

THE SWEDISH DIETARY GUIDELINES

# Find *your* way

to eat greener, not too much and be active



Livsmedelsverket



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# SUSTAINABLE BIG PICTURE

When it comes to food, it's easy to concentrate on individual nutrients or foods to the exclusion of everything else. But all aspects are interlinked, so it's important to maintain a holistic approach.

The key to good dietary habits is to eat more vegetables, enjoy a more varied diet and consume the right amount of food. Eating a wide variety of foods makes it easier to get what your body needs to feel good, while also reducing the risk of you consuming too much of harmful substances.

But what you eat isn't just important to your own personal wellbeing; it's important to the environment as well. The fact is, one-quarter of the climate impact of Swedish households comes from the food we eat – or throw away. Economising on the Earth's resources will ensure we have good food to eat in the future. That's why we've devised this advice on how you can eat sustainably – to the benefit of both your health and the environment. So that you don't have to choose.

These guidelines are suitable for most people. Anyone suffering from an illness may need special advice from their healthcare service.



# More

## VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

Eat lots of fruit, vegetables and berries! Ideally, choose high fibre vegs such as root vegetables, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, beans and onions.

### FIND YOUR WAY – how to make it work

#### GORGEOUS GREENS

Make space for vegetables, and use them as a foundation for your meals! Create beautiful salads with colourful vegetables, root vegetables and beans. Sprinkle a few nuts or seeds over the top. Think green even when you're eating out or buying ready meals.

#### ICE IS NICE

Always keep frozen vegetables at home. They're just as nutritious as fresh ones, and they won't go all wrinkly in the fridge. Freeze summer berries to enjoy them with porridge or yoghurt in winter!

#### VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

Boil, stirfry, grate, oven-roast, grill, coat with breadcrumbs, purée. All kinds of preparation methods and options are available to you!

#### MIXED TO THE MAX

Smoothies made from vegetables, fruit or berries are one way of making sure you enjoy all the benefits of fresh produce without losing the fibre.

#### DISCOVER LEGUMES

Make hummus, falafel, bean burgers, chilli con carne, soups or stews from beans, chickpeas or lentils. Use garlic, lime, chilli, curry or herbs to add flavour.

#### ENJOY SEASONAL PRODUCT

Some vegetables, fruit and berries can't be stored for any length of time. So take the opportunity to enjoy them when they're in season. This is when they're cheapest, tastiest and most eco-friendly.

#### COLOURFUL IS GOOD FOR YOU

Vegetables, fruit and berries contain lots of vitamins, minerals and other things that are good for you. Protective substances produce the various colours. That's why eating colourful food doesn't just look great, it's good for your health as well.

Lots of vegetables and fruit are rich in fibre, which has all kinds of positive effects on the body. Fibre makes you feel full up and keeps your bowels moving.

Eating lots of vegetables and fruit reduces the risk of problems such as obesity, cardiovascular disease and some types of cancer. It's a good idea to eat at least 500 grams of vegetables and fruit every day. This is equivalent to two generous handfuls of vegetables, root vegetables and legumes and two pieces of fruit, for example. But increasing your vegetable and fruit intake even slightly is good for your health. Potatoes aren't included in those 500 grams, but they're a good food anyway.

#### LITTLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

High fibre vegetables are an eco-friendly choice. They have less of an impact on the environment than salad greens and can be stored for longer.

Ecolabelling makes it easier to find fruit and vegetables that have been grown in eco-friendly ways. Only a very small number of chemical pesticides can be used in organic farming, and climate certification is helping to reduce climate impact.

# More SEAFOOD

Eat fish and shellfish two to three times a week. Vary your intake of fatty and low-fat varieties, and choose ecolabelled seafood.

## FIND YOUR WAY – how to make it work

### VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

There are lots of different kinds of fish and shellfish. Go exploring at the seafood counter or in the freezer and make some new acquaintances. And choose ecolabelled products, of course!

### FISH IN ALL FORMS

Eat fish in various ways: as fish burgers or fried fishcakes, stirfried with vegetables, in rich stews and soups, coated in crispy breadcrumbs, as ingredients in spicy oven bakes, or raw as sushi.

