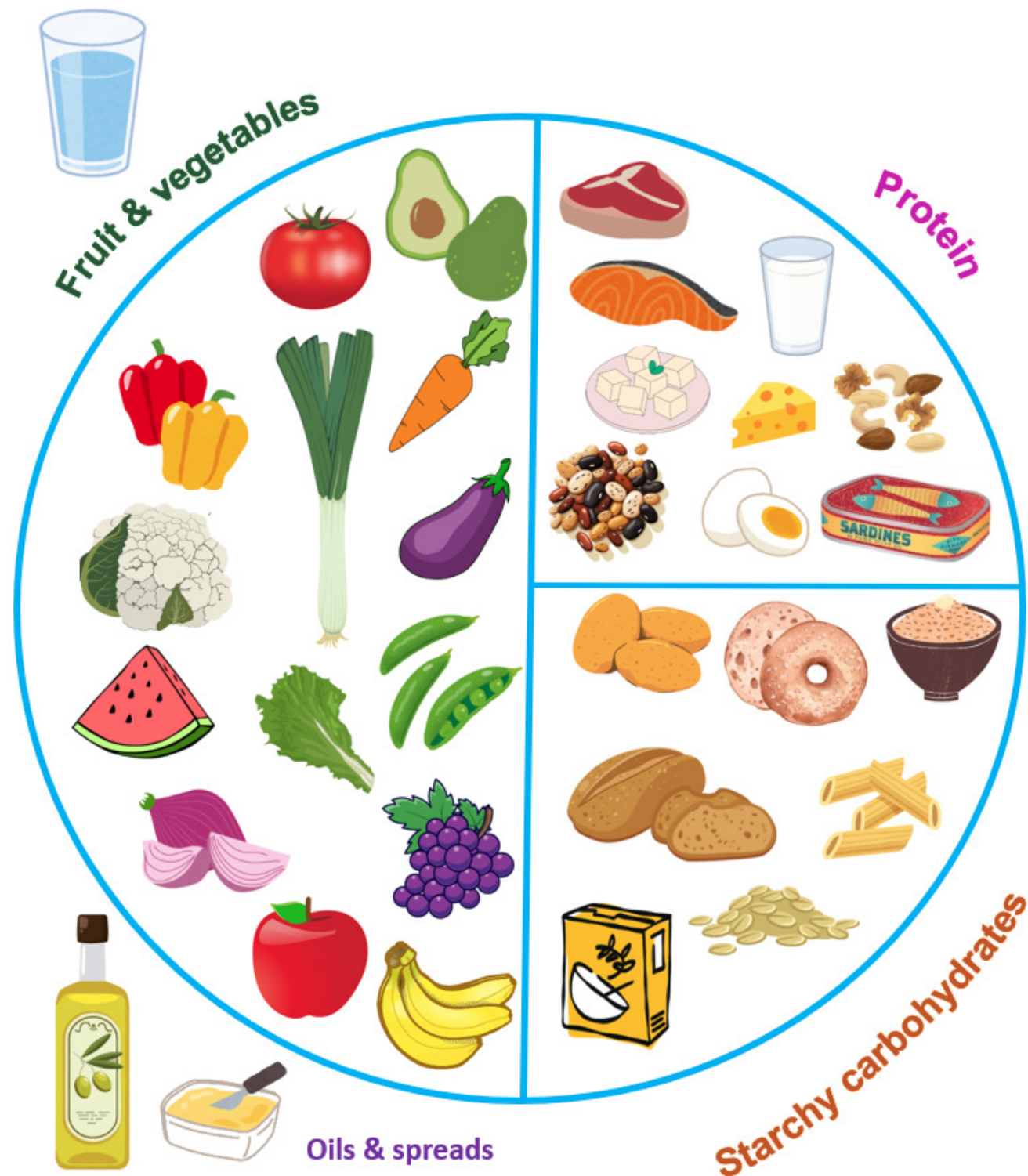


Healthy eating and your weight: getting the balance right

A patient's guide

Fluids 6 - 8 glasses a day



Healthy eating plate

A healthy balanced diet isn't just about what you eat, it's also about how much you eat. The key is to enjoy a variety of foods from the different food groups in the right amounts to get all the nutrients your body needs. Making healthier choices and choosing to eat some foods more often and in larger amounts than others can help you maintain a healthy weight.

It can be tricky to work out what a single portion of food looks like. Using your hands is an easy way to measure the right portion sizes for you without using a scale. Try it and see how it compares to your current portion sizes.

Use the healthy eating plate as a guide for creating healthy, balanced meals. Fill half your plate with vegetables, salad and fruit, a quarter with starchy carbohydrates and the last quarter with lean protein-rich foods.

