

# Healthy eating for adults

EAT FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING



## WHAT ARE THE DIETARY GUIDELINES?

The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* provide up-to-date advice about the amount and kinds of foods that we need to eat for health and wellbeing. They are based on scientific evidence and research.

The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* of most relevance to adults are included below:

### GUIDELINE 1:

To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious food and drinks to meet your energy needs.

- Older people should eat nutritious foods and keep physically active to help maintain muscle strength and a healthy weight.

### GUIDELINE 2:

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day:

- Plenty of vegetables of different types and colours, and legumes/beans
- Fruit
- Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties, such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley
- Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat

And drink plenty of water.



### GUIDELINE 3:

Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt, added sugars and alcohol.

- a. Limit intake of foods high in saturated fat such as many biscuits, cakes, pastries, pies, processed meats, commercial burgers, pizza, fried foods, potato chips, crisps and other savoury snacks.
  - Replace high fat foods which contain predominately saturated fats such as butter, cream, cooking margarine, coconut and palm oil with foods which contain predominately polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats such as oils, spreads, nut butters/pastes and avocado.
- b. Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added salt.
  - Read labels to choose lower sodium options among similar foods.
  - Do not add salt to foods in cooking or at the table.
- c. Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added sugars such as confectionery, sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials, fruit drinks, vitamin waters, energy and sports drinks.
- d. If you choose to drink alcohol, limit intake. For women who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding, not drinking alcohol is the safest option.

### GUIDELINE 4:

Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding.

### GUIDELINE 5:

Care for your food; prepare and store it safely.

[www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)

Want more information about healthy eating?

[www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)

## FOODS TO LIMIT: DISCRETIONARY CHOICES

'Discretionary choices' are called that because they are not an essential or necessary part of our dietary patterns. Discretionary foods are high in kilojoules, saturated fat, added sugars, added salt or alcohol. If chosen, they should be eaten only sometimes and in small amounts.

### Examples of discretionary choices include:

- Sweet biscuits, cakes and desserts
- Processed meats and sausages
- Ice-cream, confectionery and chocolate
- Meat pies and other pastries
- Commercial burgers, hot chips, and fried foods
- Crisps and other fatty and/or salty snacks
- Cream and butter
- Sugar-sweetened cordials, soft drinks, fruit drinks and sports drinks
- Alcoholic drinks



## TIPS FOR CHOOSING NUTRITIOUS FOODS AND DRINKS

Eating for health and wellbeing is about choosing foods from the Five Food Groups every day, while limiting foods that are not essential to our health.

- Plan ahead and stock up on basic nutritious foods like wholegrain cereals and other grain foods, reduced fat milk, lentils or other legumes, eggs, and frozen or canned foods without added sugars or added salt – this way you can eat at home more often and cook meals yourself by adding fresh ingredients.
- Choose a variety of types and colours of fresh vegetables and fruits that are in season.
- Try new ways of cooking with vegetables like roasting, baking, barbequing and stir-frying. Add extra vegetables and legumes to your recipes.
- Use fruit for snacks and desserts.
- Lean red meats are important, but a maximum of 455g a week is recommended.
- Include at least 1 or 2 meat-free meals each week – include eggs, legumes such as beans and tofu, and nuts and seeds.
- Choose reduced-fat varieties of milk, yoghurt and cheese.
- Include small amounts of foods rich in unsaturated fats such as oils, spreads, nut butters/pastes and avocado.
- Drink plenty of water instead of drinks with added sugars or alcohol.
- Choose carefully when eating out- limit creamy, commercially baked or fried foods.
- Store unused cooked food in the fridge.
- Older people who have trouble with their teeth, may prefer softer textured or cooked vegetables and fruit, finely milled wholegrain cereal foods and dishes like soups, casseroles or stews.



The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* provide up-to-date advice about the amount and kinds of foods that we need to eat for health and wellbeing.

