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# Introduction

*The food we eat plays an important role in our health and wellbeing. An adequate, well-balanced diet is fundamental to good health. Good dietary choices contribute to quality of life, help maintain a healthy body weight, protect against infection, and reduce the risk of chronic conditions and dying early. Poor dietary choices can lead to reduced immunity and ill health, and are often linked to the development of chronic conditions—the major cause of ill health in Australia.*

Australia has national dietary guidelines that provide advice about the type and amount of food that we need to eat to stay healthy. We look at whether Australians are meeting these guidelines, and how results differ across the life stages.

Generally, Australians of all ages:

- do not eat enough of the 5 food groups—vegetables, fruit, grains, meat and alternatives, and dairy products and alternatives
- eat too much food that is high in energy and low in nutrients (discretionary food or ‘extra food’—including alcohol)
- eat too much sugar, saturated fat, and sodium (salt)
- don’t do enough exercise
- carry too much weight.

These eating habits begin as young as 2 and continue into adulthood. However, despite this, we’re generally getting enough of the nutrients (that is, vitamins and minerals) that we need.

# The Australian Dietary Guidelines

*Information is provided here on Australia's food and nutrient recommendations to provide context to the preceding population health analysis.*

The Australian Dietary Guidelines provide advice about the types and amount of foods that we need to eat for health and wellbeing. No single food—apart from breast milk for about the first 6 months of life—provides all the nutrients needed for good health. The guidelines encourage people to consume a variety of foods for nutrient requirements and overall health benefits, including lowering the risk of chronic disease.

## 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.

## Guideline 3

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

## Guideline 2

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

- plenty of vegetables, including 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 4

Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding.

## Guideline 5

Care for your food; prepare and store it safely.

# FOOD GROUP SERVES

Recommended minimum daily serves from the 5 food groups across the age groups

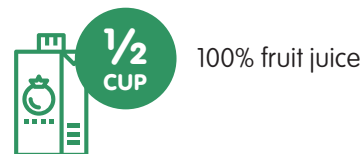
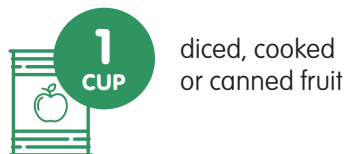
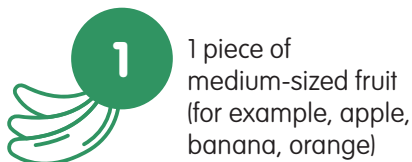
Age group	Vegetables and legumes/beans	Fruit	Grain (cereal) foods	Lean meats and alternatives	Milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives
<b>Boys</b>					
2-3	2.5	1.0	4.0	1.0	1.5
4-8	4.5	1.5	4.0	1.5	2.0
9-11	5.0	2.0	5.0	2.5	2.5
12-13	5.5	2.0	6.0	2.5	3.5
14-18	5.5	2.0	7.0	2.5	3.5
<b>Girls</b>					
2-3	2.5	1.0	4.0	1.0	1.5
4-8	4.5	1.5	4.0	1.5	1.5
9-11	5.0	2.0	4.0	2.5	3.0
12-13	5.0	2.0	5.0	2.5	3.5
14-18	5.0	2.0	7.0	2.5	3.5
Pregnant	5.0	2.0	8.0	3.5	3.5
Breastfeeding	5.5	2.0	9.0	2.5	4.0
<b>Men</b>					
19-50	6.0	2.0	6.0	3.0	2.5
51-70	5.5	2.0	6.0	2.5	2.5
70+	5.0	2.0	4.5	2.5	3.5
<b>Women</b>					
19-50	5.0	2.0	6.0	2.5	2.5
51-70	5.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	4.0
70+	5.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	4.0
Pregnant	5.0	2.0	8.5	3.5	2.5
Breastfeeding	7.5	2.0	9.0	2.5	2.5

