

DISCRETIONARY FOOD

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WHAT IS A DISCRETIONARY FOOD?

Defined as any food or drink that **does not fit into the 5 core food groups**

They are not necessary for a healthy diet and are usually **high in saturated fat and/or added sugars/salt/alcohol**, and low in fibre

Discretionary food and drinks are usually high in energy, and are referred to as **'energy dense'**

They also have low levels of essential nutrients and therefore are **'nutrient poor'**



WHY ARE THESE FOODS A PROBLEM

As they usually take the place of other, more nutritious food

It is easy to have too much of these foods and drinks as they usually do not fill you up for very long and **make you feel hungrier more often**

They are also associated with **increased risk of obesity and chronic diseases** such as heart disease, stroke, and cancer



4 MAIN CATEGORIES

Higher added sugars – energy drinks, fruit drinks, confectionary, syrups, soft drinks, honey, cordial

Higher fat – processed meat (e.g. bacon, ham), meat pies, pastry, potato chips, fried foods, butter/cream/ghee

Higher fat and added sugars – biscuits, cakes, chocolate/bars, doughnuts, puddings, sweet muffins/pies/pastries, ice cream

High alcohol – beer, liqueurs, mixed alcoholic drinks, port, sherry, spirits, wine



HOW DO I REDUCE MY INTAKE OF DISCRETIONARY FOOD?

Replacing food which contain high amounts of **saturated fat** such as butter/margarine, cream and palm oil with foods that contain **low amounts of saturated fat** such as extra virgin olive oil, vegetable oil and avocado

Eat more foods high in fibre as these make you feel fuller for longer – examples include: whole grain foods, green leafy vegetables, fruit and legumes

Swap out discretionary food for any food from the 5 core food groups

