

Functions of foods

FACT

Foods are necessary to make the body function well. In particular, they:

- provide energy
- help the growth and repair of the body
- protect the body against illness.

Most foods have more than one function

All foods provide **energy** but some provide more than others.

Most foods help the body to **grow and repair** and **protect the body** against illness. Some foods are particularly good at this.

- **Staple foods** (cereals and starchy roots) mainly provide energy. Cereals also help body growth and repair.
- **Vegetables and fruits** mainly protect the body against illness.
- **Legumes, oilseeds and nuts** mainly help the body to grow and repair. They also help to protect the body against illness. Oilseeds, nuts and groundnuts provide extra energy, too.
- **Animal foods** (e.g. milk, eggs, meat, fish, offal) mainly help the body to grow and repair. They also provide energy and protect against illness.
- **Fat and oils** mainly provide energy. If added to vegetables, they improve the protective function of vegetables. Red palm oil also protects the body against illness.
- **Sugar and sugary foods** only provide energy.
- **Breast milk** provides everything that a baby needs up to the age of 6 months.

ACT

Eat a variety of foods every day so that your body gets enough energy and everything it needs to be active, to grow and to be protected against illness.