A-Z of slim
Ready to lose that gut? It's as easy as ABC

A is for avocado
The oleic acid found in avocados triggers a reaction in the body that can stave off hunger pangs.

B is for breakfast
A big breakfast kick-starts your metabolism. Studies clearly show that breakfast eaters are slimmer than those who skip the meal.

C is for cortisol
Your adrenal glands secrete this stress hormone when your body is under pressure. It tells the body to refuel itself even when it doesn’t need it. So stay relaxed to stay lean.

D is for vitamin D
The amount of vitamin D in the blood influences the functioning of the hormone leptin, which tells the body it’s full. The best source of this vitamin is sunshine but you can also find it in eggs, milk and oily fish.

E is for eggs
Studies have shown that people who eat eggs for breakfast take in fewer calories throughout their day. This is thanks to their high protein content, which makes you feel full.

F is for flavour
You’ll eat less and feel fuller faster if you spice up the flavour of your food, according to new research. Herbs and seasonings will stimulate your taste buds without adding calories.

G is for gum
Chewing gum is a great way of distracting you from sweet, calorie-dense cravings. Researchers in Glasgow found that you can save around 47 calories by chewing gum after lunch.

H is for H₂O
Dehydration can often be mistaken for hunger, so if you are feeling peckish try drinking a glass of water. It can also raise your metabolic rate and help flush out your system.

I is for insulin
Insulin levels rise when we consume excessive sugar and refined foods such as white bread and cakes. This sends your body a hormonal message telling it to store and hold on to excess fat, so avoid these foods if you want to shed fat.

J is for journal
Keeping a food diary can increase the amount of weight you lose. Scientists believe that writing everything down encourages people to eat less and recognise problem areas.

K is for kebabs
If you crave fast food, these aren’t too bad – as long as you opt for the grilled chicken in pitta. The chilli will cause your body to let go of excess water and also keep your metabolism firing for up to three hours.
**L is for leptin**  
Fat cells secrete this hormone to tell your brain you're full. Research suggests that crash diets can lower leptin, prompting you to eat more.

**N is for nuts**  
Nuts are packed with omega 3 fatty acids, which can boost your metabolic rate and mental performance. They also contain fibre and protein, which makes them satisfying.

**O is for organisation**  
Healthy eating takes forward planning. If you're on the go and struck by hunger, you're more likely to grab a chocolate bar than a bag of nuts and seeds. Keep yoghurts, fruit and nuts handy and plan your meals in advance.

**P is for protein**  
Protein keeps you fuller for longer than other food types, and you burn more energy digesting it. Eat a portion with every meal – you can get it from lean meat, fish, eggs or pulses such as lentils and beans.

**S is for scales**  
Stepping on them regularly keeps weight in the forefront of your mind. It's easier to prevent weight creeping on than it is to get rid of it.

**Q is for quinoa**  
This wholegrain contains as many carbohydrates as pasta, but with the added bonus of protein and fibre to keep you feeling full.

**R is for regular**  
Aim to eat every two to three hours by dividing your daily calories into three meals and two snacks. If you feed your body frequently it's less liable to store fat.

**T is for trans fats**  
These are chemically altered vegetable oils found in processed foods such as cakes, biscuits and some packet soups. Your body can't process them so it stores them as fat instead.

**U is for undress**  
Your salad, that is. Croutons and salad dressings turn a low-calorie meal into one high in calories and fat. Instead, use plenty of tasty tomatoes and pepper, and drizzle with olive oil or balsamic vinegar. If you still miss that crunch from the croutons, add a handful of nuts.

**V is for variety**  
Limit variety on your plate. Humans have a built-in 'sensory specific satiety', which means there is only so much of one food we can eat before we get bored and naturally stop eating.

**W is for weekends**  
Successful weight losers are consistent and eat sensibly at weekends as well as in the week. A rest from healthy eating is fine, but choose one day and stick to it.

**X is for xylitol**  
This sweetener has half the calories of sugar. Its GI rating is low so it doesn't quickly raise and lower your blood sugar levels, which can cause cravings and energy slumps.

**Y is for yo-yo**  
Yo-yo dieting will slow your metabolism down, make you crave fatty foods and make the body store fat so you'll only be fatter than before.

**Z is for zzz**  
Lack of sleep affects your metabolism, boosting your appetite and decreasing leptin levels (see L above). According to US research, an hour's nap can reduce your day's calorie intake by 200.