

Healthy fridge essentials

In addition to food cupboard staples, keeping healthy essentials in prime position in the fridge will mean that you will be less tempted to reach for the takeaway menu and you'll be cooking up a healthy, nutritious and delicious meal in no time.

My top 10 fridge foods are not a definitive list and each food has been chosen because it is believed to benefit your health in some way, so try to make a selection of these delicious choices a regular feature in your weekly shopping basket.

1. **Eggs.** Far from being unhealthy, eggs are a valuable component in a healthy diet and are packed full of high – quality protein, vitamins A, D and B12, and folate. An egg provides just 80 calories depending on its size and cooking method.
2. **Margarine spread.** Choose from olive spread, sunflower spread or rapeseed oil spread. All contain 'good' unsaturated fats instead of 'bad' saturated fat found in butter, which can raise your cholesterol level. It is perfect for baking, cooking or spreading.
3. **Plant stanol/sterols** 'one a day' yogurt drinks. Just one drink a day contains the right amount of plant stanols or sterols to help lower your cholesterol.
4. **Soya products** like yogurts/milk. A dairy alternative that is naturally low in saturated fat and packed full of the nutritious bean power of soya.
5. **Lean meat** such as extra lean mince and skinless chicken. One of the best ways to get high quality – protein, which is essential for growth and repair of cells, as well as supplying important vitamins and minerals like B12, iron and zinc.
6. **Probiotic/Prebiotic yogurts** with live friendly bacteria cultures to help boost your 'good' bacteria in your gut.
7. **Milk.** Switch to semi skimmed, skimmed or 1% milk instead of whole milk to cut down on your saturated fat intake and calories, whilst not missing out on valuable calcium for strong bones and teeth.
8. **Fresh fruit and vegetables.** Buy a rainbow of locally produced and seasonal fruits and vegetables – red, green, yellow, white, purple and orange. All packed full of vitamins and minerals,

phytochemicals and fibre. Put vegetables crudité's or chopped fruit salad in easy reach for snacking when you open the fridge and you will be well on your way to achieving your 5-a-day.

9. **Lower fat hummus.** Made of chickpeas, hummus is a tasty, yet healthy dip and a perfect addition to a vegetarian's diet providing a valuable source of protein, soluble fibre and healthy unsaturated fats. Delicious on wholegrain bread with a grated carrot topping.

10. **Oily fish.** Choose from herring, salmon, mackerel, tuna etc. A great source of omega 3 fats which are best known for their beneficial effects on the heart. Perfect for throwing on the barbecue or sizzling under the grill for a simple healthy fish supper.