Want more information about healthy eating?

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 children 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.

- Children and adolescents should eat sufficient nutritious foods to grow and develop normally. They should be physically active every day and their growth should be checked regularly.

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 (reduced fat milks are not suitable for children under the age of 2 years)

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 predominantly 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.
   - Increase the variety and choose lower sodium options among similar foods.
   - Do not add salt to foods in cooking or on the table.
   - Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added sugars such as confectionary, sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials, fruit drinks, vitamin waters, energy and sports drinks.

GUIDELINE 4:

Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding.

GUIDELINE 5:

Care for your food; prepare and store it safely.

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 and sports drinks.

It is also important to remember that young children (less than 3 years of age) can choose on hard foods. To prevent this from happening:

- Sit with them when they eat and don’t give them hard foods such as popcorn, nuts, hard confectionary or crisps.
- Cook or grate hard fruit and vegetables to soften them.
- Remove all bones from fish or meat.

ENCOURAGING HEALTHY HABITS

Childhood is a time of learning. Children who grow up in families that enjoy a variety of nutritious foods from the Five Food Groups are more likely to make their own healthy choices as they get older.

You can help by teaching your whole family to:

- Choose ‘everyday foods’ for home and school from the Five Food Groups.
- Save discretionary choices for special occasions.
- Provide a variety of types and colours of fresh vegetables and fruit that are in season.
- Enjoy reduced fat varieties of milk, yoghurt and cheese (once they are 2 years or older).
- Eat mainly wholegrain cereal foods and breads.
- Drink plenty of water instead of sugary drinks like cordial, energy drinks, sports drinks, fruit drinks, vitamin waters and soft drink.
- Eat a healthy breakfast every day.
- Learn about how foods are grown and where they come from.
- Try new foods and recipes – help with cooking and preparing foods and drinks too.
- Turn off the tv and computer at mealtimes – make this family time.
- Wash their hands before eating or cooking.
- Be physically active – play outside, walk the dog or run around at the local park.
### Vegetables and legumes/beans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serves per day</th>
<th>2–3 years</th>
<th>4–8 years</th>
<th>9–11 years</th>
<th>12–15 years</th>
<th>15+ years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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### Fruit

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<tr>
<th>Serves per day</th>
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<th>9–11 years</th>
<th>12–15 years</th>
<th>15+ years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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### Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties

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<thead>
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<th>15+ years</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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### Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans

<table>
<thead>
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<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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### Serve Sizes

- To meet additional energy needs, extra serves from the Five Food Groups or unsaturated spreads and oils, or discretionary choices may be needed by children who are not overweight but are taller, more active or older in their age band.

- For meal ideas and advice on how to apply the serve sizes go to: 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 providing your child with the recommended amounts from the Five Food Groups and limiting the foods that are high in saturated fat, added sugars and added salt, they will get enough of the nutrients essential for good health, growth and development. They may have a reduced risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and some cancers. Your child may also feel better, look better, enjoy life more and live longer!

The amount of food your child will need from the Five Food Groups depends on their age, gender, height, weight and physical activity levels. For example, a 3-year-old boy requires 1 serve of fruit a day, but an 11-year-old boy needs 2 serves of fruit a day. A 9-year-old girl needs 4 serves of grain (cereal) foods a day, and a 14-year-old girl needs 7 serves a day. Children who are taller, more physically active or in the higher end of their age band (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