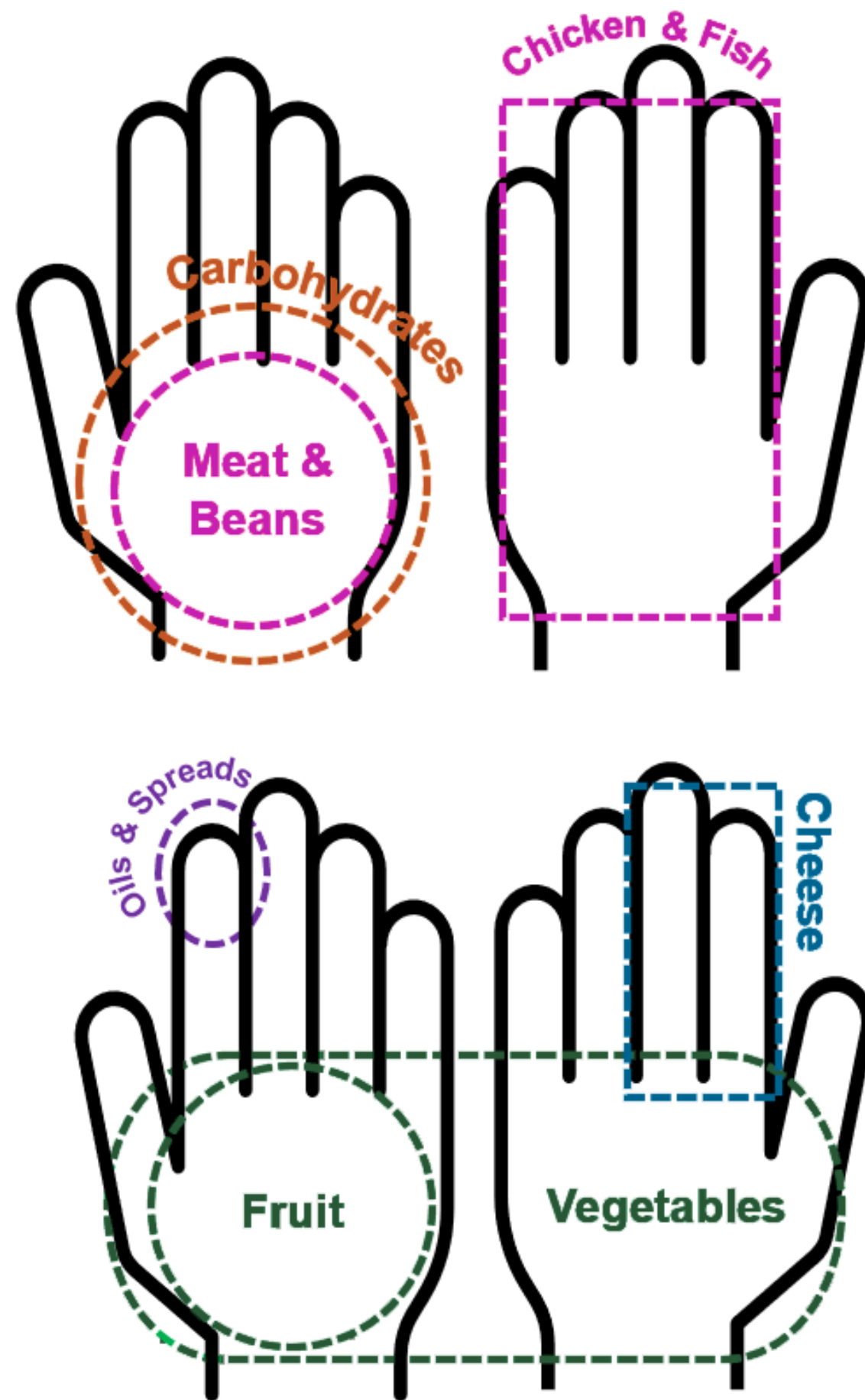
Including a small amount of healthy oil such as olive or rapeseed oil is important but use in small amounts because fats are high in calories.

You don't need to lay the foods out on your plate in this way because sometimes it won't be possible, such as with a curry, spaghetti Bolognese or stew. Instead, just visualise the ingredients as if they were laid out, so you can gauge the proportions.

Don't forget, keep hydrated. Water, lower-fat milks, lower-sugar or sugar-free drinks and tea and coffee all count.

You can also consider this guide when you're eating out.

Use your hands as a portion guide for the main food groups:



Carbohydrates

Choose an amount the size of your fist. Aim for 7-8 portions a day. These include bread, pasta, rice, potato, yam and plantain. These are often called starch carbohydrates. It's a good idea to choose wholegrain, high fibre or 50/50 versions and leave the skin on your potatoes as they contain more fibre.

Protein

For meat choose the size and thickness of your palm and for poultry and fish choose the size of your hand. For nuts choose a small handful. Aim for two to three portions a day. Include plant-based sources such as beans, peas and lentils, as well as fish and seafood, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, and if you eat meat or poultry, choose lean cuts and unprocessed options. If you eat it, also include two portions of fish per week – one being oily fish. If you don't eat oily fish, try incorporating walnuts and flaxseeds as plant-based sources of omega-3 fatty acids.

Dairy and fortified alternatives

Choose an amount equal to two fingers of cheese. Aim for three portions a day. If you opt for plant-based alternatives, ensure they are fortified with calcium and B12 as a minimum. Most of the time include plain dairy/alternatives such as plain yoghurt and add your own toppings.