### FAST FISH

Pop a portion of fish in the microwave for a few minutes, add a little salt and pepper, lemon and dill to taste – and voilà!

### TASTY ON BREAD

Fish and shellfish make fabulous sandwich fillers. Try various kinds of sandwich, such as mackerel in tomato sauce, herring, tinned tuna or prawns. Even a tiny bit of fish is good for your health!

### ECO-FRIENDLY MUSSELS

Did you know, mussels help to reduce eutrophication of the seas? Make mussel soup or mussel sauce for your pasta, or garnish some mussels with Parmesan, garlic and parsley – a win-win for you and the environment!

### FABULOUS FISH

It's easier to get many of the nutrients you need to help you feel great if you eat fish two to three times a week and vary the kinds of fish you eat. Fish contains substances such as vitamin D, iodine and selenium, which many people don't get enough of. Fish also help reduce the risk of several different common diseases. Oily fish such as salmon, herring and mackerel are rich in omega-3 fats which can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and are important for the development and function of the brain.

### CHOOSE SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS

Seafood is largely a wild resource that is at risk of being depleted. There are also fishing methods and fish farming methods that can harm the environment. So not eating too much fish is good for the environment. Choosing sustainable fish makes it possible for us to continue eating fish in the future. Look out for ecolabels such as MSC, ASC and Krav, or use the WWF's fish guide.

**Pollutants in fish:** Some people are concerned about pollutants in fish, but you can eat most varieties without problems. Oily fish such as herring and wild salmon from the Baltic Sea, Gulf of Bothnia and lakes Vänern and Vättern may be problematic. They may contain large amounts of dioxins and PCBs. Children, young people and women of childbearing age should not eat such fish more than two to three times a year. Other people can eat this fish once a week. Special advice has been issued for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers, and this is also applicable to fish with a mercury content: see [www.livsmedelverket.se](http://www.livsmedelverket.se).





# More EXERCISE

Exercise for at least 30 minutes every day! Take brisk walks, for example, and reduce the amount of time you sit still by taking brief, active breaks.

## FIND YOUR WAY – how to make it work

### ACTIVE CHOICES

Use the stairs instead of the lift, and cycle or walk to work. Use public transport instead of driving, and get off a few stops early. There are lots of opportunities for exercise in our lives, and both you and the environment can benefit from them.

### EXCELLENT EXERCISE

Exercising is so much easier if you find a kind of exercise that you really enjoy. So what do you enjoy doing? Gymnastics, running, dancing, ball sports? Try a few different things!

### TERRIFIC TEAMWORK

People often find they're more motivated if they have others to spur them on. Set up a pedometer competition at work or for your family. Put together a gang of all your mates and register for a race at just the right level of difficulty. Maybe there's a running group or Nordic walking team in your town or village?

### POWER BREAKS

Don't sit still too long, take lots of active micro-breaks. Save a reminder on your mobile! Whether you drive around or work in an office, breaks are good for you.

### GET THAT HEART RATE UP

Even if you move around a lot at work, it can still be important to go to the gym or head out for a run occasionally. Stronger muscles and improved fitness will be your reward.

### EXERCISE REDUCES RISK

If you exercise for at least 30 minutes every day, there's less risk of diseases such as type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease and some forms of cancer. Sitting still for several hours at a stretch increases the risk of such diseases, though, even if you work out.

Find out more about the benefits of physical activity at [www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se](http://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se)

# Switch to WHOLEGRAIN

Choose wholegrain varieties when you eat pasta, bread and grain.

## FIND YOUR WAY – how to make it work

### WHOLEGRAIN BREAKFAST

Get your day off to a tasty start with oatmeal porridge or porridge using some other kind of whole grain. A bowl of wholegrain cereal or muesli is another great way to start the day. Top it off with apple, banana, berries, nuts or seeds.

### SUPERB SANDWICHES

Switching to wholegrain bread is an easy way to eat more wholegrain. Did you know, crispbread is particularly good because it often contains 100 % wholegrain?