## SERVE SIZE

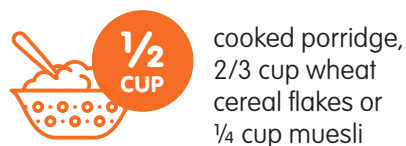
### Vegetables and legumes/beans



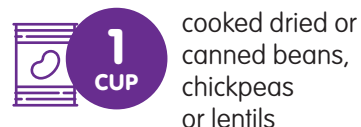
### Fruit



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



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



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



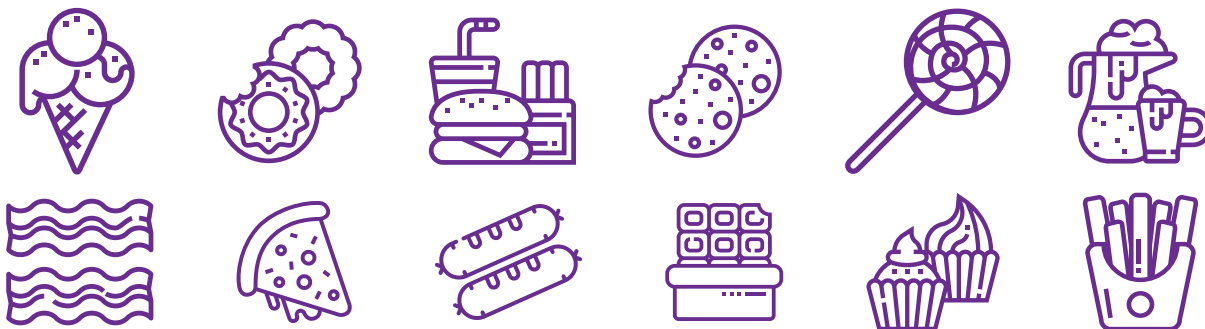
## DISCRETIONARY FOODS

*Discretionary foods can be thought of as ‘extra’ foods—they’re not needed to support good health and meet our nutrient needs.*




These foods include chips, lollies and cakes, but also alcohol, and other foods that are high in energy and low in nutrients, such as processed meats, butter, and foods with a large amount of added sugar and sodium.

These foods are associated with increased risk of obesity and chronic diseases. Although consuming discretionary foods can contribute to the overall enjoyment of eating, they should be eaten only occasionally, and in small amounts.

### Discretionary choices



# Australia's physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines

	Age group (years)			
	2-5 <sup>(a)</sup>	5-17 <sup>(b)</sup>	18-64	65 and over
 <b>Physical activity</b>	At least 180 minutes per day	At least 60 minutes per day	At least 150 minutes over 5 sessions per week	At least 30 minutes per day
 <b>Strength</b>	N/A	Muscle strengthening activities 3 times a week	Muscle strengthening activities 2 times a week	Incorporate muscle strengthening activities
 <b>Sedentary or screenbased activity</b>	Should not be restrained (for example, in a car seat or high chair) for more than 60 minutes at a time No more than 60 minutes sedentary screen time per day	No more than 120 minutes of screen use per day Break up long periods of sitting	Minimise and break up prolonged periods of sitting	Be as active as possible

(a) This group includes those aged 5 who are not yet in full-time schooling (for example, pre-schoolers).

(b) This group includes those aged 5 who are in full-time schooling.



# How do we eat across the life stages?

*The recommendations for the types of food we should eat and how much exercise we should do change over the life stages, and so do our eating and exercise habits. The recommendations can differ between males and females.*

The tables on the following pages show how what we eat compares with the recommendations as we age.

## MALES

**The 5 food groups:** From the age of 14, based on average intake, males do not eat the recommended number of serves of any of the 5 food groups

Whether males eat the recommended serves of each of the 5 food groups													
Age	2-3	4-8	9-13	14-18	19-30	31-50	51-70	71 and over					
Vegetables	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Fruit	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Grains	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Meat	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Dairy	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
			Grains (9-11)	Meat	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy
			Grains (12-13)	Meat									
			Meat	×									
			Dairy	×									

**Discretionary food:** Around one-third of males' energy comes from discretionary food, with boys aged 14-18 eating the largest share within their diets. The broad recommendation is to limit intake.

Energy from discretionary food as a proportion (%) of total energy intake									
Age	2-3	4-8	9-13	14-18	19-30	31-50	51-70	71 and over	
%	29	39	39	41	36	37	35	36	

**Added sugars:** Boys aged 14–18 consume the largest amount of added sugars within their diets—around 20 teaspoons of added sugars each day. The broad recommendation is to limit intake.

