

*Eating is a basic human need so it is lucky that most of us love food. Do you love eating though? Do you sometimes feel overwhelmed or intimidated by certain foods? Some people have foods that they don't feel comfortable eating because they feel they are 'bad' foods.*

## Food is neither 'good' or 'bad' – it is just food.

We have awarded food labels and given it human characteristics. These labels can actually affect how we feel about our ourselves when we eat this food. Are we 'bad' people for eating 'bad' foods? Do you sometimes eat large amounts of these 'bad' foods and feel guilty for it and so eat MORE of these foods to feel better?

This is part of the 'dieting cycle' which is linked to a poor relationship with food. Breaking out of the dieting cycle and feeling comfortable with food is key to being a healthy, confident eater.



## A poor relationship with food can look like ...

- Fussy eating
- Very limited variety of foods eaten possibly with strict avoidance of whole food groups
- Inadequate intake from the 5 food groups
- Excessive intake from the 'extras' group (high fat, high salt, high sugar choices)
- Poor body image and self-esteem
- Regular short-term restrictive dieting, often in the form of fad diets
- Limited awareness of actual hunger often leading to overeating

## Tips to have a great relationship with food

- Get in touch with your appetite, learn to recognise hunger cues and remember that it is OK to feel hungry before each meal.
- Eat from the 5 food groups – they each offer essential nutrients for good health.
- Keep 'sometimes' foods to just that 'sometimes' and enjoy them in moderation without feeling guilty.
- Avoid labelling food as 'good' or 'bad' – it is just food.
- Respect your body - appreciate that your body allows you to perform many necessary functions during the day. Avoid comparing your body to others.
- Shift your focus from weight or size to health. Appreciate that healthy eating allows you to become your healthiest self whatever your weight.
- Do something active every day to release endorphins, the feel good hormones, and to improve your fitness and strength.

Looking for healthy eating inspiration? Go to our website [www.actnss.org](http://www.actnss.org) – it is full of simple and delicious recipes that you and your family will love.