



# Balancing our food

To get all the nourishment and ENERGY we need, we have to eat a variety of foods. This is called our DIET.

We cannot live without food because food contains all the things we need:

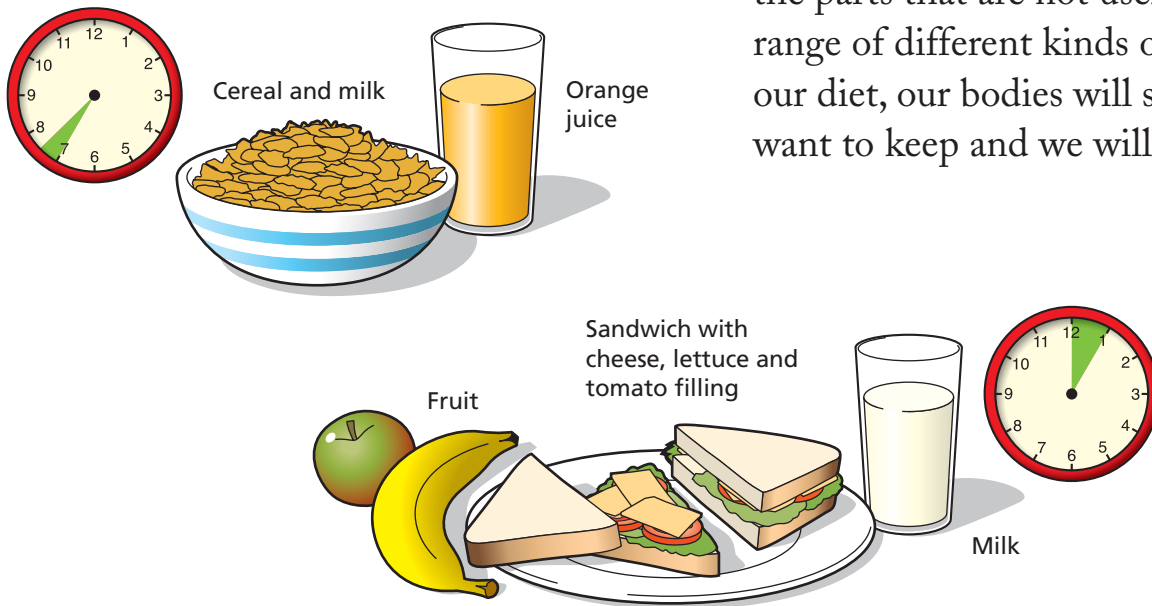
- ▶ to give us energy
- ▶ to grow
- ▶ to repair damaged parts of our bodies.

So although we eat food because we enjoy eating it, we also need to eat food because it is good for us.

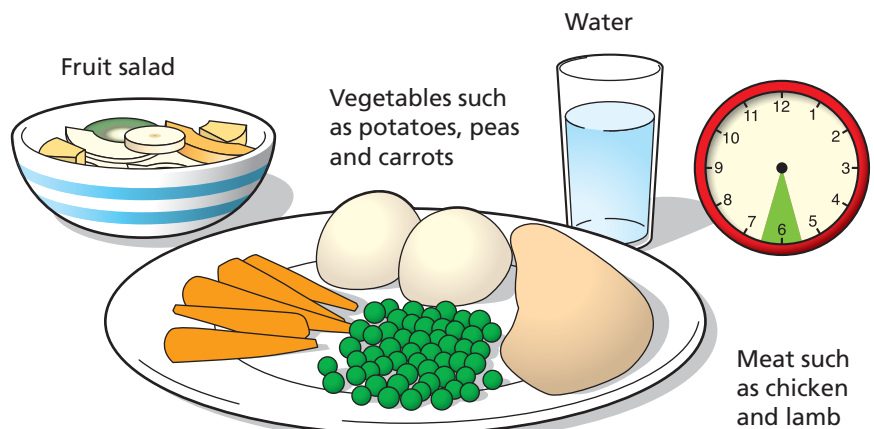
## Working out the variety we need

The food we normally eat and drink is called our diet (Picture 1). Our diet is usually very varied, as you saw on the last page. It includes meat, vegetables, fruit, cereals and dairy products like milk, as well as water, tea, soft drinks and so on.

Our bodies are very good at sorting out the useful parts of the food we eat from the parts that are not useful. So, if we eat a range of different kinds of food as part of our diet, our bodies will sort out what they want to keep and we will stay healthy.



▶▶ (Picture 1) Have you noticed that we normally eat different things at different times of the day? We might have cereal at breakfast, sandwiches at lunch and a bigger meal in the evening. This matches the amount of energy we have used up.



People who are well fed on balanced, nourishing food live longer, can do more work and are stronger than those who do not eat a plentiful, balanced diet.

What people have found from experience is that to get a balanced, nourishing diet we need to eat more of some food groups than others. Picture 2 shows this balance. We need to eat more of the foods from the bottom layers of this diagram, called a food pyramid, and less of the foods from the top.

## Drink is a food, too

Our bodies lose water all of the time and this has to be replaced. Some of the water we need comes from our food, but we need to drink liquids as well. Many of these liquids (including water) contain **MINERALS**. Soft drinks contain sugar, and milk contains **VITAMINS** and **FAT**.

### Summary

- Our bodies need a variety of foods to stay healthy.
- A diet is the normal foods you eat.
- Drink is a very important part of our diet.

► (Picture 2) The balance of foods we need to eat is shown in this diagram, which has been shaped into a pyramid. To get a balanced diet we need to eat most from the bottom of the pyramid and least from the top.

When people 'go on a diet' they usually eat less of the foods higher up this pyramid because the foods near the top contain lots of fat and too much fat is bad for you.

