

# Healthy Eating for Teenagers with Barth Syndrome

There are many changes that happen during your teenage years that affect your body and your food choices. Now you have more independence and freedom to choose your own foods it's good to understand which foods will help you feel better. Eating a healthy diet in Barth syndrome is just like a normal healthy diet for all teenagers, but sticking to it can be harder with Barth syndrome and poor food choices can also have more immediate effects on how you feel.

## Your body

Usually boys start to grow after the age of 12 years and their body fat starts to reduce, so from this age your friends will suddenly start to shoot up and get slimmer. The growth spurt in Barth syndrome happens much later than normal (around the age of 18 years) so during your teenage years you will look smaller than many of your friends, although you will catch them up in the end!



## Top Tips for Healthy eating

- Don't skip meals – especially breakfast. Your body will have used up its energy stores overnight and will start to use your muscles for energy if you don't refuel in the morning.
- Choose low GI carbohydrates. These are wholegrain foods and are usually the brown foods; full of fibre they fill you up for longer and don't turn into fat so quickly.

- Eat more fruit and vegetables. Find ones you like and add them in everyday. They fill you up, are chock full of vitamins and minerals and are low in fat and energy so you can eat more of these.
- Have protein at every meal. Meat, chicken, turkey, milk, yoghurt, nuts, fish, eggs, lentils, soya, quorn. Avoid the ones that come with fat though, like some sausages, salami, pepperami, frankfurters, pies, pasties and food wrapped in fat like battered fish or deep fried chicken.

If we eat more energy (food) than we use for activity or need for growth, we will become overweight. As you are growing slower than usual during your teenage years and it is harder to exercise with Barth Syndrome, you need less food than your friends. Your portion sizes should be smaller and you won't be able to have as many snack foods like crisps, biscuits and chocolate as you will gain weight much quicker.

This can feel really unfair, but keeping to a healthy weight will help you to feel better and have enough energy to join in with your friends. The best foods to eat are ones that fill you up and keep you going for longer. These are protein foods (meat, fish, chicken, eggs, dairy, quorn, tofu) and low GI Carbohydrates (slowly released energy foods). The good news is that's exactly what your body needs so that it uses less of your body muscle for energy.



- Look at your plate. One third should be vegetables, one third protein and one third carbohydrate.
- Have three servings of dairy foods a day. A glass of milk, one yoghurt or a small serving of cheese counts as one. No more than this otherwise it's just extra calories.
- Choose your snack foods wisely. No more than one "unhealthy" snack a day. That means one packet of crisps OR one small cake OR one small chocolate bar. Avoid grazing on foods – leave a gap of at least 2 hours between meals and snacks.
- Cut out sugary drinks. Completely. You do not need to have energy drinks between meals. Have a glass of skimmed milk, sugar free squash, a small amount of fruit juice diluted with sparkling water or sugar free flavoured water. Or just water.

# Here are some healthy meal ideas



## Cereal Breakfast

### Low GI

All Bran  
Sultana Bran  
Porridge & Raisins  
Special K

### Toast

Granary bread  
Raisin bread

Fruit & Yoghurt or  
made into a smoothie

Low Gi Fruit

### Protein

Milk

Poached/boiled/scrambled  
egg  
Slice of low fat Cheese  
slice of ham  
low fat cream spread  
Peanut butter  
Drink of milk

2% or 0% natural Greek  
yoghurt drizzle of honey/  
agave nectar



## Packed Lunch

### Low GI

Granary Bread  
Whole-wheat tortilla  
wrap  
Cold Pasta  
Low GI fruit\*  
Small Packet crisps

### Protein

Turkey,ham,chicken,  
tuna,salmon,trout,  
prawn fillings  
Salad, grated carrot,  
sweetcorn  
Be good to yourself  
hummus or low fat  
mayo, or low fat  
cream cheese  
Low fat Yoghurt  
Mixed Nuts

## Quick cooked Lunch

Granary bread  
Low GI Fruit\*

Baked beans or  
mushroom/ low fat  
cheese omelette  
Lentil soup



## Evening Meals

### Low GI

Long grain rice  
dishes

Pasta dishes

### Protein

Chicken and lentil  
or chickpea curry  
Lentil burgers and  
salsa  
Egg & prawn/  
chicken/tofu light  
stir fry & soy sauce

Tomato & bacon/  
quorn sauce with  
peas & sweetcorn  
(+ chilli)

## Evening Meals

### Low GI

Wraps

Sweet potato

Roasted ratatouille

### Protein

Spicy chicken/ quorn with refried  
beans, peppers, low fat sour cream  
and salsa

Moroccan lamb or chickpea stew

Chicken pieces or quorn  
sausages

\* Low GI fruits include plums, peaches, raspberries, cherries, apples, pears, kiwi, oranges, strawberries. One handful is one portion!