Number of teaspoons of added sugar consumed each day								
Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over
	8 tsp	12 tsp	16 tsp	20 tsp	18 tsp	15 tsp	11 tsp	11 tsp

**Saturated and trans fats:** Males of all ages, on average, get between 12 and 14% of their energy from saturated and trans fats. This is more than the recommendation (for those aged 14 and over) for these types of fats to make up less than 10% of total energy.

Energy from saturated and trans fats as a proportion (%) of total energy intake								
Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over
	14	14	14	13	12	12	12	12

**Sodium: Across the life stages, males consume up to 3.8 times more sodium than the maximum their bodies need**

Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over
	3.8 times	3.7 times	3.3 times	3.4 times	3.4 times	3.2 times	2.7 times	2.4 times

**Calcium:** From the age of 9, calcium intake reduces substantially—7 in 10 adolescents (14–18 years) and 9 in 10 men aged 71 years and over do not meet the recommendation.

Proportion (%) of males who do not consume the recommended amount of calcium								
Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over
%	0.7	11	46 (9–11) 67 (12–13)	71	44	43	63	90

Males of all age groups generally get enough iron, folate, iodine, vitamin D and vitamin B12. Across the age groups, males also meet, or are close to meeting, the recommended amount of fibre.

**Physical activity:** More than 4 in 5 boys aged 9–18, and at least 2 in 5 men do not do the amount of exercise recommended for good health.

Proportion (%) of males who do not meet the exercise recommendations								
Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over
%	28	54	82	83	43	53	59	75

**Overweight and obesity:** Rates generally increase with age. More than 4 in 5 men aged 51–70 are overweight or obese.

Proportion (%) of males who are overweight or obese								
Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over
%	24	20	32	33	55	73	81	76

# FEMALES

**The 5 food groups:** From the age of 14, based on average intake, females do not eat the recommended number of serves of any of the 5 food groups (with the exception of grain foods for those aged 71 and over).

Whether females eat the recommended serves of each of the 5 food groups													
Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over					
	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables
	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit	Fruit
	Grains	Grains	Grains	Grains	Grains	Grains	Grains	Grains	Grains	Grains	Grains	Grains	Grains
	Meat	Meat	Meat	Meat	Meat	Meat	Meat	Meat	Meat	Meat	Meat	Meat	Meat
	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy	Dairy
			(9–11)	(12–13)									

**Discretionary food:** Around one-third of females' energy comes from discretionary food, with girls aged 14–18 eating the largest share within their diets. The broad recommendation is to limit intake.

Energy from discretionary food as a proportion (%) of total energy intake									
Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over	
	32	36	40	41	35	33	31	32	

**Added sugars:** Girls aged 14–18 consume the largest amount of added sugars within their diets—around 16 teaspoons of added sugars each day. The broad recommendation is to limit intake.

Number of teaspoons of added sugar consumed each day									
Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over	
	8 tsp	10 tsp	15 tsp	15 tsp	13 tsp	10 tsp	9 tsp	8 tsp	

**Saturated and trans fats:** Females of all ages, on average, get between 12 and 14% of their energy from saturated and trans fats. This is more than the recommendation (for those aged 14 and over) for these types of fats to make up less than 10% of total energy.

Energy from saturated and trans fats as a proportion (%) of total energy intake									
Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over	
%	14	13	14	14	13	12	12	12	

**Sodium: Across the life stages, females consume up to 3.6 times more sodium than the maximum their bodies need**

Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over
	3.6 times	3.1 times	2.8 times	2.6 times	2.5 times	2.3 times	2.1 times	1.9 times

**Calcium:** From the age of 9, calcium intake reduces substantially—more than 9 in 10 adolescents (14–18 years) and women aged 51 years and over do not meet the recommendation.

**Proportion (%) of females who do not consume the recommended amount of calcium**

Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over
%	2.4	21	54 (9–11) 84 (12–13)	90	71	67	91	94

**Iron:** Around 2 in 5 adolescents (14–18 years) and women aged 19–50 do not get enough iron in their diets.

**Proportion (%) of females who do not consume enough iron**

Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over
%	15	11	11	40	38	38	5.0	6.7

Females of all age groups generally get enough folate, iodine, vitamin D and vitamin B12. Across the age groups, females also meet, or are close to meeting, the recommended amount of fibre.

