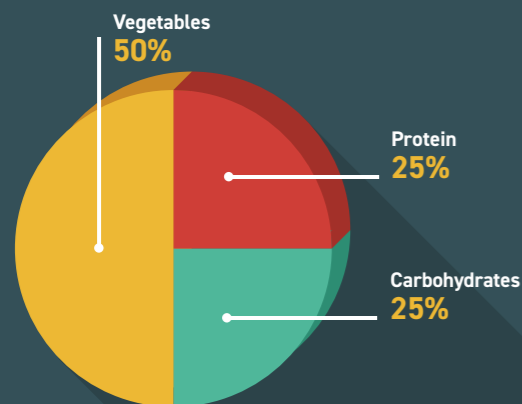


# HEALTHY EATING ON BOARD

## SIMPLE TIPS FOR SEAFARERS

MAINTAINING A BALANCED AND NUTRITIOUS DIET IS ESSENTIAL FOR SEAFARERS, WHO FACE UNIQUE CHALLENGES IN STAYING HEALTHY WHILE ON BOARD SHIPS. LIMITED ACCESS TO FRESH FOODS, IRREGULAR MEAL SCHEDULES, ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS AND LONG WORKING HOURS CAN ALL CONTRIBUTE TO UNHEALTHY EATING HABITS, LEADING TO LOW ENERGY LEVELS, WEIGHT GAIN, AND POTENTIAL LONG TERM HEALTH ISSUES. HOWEVER, WITH SOME PLANNING AND AWARENESS, SEAFARERS CAN ADOPT HEALTHIER EATING HABITS THAT WILL IMPROVE THEIR OVERALL HEALTH, MENTAL WELLBEING AND INCREASE ENERGY LEVELS. HERE ARE SOME STEPS THAT SEAFARERS CAN TAKE TO IMPROVE THEIR DIET:

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### 1. PRIORITISE BALANCED MEALS

One of the most effective ways to maintain energy levels is to eat balanced meals. This means including a combination of carbohydrates, proteins and healthy fats in each meal. Carbohydrates like rice, potatoes and whole grains provide essential energy, while protein sources such as meat, fish and legumes support muscle repair and immune health. Healthy fats from sources like olive oil, nuts and fish can improve brain function and provide sustained energy.

To make balanced eating easier, try to create meals that consist of about half vegetables, a quarter protein and a quarter carbohydrates. This formula helps manage portion sizes and provides a variety of nutrients.



### 2. CHOOSE WHOLE FOODS WHEN POSSIBLE

While it can be tempting to rely on processed foods for convenience, especially on long voyages, they are often high in unhealthy fats, sugars and preservatives. Whenever possible, choose whole foods like fresh vegetables, fruits, lean meats, eggs and whole grains. Even with limited access to fresh produce, frozen or canned vegetables and fruits (without added sugars) can be a nutritious alternative. Whole foods are packed with nutrients and help you feel full longer, reducing the urge to snack on less healthy options. Aim to eat five 80g portions of fruit and vegetables every day – the '5 A DAY' rule. As an approximate guide, one portion would be 3 to 4 tablespoons of cooked vegetables.



### 3. KEEP HYDRATED

Proper hydration is essential for physical and mental health. Dehydration can cause fatigue, headaches and decreased concentration—common issues among seafarers who work in varying temperatures and spend long hours on duty. Aim to drink at least 2 to 3 litres of water per day and increase intake in hot or physically demanding conditions.



### 4. AVOID EXCESSIVE SUGAR AND SALT

Sugary snacks and high salt foods are often available on board as quick and tasty options, but they can lead to energy crashes and contribute to long-term health problems like high blood pressure. Instead of reaching for sugary snacks, keep healthier alternatives like nuts, seeds and fresh or dried fruit on hand. If you're craving something sweet, consider a piece of fruit or a small portion of dark chocolate. Reducing salt intake by using herbs and spices for seasoning can also enhance flavour without impacting blood pressure. Aim to eat less than 6g (0.2oz) of salt a day, which is about a small teaspoonful.



### 5. PLAN FOR SNACKS AND QUICK MEALS

On busy shifts or when mealtimes are irregular, it can be challenging to make healthy choices. Planning for nutritious snacks like yogurt or hard-boiled eggs can prevent the urge to reach for high calorie, processed foods.



### 6. MAKE TIME FOR EXERCISE

While food choices are critical, regular exercise is equally important to staying healthy on board. Even a 15 to 20-minute daily workout, such as bodyweight exercises, stretching, or walking around the ship, can help manage weight, reduce stress, and improve overall energy levels.

By following the steps above, you will be making progress towards having a balanced diet. Adopting healthier eating habits on board may take some effort, but the benefits are well worth it. By planning balanced meals, choosing whole foods, staying hydrated, and minimising sugar and salt intake, seafarers can maintain a nutritious diet that supports their demanding work.