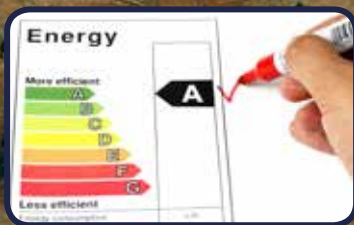


Energy Efficient Cooking



Ways to
save energy
when cooking . . .
and save money
on the energy
bill too



Action for Warm Homes

Energy Efficient Cooking

The way we cook, as well as using energy efficient cooking appliances, can reduce the amount of energy we use – and lower our energy bills too.



When cooking, always remember it is important to

- Cook and re-heat all foods until they are piping hot all the way through.
- Follow recipes and label instructions carefully especially advice on cooking times and temperatures.
- Follow appliance manufacture instructions.

Tips for energy-efficient cooking on a hob

- Always use the right size of pan for the amount of food you are cooking.
- Choose the right size of burner or ring, for example the burner or ring should be the same size as the base of the pan.
- Always follow the instructions and where possible put lids on pans to keep the heat in and stop steam escaping.
- Turn down the ring or burner once the cooking temperature or state is reached; simmer food rather than boiling it.
- Use a steamer to cook vegetables or potatoes, that way you can layer a number of vegetables on top of each other and still use one ring, or use a pan with a divider. Alternatively just put enough water in the pan to cover the vegetables. Steaming is a healthy way to cook and helps preserve some vitamins in vegetables too.
- Use a pressure cooker for cooking pulses, even joints of meat, whole meals, or stews. It speeds up the cooking time.



Tips for energy-efficient cooking in the oven

- Follow the pre-heat instructions and be ready to start cooking as soon as it is up to the required temperature.
- Cook in batches and cook as much as possible in the oven at the same time to use all the space and the heat available. You can always freeze portions of the food to warm up at a later time.
- Cut food into smaller pieces, that way it will cook more quickly.
- Keep the oven door closed while you are cooking. When cooking, each time the door of the oven is opened it loses heat and requires more energy to get back up to temperature.
- Keep the oven door clean so you can look in, rather than having to open it to see how your food is doing.
- Take care when removing food from the oven. Always use an oven glove or tongs when using the oven or grill.



Advantages of using a conventional oven

- There's room to bake several items at the same time
 - Food cooks much faster compared to using a slow cooker
 - Most suitable way of making certain foods like bread, scones, cakes, biscuits
 - Baking can be a very healthy way to cook e.g. baked potatoes, breads, casseroles, roast meat or chicken, roast vegetables.
- Try to keep the amount of fat or oil you use to a minimum and trim off any visible fat.



Microwave ovens

Microwave ovens are very fast in operation which is ideal for cooking small quantities of food, defrosting or reheating.

Advantages of using a microwave oven

Because their heat waves are concentrated on the food, microwave ovens cook and heat much faster than conventional ovens.

Cooking or re-heating small portions of food in a microwave can reduce the amount of energy used, and save on the energy bill, compared to a conventional oven.



Slow cookers

There are benefits in using a slow cooker. For example you can leave your food to cook slowly while you get on with other things. Slow cookers work by applying a small amount of heat over a longer period of time allowing cheap cuts of meat to break down resulting in a tender texture.

Another benefit is there is less to wash up, since a meal is cooked in one dish.

Slow cookers have a lower energy rating than conventional electric ovens hence they may use less energy, reducing the energy bill, compared to cooking an equivalent meal in a conventional oven.

The real benefit of using a slow cooker is the time saved by early preparation and then cooking during the day. Preparing meals in a slow cooker can be a time saver and it may help you to eat a more nutritious meal if the alternatives are fast food or less healthy options. The slow cooker can also be used to make extra servings that can be refrigerated or frozen for later, saving even more time and energy.

Features to think about when considering a slow cooker include a timer to automatically stop cooking at a set time, auto cook that automatically switches the temperature to low after a set time, and a keep warm setting.

If you decide to use a slow cooker, it is usually best to follow a recipe or two at first. Slow cookers use less liquid than hob cooking, and they may take a bit of getting used to. Most slow cookers come with a recipe book, and there are plenty of recipes online too.

You might also speak to your local butcher about the best cheaper cuts of meat or chicken to use in a slow cooker. They will be able to advise you on cuts that are tasty and nutritious while also being lower in fat.