Oils and spreads

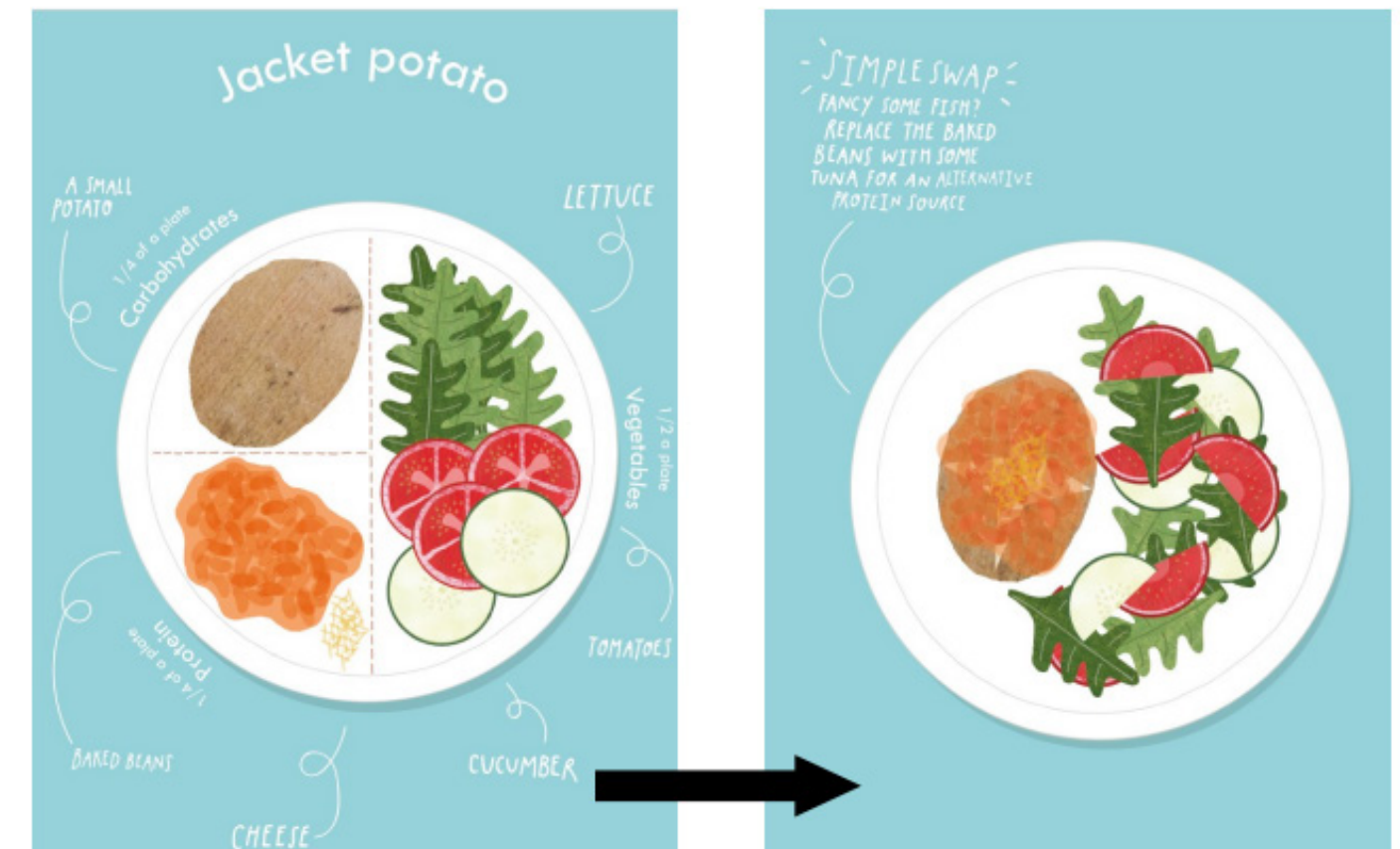
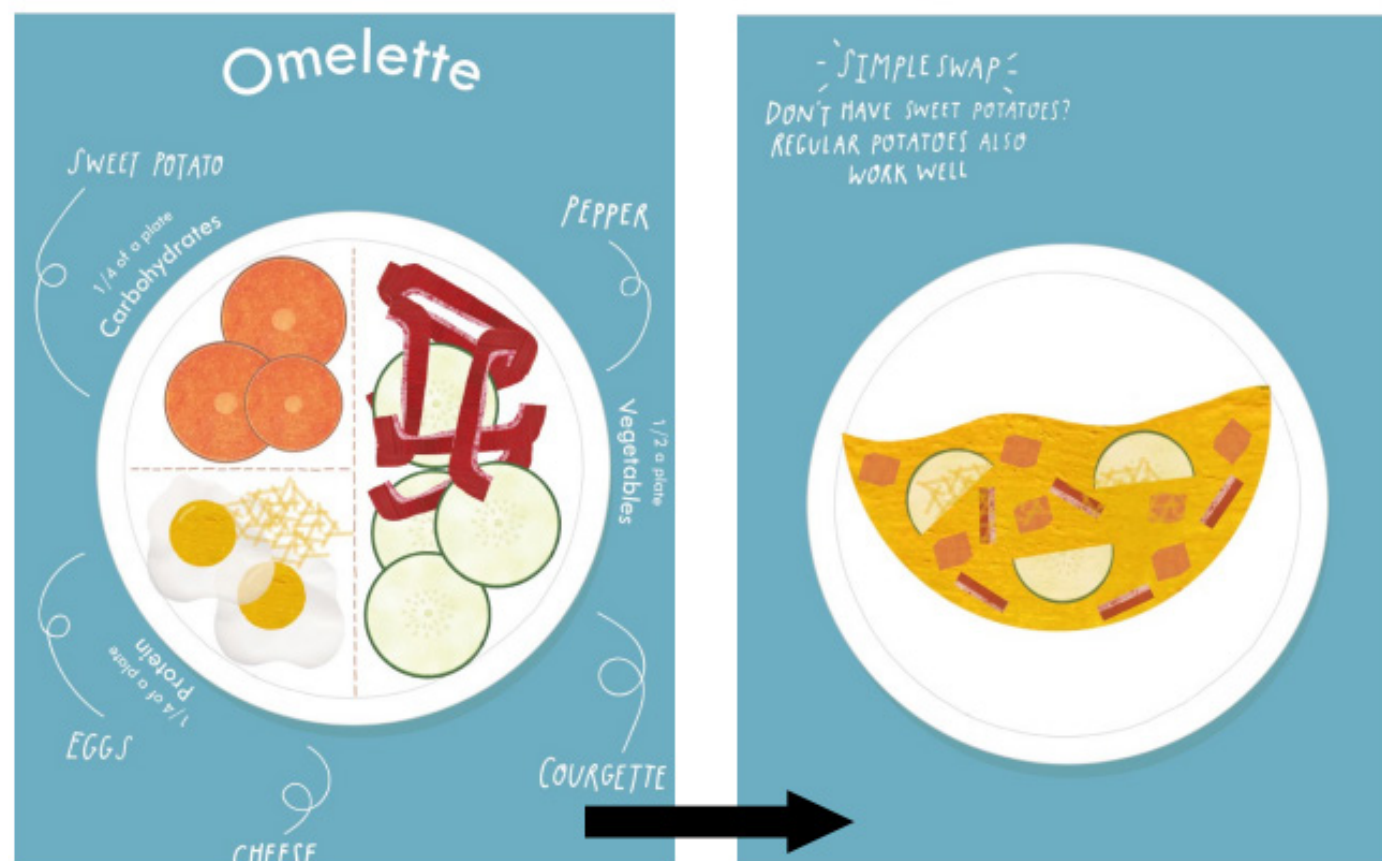
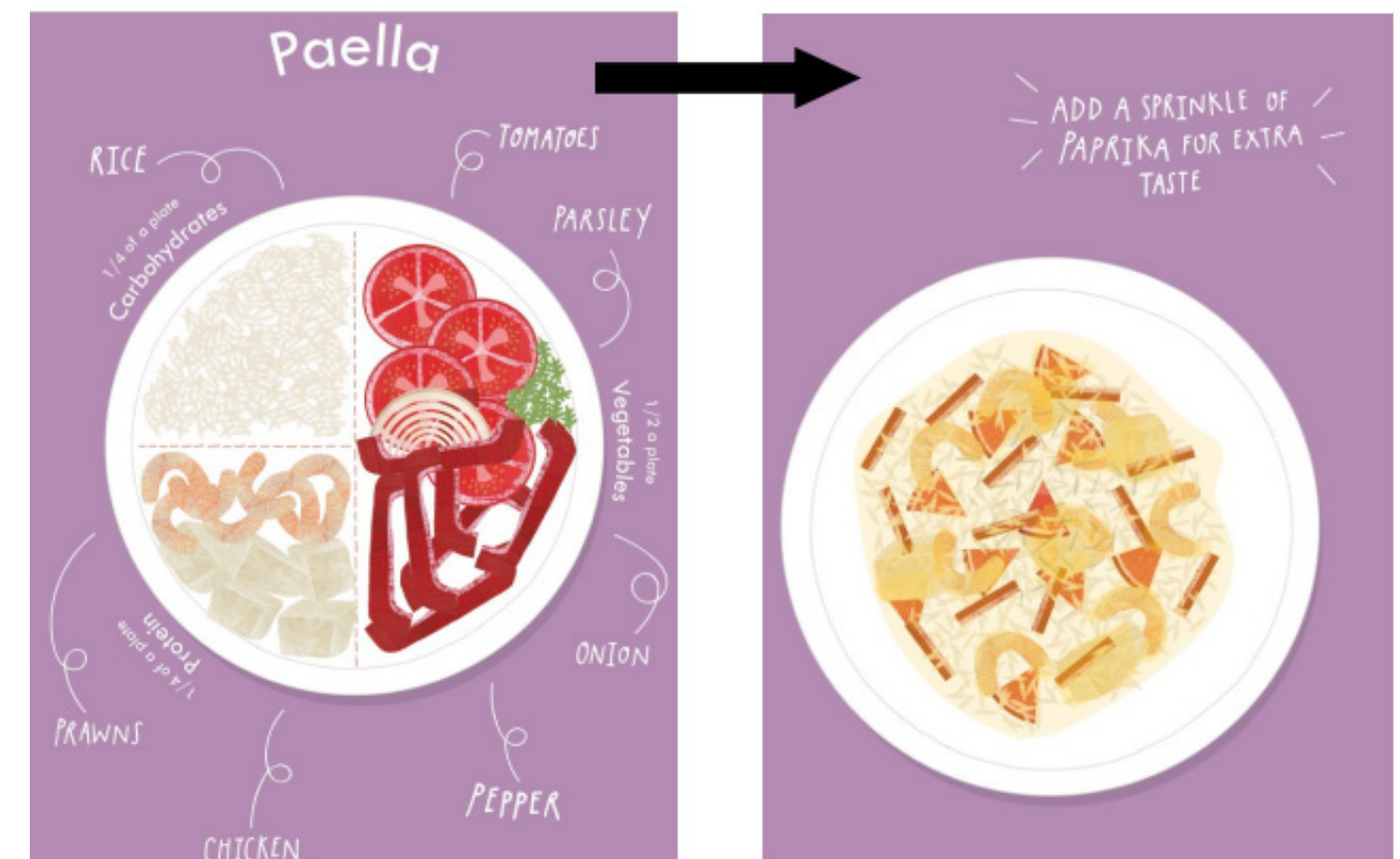
