

Food and activity diary

Guide to completing your diary

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Introduction

Diet and activity levels have a big impact on your health. Risk factors; things that increase our risk of a disease can be broadly divided into modifiable and non-modifiable categories.

This activity focusses on the some of the modifiable risk factors (ie lifestyle).

Until Week 4 you will monitor your diet and activity levels using a food and activity diary.

The food diary is a modified version of the European Prospective Investigation of Cancer (EPIC)-Norfolk 7 day diet diary. Whilst the activity diary is a modified version of the Core Questions on Physical Activity in EPIC Baseline Questionnaires.

Therefore, we would like to acknowledge the contribution of the staff and participants of the EPIC-Norfolk Study and also the Epidemiology Unit, Medical Research Council, Cambridge, UK. EPIC-Norfolk is supported by the Medical Research Council programme grants (G0401527,G1000143) and Cancer Research UK programme grant (C864/A8257).

Learning Objectives

There is more to understanding a topic than just remembering facts. To really understand a topic we first learn the theory then we learn how to apply the theory through practical work.

By the end of this practical you should be able to:

- Identify some cardiovascular risk factors
- Process and analyse data
- Find the recommended values for a UK diet and the recommended activity levels
- Compare your values to the recommended and typical values for a UK adult

Assessment

In Week 4 there will be a choice of two worksheets for you to complete (a brief analysis or a detailed analysis). We will then gather some group data, so that we may come and discuss results.

Note: Data analysis will be shared anonymously, and we do not expect you to share personal information about your diet and activity levels unless you are comfortable doing so.

Health and Safety

All of the practicals in this course are optional. Practical work aims to apply the theory already covered, enabling a deeper understanding of the material. If you are unable to, or do not wish to carry out the practicals, you may find it useful to watch the videos or read comments made by others in the resulting discussions.

This practical is a little different to the others as it involves monitoring your food and activity in a diary from now until week 4. In Week 4 you'll have the opportunity to collate and analyse this data in the home practical. Your data will always remain private, but you'll have the chance to compare your results to UK and WHO averages, as well as submit your data anonymously to see how you compare with other learners.

- There are no significant risks associated with monitoring your food and activity, however if any concerns are raised through the process we recommend that you discuss this with your healthcare provider.

- We recommend that you do not try to significantly change your regular habits during the monitoring period (ie Don't suddenly take up jogging).

At the end of the monitoring period we will collate and analyse the data collected. It should be noted that the data analysis is for the purpose of learning and will not provide a complete health picture, or take into account each individual's unique circumstances.

Therefore, caution should be used in interpreting the data and to raise any concerns with your healthcare provider.

If after carrying out this activity you think that you would like to change your diet or lifestyle, do seek advice where appropriate. For example, some individuals should only undertake physical activity under the supervision or the recommendation of their healthcare provider, or another qualified person.

Dietary changes could affect, or be affected, by medications or various medical conditions (eg Diabetes), and so this also may need the supervision or the recommendation of your healthcare provider.

As long as you are cautious in interpreting your diary and seek appropriate advice before implementing any changes, the risks associated with this practical are low.

What you will need

Before starting this practical make sure that you have the following items ready to use:

- Food and Activity Diary (either paper or electronic copies)
- Pen / pencil
- Step counter (pedometer) if available – you can find these cheaply from many pharmacies, and online.

Instructions

Fill in the food and activity diary at the end of each day from now until you reach the corresponding step in Week 4.

On each sheet record your name, the date and the day of the week

In the food diary, record details of each type of food or drink that you consume throughout the day and the amounts of each.

For example:

| BEFORE BREAKFAST | |
|---|---|
| Food/Drink | Amounts (eg Medium sized portion or small glass or number of items) |
| Apple juice | 1 glass |
| BREAKFAST | |
| Food/Drink | Amounts |
| Porridge with semi-skimmed milk | 1 medium sized bowl |
| Sugar | 2 tea spoons |
| Tea with semi-skimmed milk and 2 sugars | 1 cup |
| Toast with margarine and orange marmalade | 2 slices |
| Water | 1 glass |

In the activity diary, record details of you daily activities including:

- Your daily step count (if known).
- Work activities – indicate if you do activities of different intensities during your day, or alternatively you can indicate which single intensity best represents your overall working day.
- Leisure time activities – indicate each of the different types of leisure activity you have carried out, along with the duration and intensity.
- Sedentary leisure time – indicate the duration of sedentary activities.

In Week 4 further instructions on analysing your food and activity diary will be provided.