Advantages of using a slow cooker

- Flexibility of cooking time
- Food can be prepared well in advance and left to cook all day
- There are a great variety of recipes for slow cooker meals
- You can use cheaper cuts of meat, pulses and alternatives to meat
- Portable – you can take a slow cooker anywhere and plug it in



Energy tips in the kitchen

- ✓ Plan meals so you get the most out of the oven while it is on. Cook more than one dish at a time - e.g. cook a casserole with baked potatoes at the same time
- ✓ If possible, cut up food into even sized, smaller pieces to cook more quickly
- ✓ Cook a large amount of food and freeze in portions for future use
- ✓ Use a slow cooker, leaving the food to cook slowly while you get on with other things
- ✓ Use the microwave oven to cook small quantities of food, for defrosting or reheating
- ✓ Use the right size of saucepan and keep the lid on to reduce the heat loss and to stop steam escaping
- ✓ Only boil the amount of water you need in the kettle but be sure to cover the element of an electric kettle
- ✓ Make toast in the toaster instead of using the grill
- ✓ Allow food to cool and then freeze or put into the fridge within 2 hours.
- ✓ Don't leave the fridge or freezer door open for longer than necessary
- ✓ Defrost fridges and freezers regularly to keep them working efficiently
- ✓ Consider replacing older appliances with more efficient models, the 'A' rated are the most efficient

A few simple tips for healthier cooking

- Trim fat off meat and remove skin from chicken- ask your butcher for leaner cuts.
- If you need to use fat or oil keep it to a minimum.
- Use tomato based sauces rather than creamy ones.
- Add plenty of vegetables to dishes to add texture, flavour and vitamins!



Baking, steaming, microwaving and slow cooking can all be healthy ways of cooking. Using a range of different

cooking methods can help us eat a varied and nutritious diet. For more information on healthy eating check out <http://enjoyhealthyeating.info/>

For more information on living better including eating and drinking well check out <http://choosetolivebetter.com>

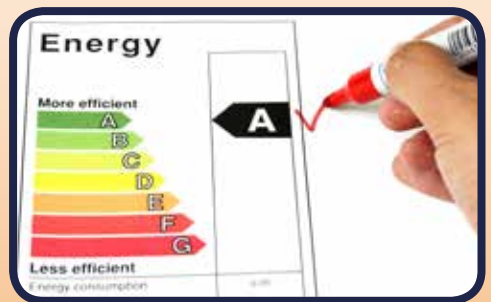
Should you consider replacing your oven to help make your cooking more energy efficient?

Having an oven that is in good working order is essential for energy efficient cooking; it will help lower your energy consumption thus keeping your energy bills down.

It is worth checking that the door of your oven is properly sealed, because the amount of heat that leaks out during cooking has a big impact on the energy efficiency and the energy consumption of an oven.

If the oven is more than 15 years old it may be worth replacing it with a newer more efficient model. If you decide that you need a new oven choose one that is energy efficient. The energy label will tell you how energy efficient an appliance is. Those that are A-rated are the most energy efficient.

When purchasing any new appliance, always consider the energy labelling and choose the most energy efficient, and consider the cost of the energy used over the lifetime of the appliance, not just the purchase price.



Don't overpay for the energy you are using

Compare electricity prices on the Consumer Council website to make sure you are on the cheapest tariff.

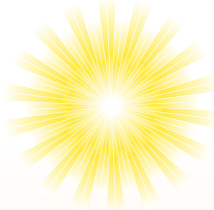
Switching is very straight forward and could save you money.

www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/consumers/save-money/energy/considering-switching-supplier

www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/policy-research/publications/switch-electricity-and-gas-guide

Energy Efficiency Tips

- ✓ On a sunny day open your curtains to let the warmth of the sunshine in
- ✓ Close the curtains at night to keep the heat in
- ✓ Avoid blocking radiators with furniture
- ✓ Turn off lights when they are not needed
- ✓ Switch to LEDs, they now come in a variety of shapes, sizes and fittings to replace traditional bulbs
- ✓ Electrical appliances on standby cost money – switch off
- ✓ If possible use a shower rather than a bath
- ✓ Use a bowl to wash up rather than running the hot water tap
- ✓ Cut your energy bills by setting the washing machine where possible to wash at 30°C
- ✓ Try not to leave your fridge door open as it takes energy to cool it down again



For more information on Energy Efficiency contact:

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T: 028 9023 9909
E: northern.ireland@nea.org.uk
www.nea.org.uk



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