**Physical activity:** More than 4 in 5 girls aged 9–18, around half of women aged 19–50, and more than 3 in 5 women aged 51 and over do not do the amount of exercise recommended for good health.

**Proportion (%) of females who do not meet the exercise recommendations**

Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over
%	22	60	85	85	48	54	62	80

**Overweight and obesity:** Rates generally increase with age. Around 2 in 3 women aged 51 and over are overweight or obese.

**Proportion (%) of females who are overweight or obese**

Age	2–3	4–8	9–13	14–18	19–30	31–50	51–70	71 and over
%	18	25	26	28	38	56	67	67

# TODDLERS

How well are children aged 2–3 meeting the Guidelines?

## EATING HABITS



**1** in 4  
do not do  
enough exercise

### ■ GENERALLY EAT ENOUGH

Fruits, dairy products & alternatives, calcium, folate, iodine

### ■ DON'T EAT ENOUGH

Vegetables, grain foods, meat & alternatives

### ■ EAT TOO MUCH

Sodium, saturated & trans fats, added sugars

### MAIN TYPES OF DISCRETIONARY FOODS

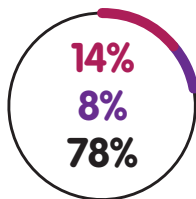
Sweet biscuits, cakes and muffins, chocolate, savoury snack foods, fried potato products, pastries



## ENERGY INTAKE

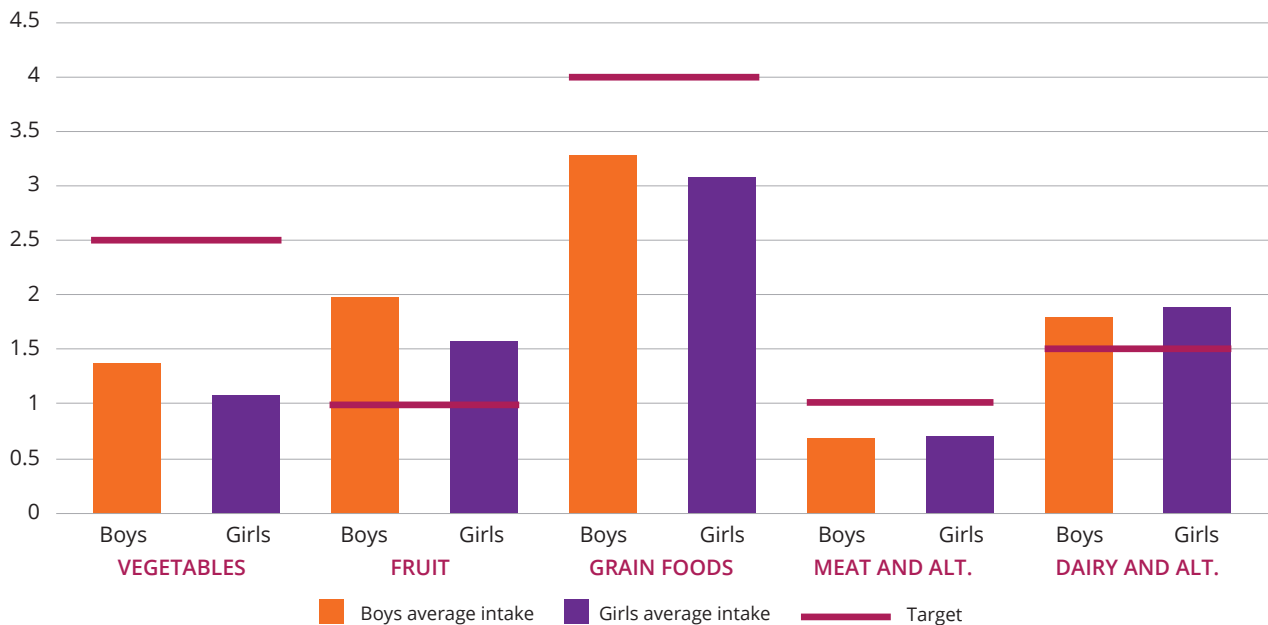


**30%** from discretionary foods.  
**70%** from 'non-discretionary' foods.



**14%** from saturated and trans fats.  
**8%** from added sugars.  
**78%** from other macronutrients.

**Average intake of serves of the 5 food groups, compared with the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommendations, for boys and girls aged 2-3, 2011-12**



# YOUNG CHILDREN

How well are children aged 4–8 meeting the Guidelines?