### PUT GRAIN ON THE MENU

Choose wholegrain pasta and couscous instead of white varieties. Oats and barley are always wholegrain – try a few different ones to find your favourites.

### MIX MORE

Swap some of your wheat flour for graham flour or another kind of wholegrain flour when making pastry, pancakes, pizzas and suchlike.

### USE THE KEYHOLE

The Keyhole symbol on bread, cereals, grain, pasta and rice indicates that it contains more wholegrain and fibre and less sugar and salt.

### ALL CHANGES ARE GOOD

Not so keen on wholegrain? Take it one step at a time – even a little bit of wholegrain is good for your health!

### WHOLESOME WHOLEGRAIN

Wholegrain is only available to us in cereal-based products such as pasta, bread, rice and grain. Nothing is removed from wholegrain – the germ and the bran are left in – which makes wholegrain products more nutritious. Wholegrain contains fibre, iron, folic acid, antioxidants and other protective substances.

Wholegrain can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and colorectal cancer. Wholegrain can also help maintaining your weight as the fibre makes you feel full. About 70 grams per day for women and 90 grams for men is about the right amount. This is equivalent to two pieces of crispbread and a portion of wholegrain pasta, for example.

### LITTLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Cereals have a relatively small climate impact and fields aren't sprayed to a particularly great extent. Only a very small number of chemical pesticides can be used in organic farming. Rice is one of the crops causing the greatest emissions of greenhouse gases. From this perspective, other grains and potatoes are better choice for the environment.





# Switch to HEALTHY FATS

Choose healthy oils when cooking, such as rape seed oil or liquid fats made from rapeseed oil, and healthy sandwich spreads. Look for the Keyhole symbol.

## FIND YOUR WAY – how to make it work

### USE OIL FOR FRYING

Rapeseed oil and olive oil, like liquid fats, are ideal for frying.

### BUTTER PERHAPS?

Sure, it's fine to enjoy a little butter now and again, but oil or liquid fat is nearly always just as good for cooking and baking. 100 grams of butter in a recipe is equivalent to around 1 decilitre of liquid fat.

### ENJOY A VINAIGRETTE

Bring out the flavour of your salad with a vinaigrette. Blend some rapeseed or olive oil with vinegar, garlic, dried herbs and a little salt and pepper – quick and tasty!

### NUTS AND SEEDS WITH FABULOUS FAT

Cooking fats aren't our only source of "good" fat – nuts and seeds are full of healthy fats too. These are great in a pesto sauce, in salads or as snacks. Choose the unsalted varieties, of course.

### LOOK FOR THE KEYHOLE

The Keyhole symbol makes it easier to find cooking fats containing "good" fat.

### FIND THE RIGHT FAT

Our bodies need fat, but it has to be the right kind. Oils and other cooking fats carrying the Keyhole symbol contain unsaturated fats, and it's good to eat more of these. Rapeseed oil contains particularly healthy omega-3 fat, which our bodies can't create. But all fats are heavy on the calories. So we have to cut back on the less healthy fats so that we've got space for the healthier varieties. Saturated fat is less good for us and can be found in products such as butter and palm oil, and in coconut oil as well.

Research has clearly shown a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease when some saturated fat is swapped for unsaturated fat.

### WITH THE ENVIRONMENT IN MIND

Rapeseed oil and olive oil generally have less of an impact on the environment than palm oil, which is found in some cooking fats. Read the packaging! There are a number of accredited oil palm plantations offering more sustainable cultivation. Butter has more of an impact on the environment than oils, but at the same time it can help bring about a rich agricultural landscape and biodiversity. In organic farming only a very small number of chemical pesticides can be used.

# Switch to

# LOW FAT DAIRY PRODUCTS

Choose low-fat, unsweetened products enriched with vitamin D.

## FIND YOUR WAY – how to make it work

### SMART DAIRY CHOICES

Low-fat milk contains just as many nutrients as full-fat, but with less saturated fat and fewer calories. Look for the Keyhole symbol.