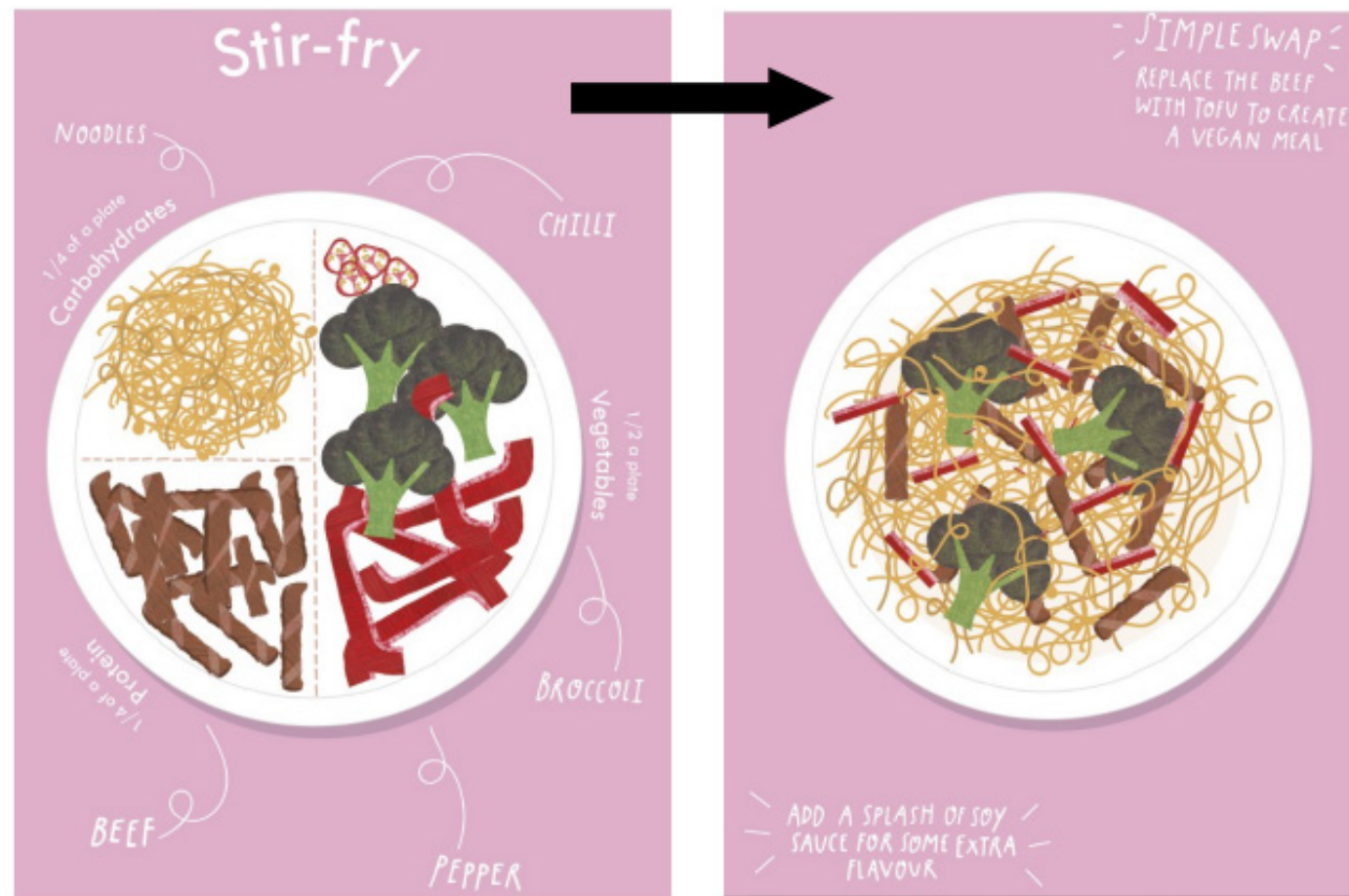
Limit to two portions - the amount the size of the tip of your finger. Choose unsaturated oils such as olive oil and rapeseed oil and vegetable spreads in your cooking instead of butter and ghee.