### For more information visit:

[www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)

### or contact:

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**Australian Government**  
**National Health and Medical Research Council**  
**Department of Health and Ageing**

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# SERVE SIZES



## Vegetables and legumes/beans

### Serves per day

	19-50 years	51-70 years	70+ years
Men	6	5½	5
Women	5	5	5

A standard serve of vegetables is about 75g (100-350kJ) or:

- ½ cup cooked green or orange vegetables (for example, broccoli, spinach, carrots or pumpkin)
- ½ cup cooked, dried or canned beans, peas or lentils\*
- 1 cup green leafy or raw salad vegetables
- ½ cup sweet corn
- ½ medium potato or other starchy vegetables (sweet potato, taro or cassava)
- 1 medium tomato

\*preferably with no added salt



## Fruit

### Serves per day

	19-50 years	51-70 years	70+ years
Men	2	2	2
Women	2	2	2

A standard serve of fruit is about 150g (350kJ) or:

- 1 medium apple, banana, orange or pear
- 2 small apricots, kiwi fruits or plums
- 1 cup diced or canned fruit (with no added sugar)

Or only occasionally:

- 125ml (½ cup) fruit juice (with no added sugar)
- 30g dried fruit (for example, 4 dried apricot halves, 1½ tablespoons of sultanas)



## Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties

### Serves per day

	19-50 years	51-70 years	70+ years
Men	6	6	4½
Women	6	4	3

A standard serve (500kJ) is:

- 1 slice (40g) bread
- ½ medium (40g) roll or flat bread
- ½ cup (75-120g) cooked rice, pasta, noodles, barley, buckwheat, semolina, polenta, bulgur or quinoa
- ½ cup (120g) cooked porridge
- ¾ cup (30g) wheat cereal flakes
- ¼ cup (30g) muesli
- 3 (35g) crispbreads
- 1 (60g) crumpet
- 1 small (35g) English muffin or scone



## Lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans

### Serves per day

	19-50 years	51-70 years	70+ years
Men	3	2½	2½
Women	2½	2	2

A standard serve (500-600kJ) is:

- 65g cooked lean meats such as beef, lamb, veal, pork, goat or kangaroo (about 90-100g raw)\*
- 80g cooked lean poultry such as chicken or turkey (100g raw)
- 100g cooked fish fillet (about 115g raw weight) or one small can of fish
- 2 large (120g) eggs
- 1 cup (150g) cooked or canned legumes/beans such as lentils, chick peas or split peas (preferably with no added salt)
- 170g tofu
- 30g nuts, seeds, peanut or almond butter or tahini or other nut or seed paste (no added salt)

\*weekly limit of 455g



## Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat

### Serves per day

	19-50 years	51-70 years	70+ years
Men	2½	2½	3½
Women	2½	4	4

A standard serve (500-600kJ) is:

- 1 cup (250ml) fresh, UHT long life, reconstituted powdered milk or buttermilk
- ½ cup (120ml) evaporated milk
- 2 slices (40g) or 4 x 3 x 2cm cube (40g) of hard cheese, such as cheddar
- ½ cup (120g) ricotta cheese
- ¾ cup (200g) yoghurt
- 1 cup (250ml) soy, rice or other cereal drink with at least 100mg of added calcium per 100ml