### FERMENTED DAIRY JUST AS NUTRITIOUS

Fermented milk provide just as much calcium and other nutrients as milk. Skip sweetened varieties, and add fresh or frozen berries instead!

### VEGGIE DRINKS

Drinks made of oats and soya are eco-friendly. Choose the ones enriched with vitamins and minerals – you'll see this information on the packaging.

### SAUCE WITH A KICK

Why not try making a tomato salsa with garlic, chilli, ginger and exciting herbs instead of a traditional cream sauce?

### CHALLENGE YOUR TASTE BUDS

Buy a really well made cheese bearing the Keyhole symbol and carry out a taste test. If you can't taste the difference, you've found a great way to cut back on the less healthy fat.

### LOTS OF IMPORTANT NUTRIENTS

Dairy products contain lots of calcium which we need for our bones and teeth. Depending on what else you eat – cheese, for example – 2-5 decilitres of milk or fermented milk a day is all you need to make sure you get enough calcium. Dairy products often contain lots of other important vitamins and minerals, as well as protein.

Low-fat dairy products also help reduce the risk of several different diseases, including high blood pressure, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

### GOOD AND BAD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Dairy products come from cows, which release methane gas. This is bad for the environment, so it's a good idea not to consume too much cheese or other dairy products. At the same time, grazing animals can do their bit for the environment. In Sweden, for example, they help to produce a rich agricultural landscape and ensure that natural pastures are kept open. This benefits lots of species under threat. Ecolabels such as "organic" help you choose foods produced with the environment in mind.





# Less

## RED AND PROCESSED MEAT

Eat less red and processed meat, no more than 500 grams a week. Only a small amount of this should be processed meat.

### FIND YOUR WAY – how to make it work

#### FOUR A WEEK?

Four meals containing meat makes around 500 grams. Focus more on vegetarian foods and eggs, and sometimes fish or poultry. Or eat meat a little more often, but in smaller quantities. Make your meat sauce or casserole go further using crushed tomatoes, lentils or root vegetables. You can kill two birds with one stone this way – less meat and more vegetables!

#### CHICKEN OR EGG

Chicken can be varied just about any way you like. As can eggs – you can have them boiled, fried or in an omelette together with some wholemeal bread and salad for a quick and tasty meal.

#### EASY TO SWITCH

Soups, pies and stirfries can easily be made without meat. The freezer section in your supermarket offers lots of exciting "veggie burgers", and you'll find ready-to-eat beans, lentils and chickpeas among the tinned products. Quick, simple and delicious.

#### VEGGIE FOOD IN WHEN YOU'RE OUT

More and more restaurants are focusing on serving delicious vegetarian food. Take the opportunity to enjoy a tasty veggie meal if you're having lunch out.

#### HEALTHIER CHOICE

The Keyhole symbol can help you find minced meat and processed meat containing less fat.

#### MEAT WITH A CARE

If you cut back on meat, you'll have enough money for meat produced more sustainably, with attention paid to the welfare of the animals. Choose ecolabelled meats such as free range, organic or certified eco-friendly.

#### GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

Cutting back on red and processed meat is good for our health. By red meat, we mean beef, pork, lamb, reindeer and game. Eating less than 500 grams a week (equivalent to 600-750 grams of raw meat) reduces the risk of colorectal cancer. This is particularly true if we cut back on processed meat products. Processed meat also contains lots of salt and saturated fat, so cutting back on these also reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Meat contains vital nutrients, but beans, chickpeas, lentils, fish, eggs and poultry also provide lots of iron and protein, for instance.

#### GREATEST ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Of all foods, meat has the greatest impact on our climate and environment. This is why it's important for us to cut back on meat and be careful about what meat we do choose to eat. Poultry has the smallest impact on our climate, followed by pork. Beef and lamb have the greatest impact, but free range beef and lamb can also have positive effects. In Sweden, for example, they help to produce a rich agricultural landscape and ensure that natural pastures are kept open. This benefits lots of species under threat. Sweden is also in a good position when it comes to animal welfare and the use of antibiotics.