Fruit and vegetables

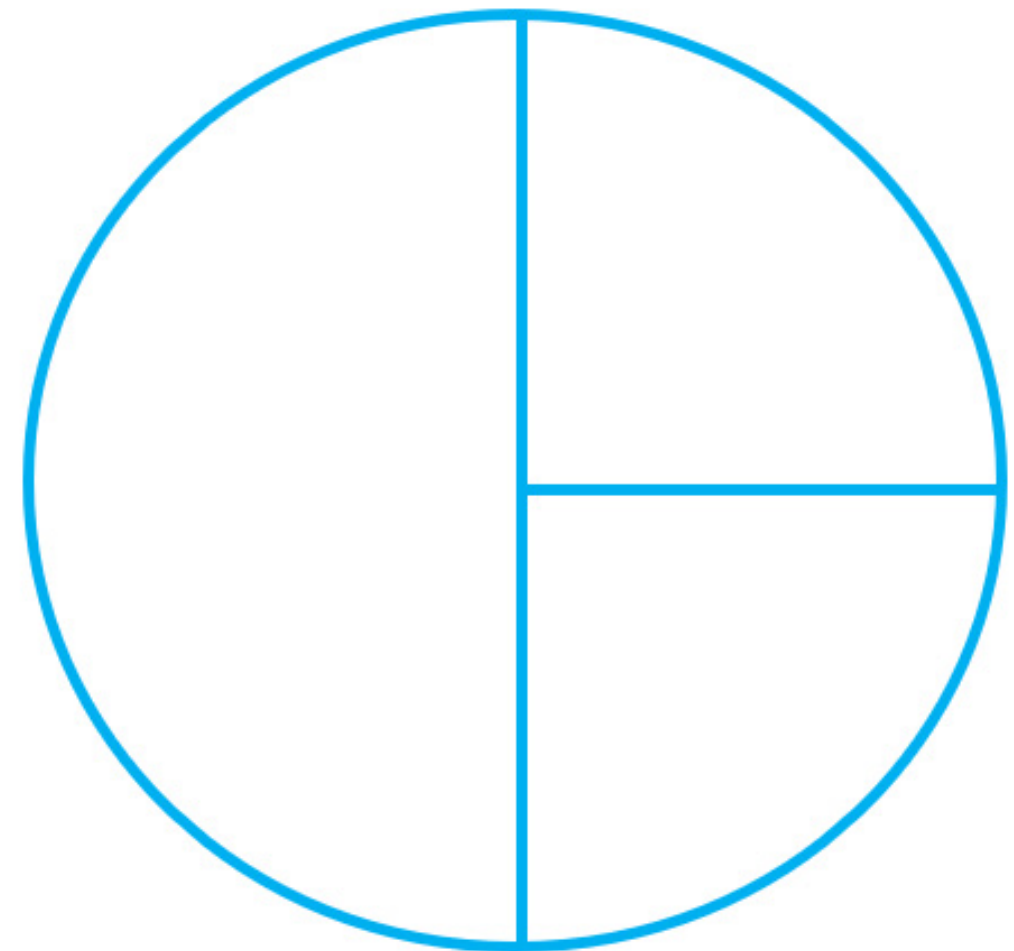
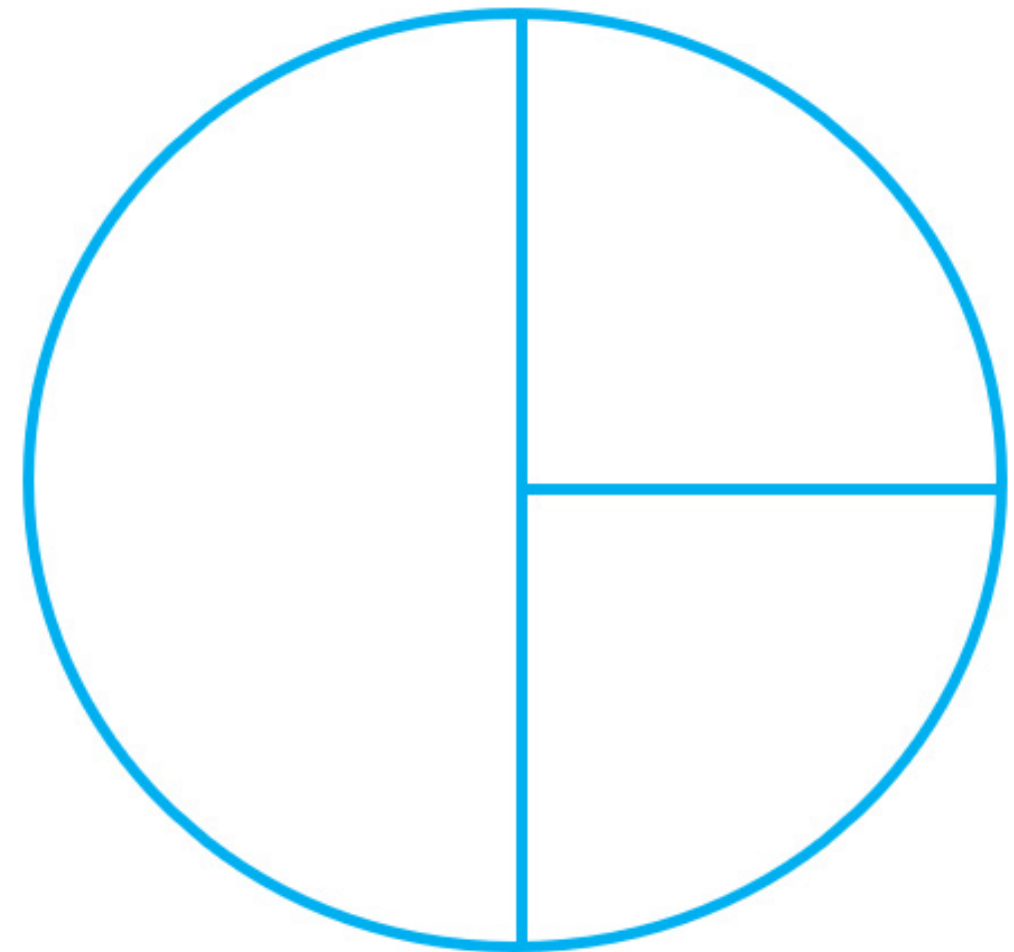
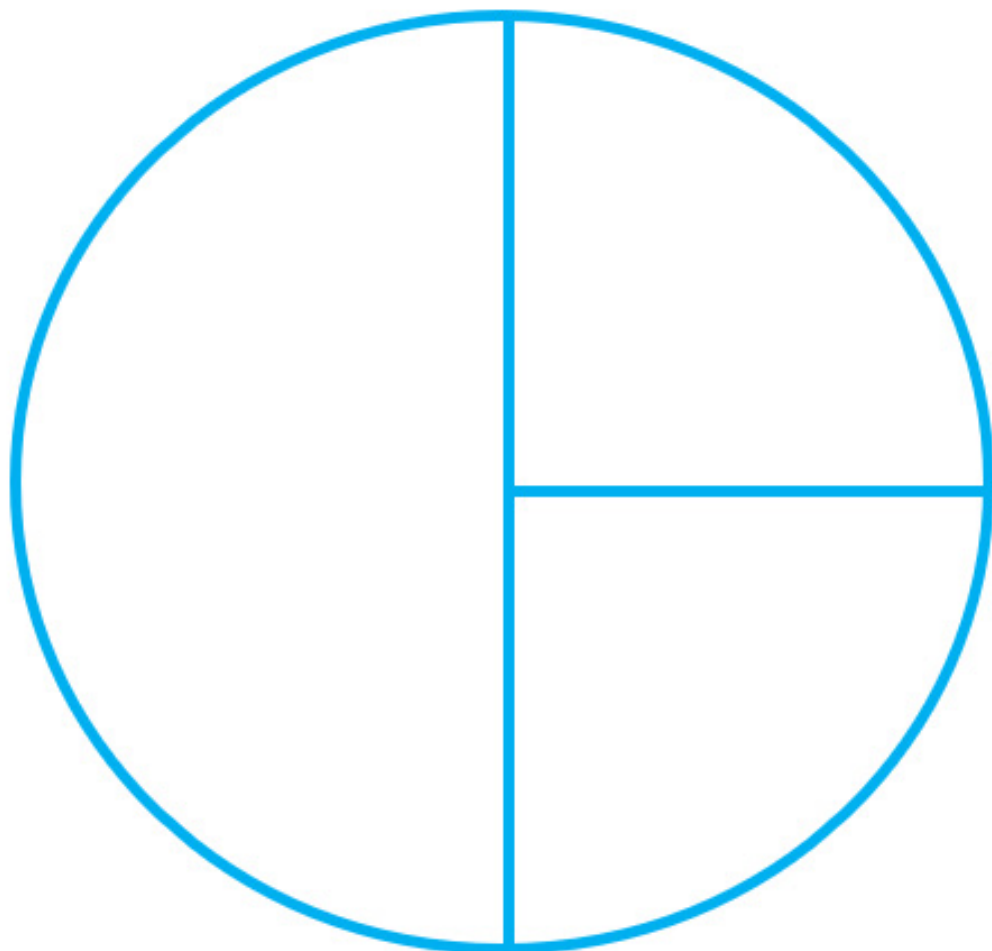
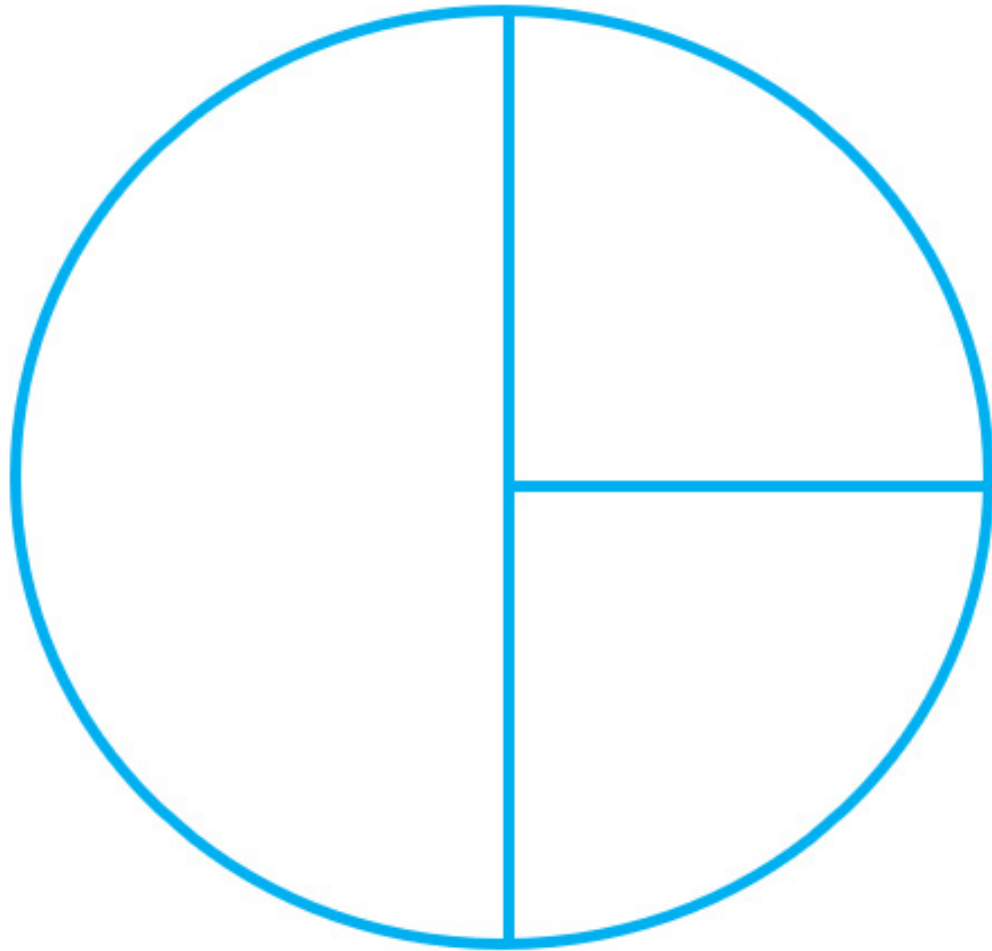
Choose a handful of fruit, a cupped handful of vegetables or as much salad as you can fit into both cupped hands. Aim for five or more portions a day. Fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or tinned. Try filling half your plate with veg, salad and fruit. Include a portion at snack times to increase your intake. Include lots of different coloured fruit and veg as they all contribute different nutrients, or in other words 'eat the rainbow'.

