

Activity

How much do you know? After reading this feature, have a go at answering these questions.

1. Eating a diet high in salt can raise blood pressure, which in turn can increase the risk of stroke and vascular dementia. What is the maximum amount of salt we should be eating daily?

- 6g of salt a day
- 9g of salt a day
- 12 g of salt a day

Answer: The Food Standards Agency advises that we should eat no more than 6g of salt a day, which is about a teaspoon. For more information go to www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/fss/salt/

2. Which of the following should we eat less of to stay healthy and reduce our risk of raising cholesterol levels?

- a diet rich in saturated fat, for example butter, lard and fat on meat
- a diet rich in monounsaturated fat, for example olive oil, avocados and rapeseed oil
- a diet rich in omega 3 oils, for example oily fish, walnuts and linseeds.

Answer: We should eat less saturated fat that is the fat that is found in butter, ghee, lard and fat on meat. Eating too much saturated fat can contribute to increasing the level of unhealthy cholesterol in our bodies. This has been linked to increasing the risk of heart disease and dementia (in particular vascular dementia).

Foods rich in monounsaturated oils such as olive oil and omega 3 oils such as oily fish are a healthier alternative to saturated fats and are associated with keeping the body and brain healthy. For further information go to www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/fss/fats/unsatfat/

3. How much oily fish a week should we eat to keep healthy?

- 1 portion a week (140 grams)
- 2 portions a week
- 4 portions a week

Answer: Girls and women who might have a baby one day shouldn't eat more than two portions of oily fish a week. A portion is 140 grams. In general, this advice also applies to women who are pregnant or breastfeeding. Women who aren't going to get pregnant in the future, boys and men can eat up to four portions a week. Good sources of oily fish include salmon, sardines, pilchards, mackerel and kipper. For further information go to www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/faq/oilyfish

4. Studies have suggested following a Mediterranean diet could help to reduce the risk of developing dementia. Which foods are associated with a Mediterranean diet? List as many as you can think of.

Answer: A Mediterranean diet is one that is rich in fruits and vegetables, fish, whole grains, olives and olive oil. It also contains some nuts and seeds, lean meat in moderate quantities, and perhaps an occasional glass of red wine!