# Less SALT

Choose food with less salt. Use less salt when you cook, but choose salt with iodine when you do use it.

## FIND YOUR WAY – how to make it work

### KEEP AN EYE ON SALT

Most of the salt we consume is in the food we buy, such as bread, cheese, meat products, ready meals and restaurant meals. Turn over the pack and look out for the salt content, or check the Keyhole symbol. You'll see it on food containing less salt.

### GREAT ALTERNATIVES

Cut back on salt but not the flavour! Use fresh and dried herbs, lemon, garlic, fresh ginger, chilli, curry and other spices. You can add lots of fabulous flavour to your food even if you use less salt.

### DO A TASTE TEST

Some ingredients, such as stock and soy sauce, already contain lots of salt. You might not need any extra salt?

### DON'T PUT SALT ON THE TABLE

Don't always put a salt cellar on the table. People sometimes add salt automatically without actually needing it.

### SWITCH SALT?

You can get salt and herb salt containing less sodium than standard table salt. Read the packaging! And don't forget, choose salt with iodine.

### CUT DOWN

If you love salt, you can cut down gradually. Your taste buds will get used to less salt over the course of just a few weeks, and you'll get better at tasting saltiness. You will be able to detect other flavours more readily, and over time your food will taste even better.

### LESS IS MORE

Salt contains sodium, which is vital for various bodily functions. But sodium occurs naturally in many foods, and cutting back on salt doesn't present a risk of sodium deficiency. Lots of sodium can increase blood pressure, which in turn increases the risk of cardiovascular disease and kidney damage.

Choosing salt with iodine is a good idea as iodine is needed for the metabolism. But you don't need huge quantities of salt to get enough iodine, you'll find iodine in milk and seafood as well.





# Less SUGAR

Hold back on the sweets, pastries, ice creams and other products containing lots of sugar. Cut back on sweet drinks in particular.

## FIND YOUR WAY – how to make it work

### A LITTLE OF WHAT YOU FANCY

Most people like sweets, fizzy drinks and cakes. And if the rest of your diet is balanced, having a small amount of sugar isn't dangerous. So choose sweet things with care and enjoy them.

### TO EAT OR NOT TO EAT?

Sugar cravings can be very strong, and some people find it almost impossible to eat small quantities of sweet things and then stop. Work out what works for you, and eat just small quantities of sweet things – or give up sweet things altogether. Or maybe you could cut back a little at a time?

### WORK IT ALL OUT

Have a think about where, when and how you eat sugary things. What would be easiest to cut back on? And remember – even little improvements help!

### LIQUID CALORIES

Sweet drinks trick the body into thinking you're not getting lots of calories. Water is by far the best drink for quenching thirst – much better than fizzy drinks, juice, soft drinks and sports drinks.

### HIDDEN SUGAR

Flavoured yoghurts, sweet cereals, sweet fruit desserts can contain huge amounts of sugar. But adding a little bit of sugar to food to flavour it is nothing to worry about.

### USE THE KEYHOLE TO HELP YOU

The Keyhole symbol can be found on cereals, bread and yoghurt containing little or no added sugar.

### LOTS OF CALORIES – NOT SO MUCH NUTRITION

Products containing a lot of added sugar contain lots of calories but hardly any nutrients. If you eat and drink lots of sweet things, it's hard to get the important vitamins and minerals your body needs without also taking on board more calories than you use.

It's easy to become overweight, which in turn increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer. Sweet drinks in particular increase the risk of obesity as they contain lots of calories but don't make you feel full.

In Sweden, we eat 15 kilos of sweets per person per year on average, more than twice as much as in the 60's. In recent years consumption declined slightly.

### UNNECESSARY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

It's possible that many people don't realise that sweet things and fizzy drinks affect the environment. A bag of jelly beans actually has as much of a climate footprint as a small portion of pork.

# MAINTAIN A BALANCE

Try to maintain energy balance by eating just the right amount.

## FIND YOUR WAY – how to make it work

### START WITH YOURSELF

We all need different numbers of calories. Don't compare how much you can eat with how much others can eat – find your own energy balance!