Build your meal examples:

Images below used with kind permission from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust department of nutrition and dietetics



Use these pages to plan some of your meal ideas:



Notes:

If you need more detailed advice or if you are following a special diet that makes it difficult to make these changes, please discuss with your dietitian.

If you have been advised to have thickened fluids or a modified diet by a speech and language therapist, please continue to follow this advice.

Useful contact numbers:

Royal Papworth Hospital dietitians:
01223 639372

Royal Papworth Hospital cardiac rehab
team: 01223 638429

Royal Papworth Hospital cardiac support
helpline: 01223 638100

Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

A member of Cambridge University Health Partners



Papworth Road
Cambridge Biomedical Campus
CB2 0AY



royalpapworth.nhs.uk



01223 638000

Alternative versions of this leaflet

Large print copies and alternative language versions of this leaflet can be made available on request.

View a digital version of this leaflet by scanning the QR code.



Become a member

As a member of Royal Papworth Hospital Foundation Trust, you could have your say on how the organisation is run, now and in the future. You will receive regular information and news from Royal Papworth and get invited to exclusive events. Membership allows you to vote for your representatives on the Council of Governors, talk to your Council of Governor representatives and stand as a governor.

Scan the QR code or head to royalpapworth.nhs.uk/our-hospital/how-we-are-run/foundation-trust-members to find out more.



Author ID:	Cardiac rehab dietitian
Department:	Cardiac rehab support
Printed:	February 2025
Review date:	February 2027
Version:	01
Leaflet number:	PI 265