## EATING HABITS



### ■ GENERALLY EAT ENOUGH

Fruits, grain foods (for boys), calcium, folate, iron, iodine

### ■ DON'T EAT ENOUGH

Vegetables, grain foods (for girls), meat & alternatives, dairy products & alternatives

### ■ EAT TOO MUCH

Sodium, saturated & trans fats, added sugars

more than  
**99%**  
do not eat enough veggies



**1 in 5** girls have inadequate calcium intakes



**1 in 10** girls have inadequate iron intakes

### MAIN TYPES OF DISCRETIONARY FOODS

Cakes & muffins, sweet biscuits, pastries, savoury snack foods, ice cream, sausages



**3 in 5**  
do not do enough exercise

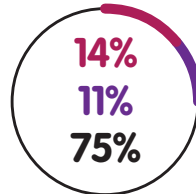




## ENERGY INTAKE

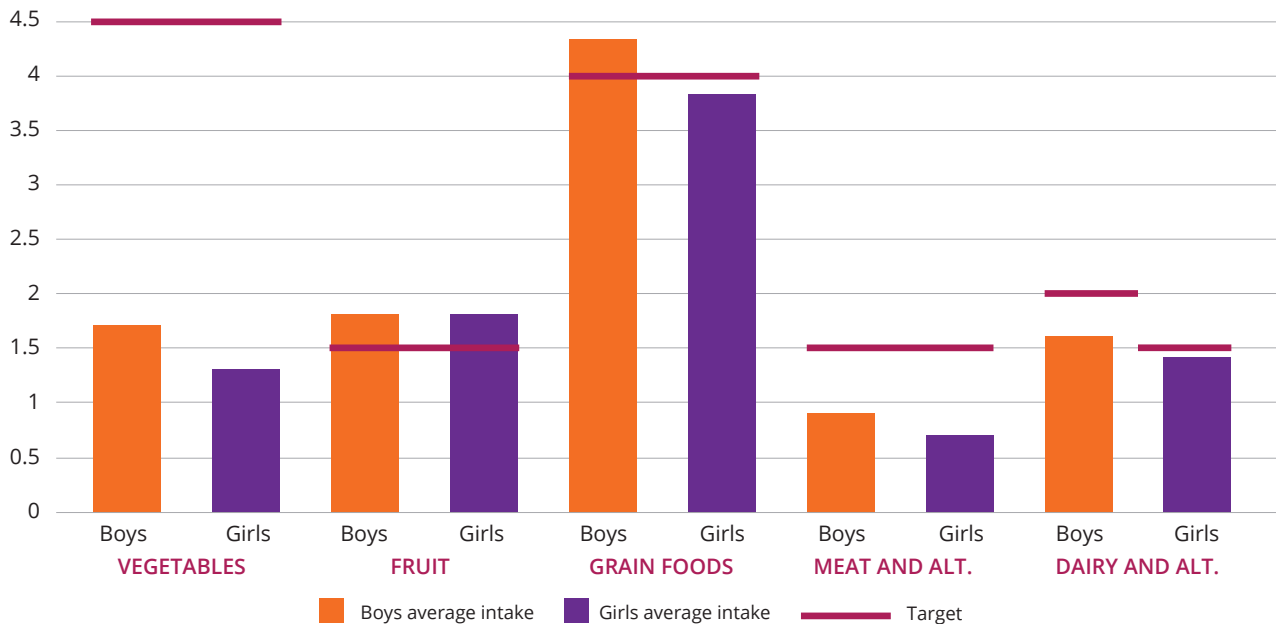


**38%** from discretionary foods.  
**62%** from 'non-discretionary' foods.



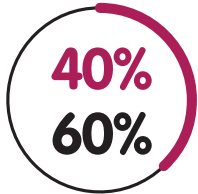
**14%** from saturated and trans fats.  
**11%** from added sugars.  
**75%** from other macronutrients.