### ENJOY YOUR FOOD

Eat slowly, pay attention to what you're doing and experience all the flavours! If you eat too quickly, you won't have time to enjoy your food and it'll be easier for you to eat too much.

### CLEAR TARGETS

Eat when you're hungry, but not every time you fancy eating something. If you have breakfast, lunch and dinner and maybe a tasty snack between meals, you might find it easier to avoid picking at food.

### YOUR MODEL

Customise your Plate model according to yourself and your lifestyle. If you exercise a lot, you can add a lot of potatoes or pasta, but if you don't exercise much you can increase the vegetables instead.

### PARTY ON!

Differentiate between everyday meals and party food. You'll be party-perfect if you do!

### ALCOHOL CONTROL

Remember, beer, wines and spirits contain lots of calories. A tin of strong beer contains almost 250 kcal, which is the same as ten meatballs. So two tins of beer is the same as an entire meal.

### TRY KEEPING A FOOD DIARY

You may sometimes find it a good idea to make a note of everything you eat. You could try the Matvanekollen (Eating Habit Check) food diary at [www.livsmedelverket.se](http://www.livsmedelverket.se). This might help you to keep track of where you're getting your nutrients and calories from.

### JUST ENOUGH IS IDEAL

Your body needs just enough energy to work well; in other words, you should consume as many calories as you can burn off. Too many calories – and indeed, too few – can lead to serious health problems.

Naturally fibre-rich foods such as vegetables, fruit, wholegrain products, nuts and seeds will help you to maintain your weight, while lots of fizzy drinks and sweets, white varieties of bread, rice and pasta, red and processed meat increase the risk of putting on weight. In Sweden, half of all adults are overweight.

Alcohol contains lots of calories and also affects your health in other ways. Among other things, alcohol increases the risk of cancer.



# THE KEYHOLE

## HEALTHY CHOICES MADE EASY

Look for the Keyhole symbol – we've said it again and again. This is a National Food Agency symbol which can help you to find food containing less sugar and salt, more wholegrain and fibre and healthier or less fat.

One thing that foods and meals carrying the Keyhole symbol have in common is the fact that they provide a healthier choice in their own specific food groups.

The Keyhole symbol can help you when you're doing your own cooking or when you buy ready meals, and is also becoming more common in restaurants.

Find out more at [www.nyckelhalet.se](http://www.nyckelhalet.se). You'll find lots of tasty Keyhole recipes there, so you can enjoy food that's not just delicious – but also healthy.

The Keyhole symbol also has its own Facebook page – why not Like it?





# *One-minute advice*

## MORE

vegetables, fruit and berries  
fish and shellfish  
nuts and seeds  
exercise



## SWITCH

white flour  
butter based  
fats  
high-fat dairy  
products

## TO

wholegrain  
vegetable  
fats and oils  
low-fat dairy  
products



## LESS

red and processed meat  
salt  
sugar  
alcohol



## *Eat more...*

**VEGETABLES, FRUIT AND BERRIES** *My way is...*

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**FISH AND SHELLFISH** *My way is...*

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**NUTS AND SEEDS** *My way is...*

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**EXERCISE** *My way is...*

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## *Switch to...*

**WHOLEGRAIN** *My way is...*

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**VEGETABLE FATS AND OILS** *My way is...*

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**LOW-FAT DAIRY PRODUCTS** *My way is...*

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## *Less...*

**RED AND PROCESSED MEAT** *My way is...*

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**SALT** *My way is...*

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**SUGAR** *My way is...*

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**ALCOHOL** *My way is...*

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In truth, most people know perfectly well what they should eat. It's no secret that vegetables are good for you and sugar isn't.

But knowing and doing are two different things. We'll give you advice and handy tips here to make it easier for you to adopt successful eating habits that are sustainable for both your health and the environment. So you can **find your own way** of eating greener, not too much and be active. After all – even tiny steps can make a huge difference!

Do you want to know more?

Visit [www.livsmedelsverket.se](http://www.livsmedelsverket.se)