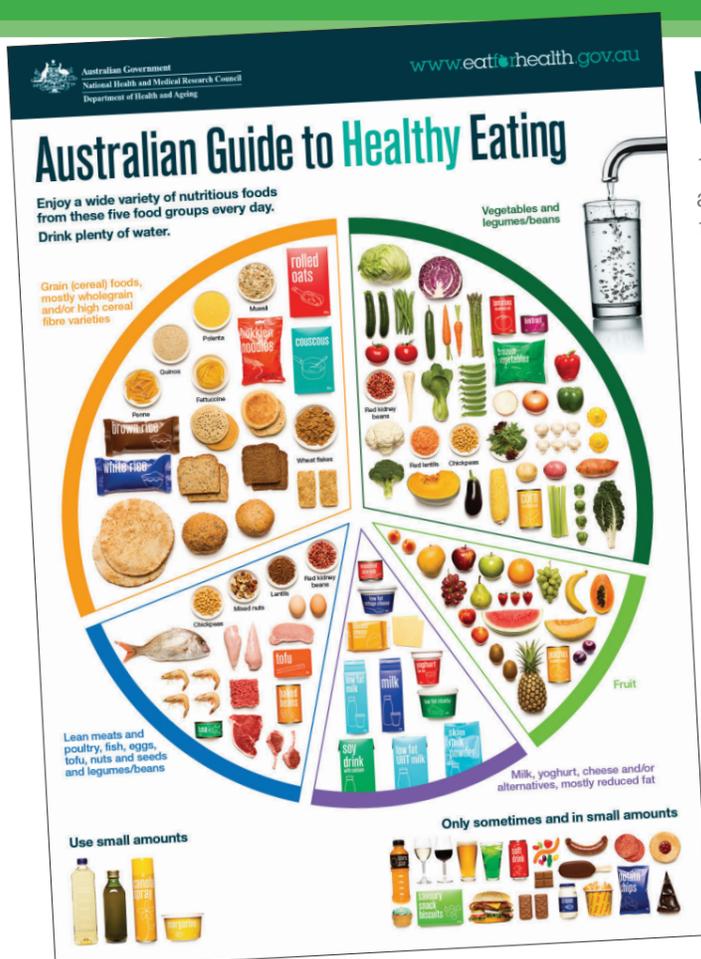
- To meet additional energy needs, extra serves from the Five Food Groups or unsaturated spreads and oils, or discretionary choices may be needed only by those adults who are taller or more active, but not overweight.

- An allowance for unsaturated spreads and oils for cooking, or nuts and seeds can be included in the following quantities: 28-40g per day for men less than 70 years of age, and 14-20g per day for women and older men.

- For meal ideas and advice on how to apply the serve sizes go to:

[www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION GO TO [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)



## WHICH FOODS SHOULD I EAT AND HOW MUCH?

The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* provide up-to-date advice about the amount and kinds of foods and drinks that we need regularly, for health and well-being.

By eating the recommended amounts from the Five Food Groups and limiting the foods that are high in saturated fat, added sugars and added salt, you get enough of the nutrients essential for good health. You may reduce your risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and some cancers. You may also feel better, look better, enjoy life more and live longer!

The amount of food you will need from the Five Food Groups depends on your age, gender, height, weight and physical activity levels, and also whether you are pregnant or breastfeeding. For example, a 43-year-old man should aim for 6 serves of vegetables a day, whereas a 43-year-old woman should aim for 5 serves a day. A 61-year-old man should aim for 6 serves of grain (cereal) foods a day, and a 61-year-old woman should aim for 4 serves a day. Those who are taller or more physically active (and not overweight or obese) may be able to have additional serves of the Five Food Groups or unsaturated spreads and oils or discretionary choices.

For further information go to [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au).

### HOW MUCH IS A SERVE?

It's helpful to get to know the recommended serving sizes and serves per day so that you eat and drink the right amount of the nutritious foods you need for health – as shown in the tables above. We've given you the serve size in grams too, so you can weigh foods to get an idea of what a serve looks like.

The 'serve size' is a set amount that doesn't change. It is used along with the 'serves per day', to work out the total amount of food required from each of the Five Food Groups. 'Portion size' is the amount you actually eat and this will depend on what your energy needs are. Some people's portion sizes are smaller than the 'serve size' and some are larger. This means some people may need to eat from the Five Food Groups more often than others.

### HOW MANY SERVES A DAY?

Few people eat exactly the same way each day and it is common to have a little more on some days than others. However, on average, the total of your portion sizes should end up being similar to the number of serves you need each day.

If you eat portions that are smaller than the 'serve size' you will need to eat from the Food Groups more often. If your portion size is larger than the 'serve size', then you will need to eat from the Food Groups less often.