**Average intake of serves of the 5 food groups, compared with the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommendations, for boys and girls aged 4–8, 2011–12**

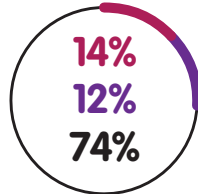




## ENERGY INTAKE

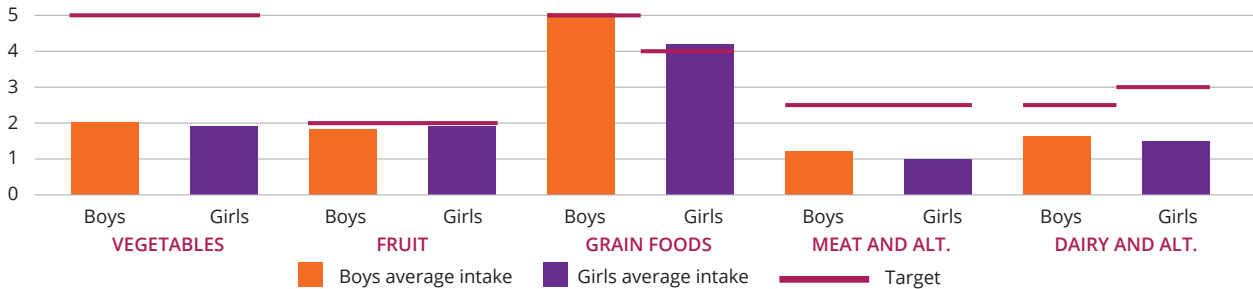


**40%** from discretionary foods.  
**60%** from 'non-discretionary' foods.

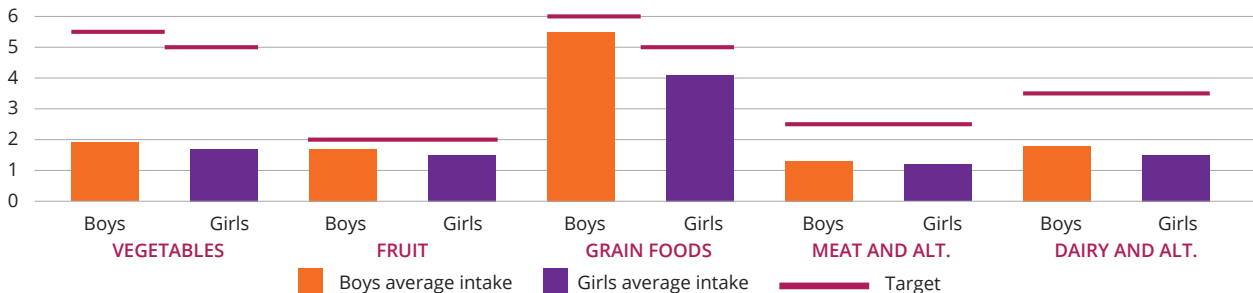


**14%** from saturated and trans fats.  
**12%** from added sugars.  
**74%** from other macronutrients.

### Average intake of serves of the 5 food groups, compared with the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommendations, for boys and girls aged 9-11, 2011-12



### Average intake of serves of the 5 food groups, compared with the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommendations, for boys and girls aged 12-13, 2011-12



# TEENS

How well are adolescents aged 14–18 meeting the Guidelines?

## EATING HABITS



### ■ GENERALLY EAT ENOUGH

Folate, iodine

### ■ DON'T EAT ENOUGH

Vegetables, fruits, grain foods, meat & alternatives, dairy & alternatives, fibre

### ■ EAT TOO MUCH

Sodium, saturated & trans fats, added sugars

more than  
**99%**  
do not eat enough veggies



**9 in 10** girls have inadequate calcium intakes



**4 in 10** girls have inadequate iron intakes

### MAIN TYPES OF DISCRETIONARY FOODS

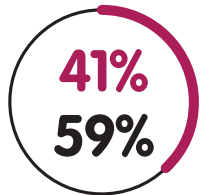
Soft drinks, cakes & muffins, fried potato products, sweet biscuits, pastries, savoury snack foods, chocolate



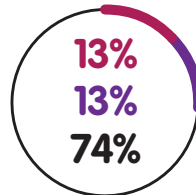
**4 in 5**  
do not do enough exercise



## ENERGY INTAKE

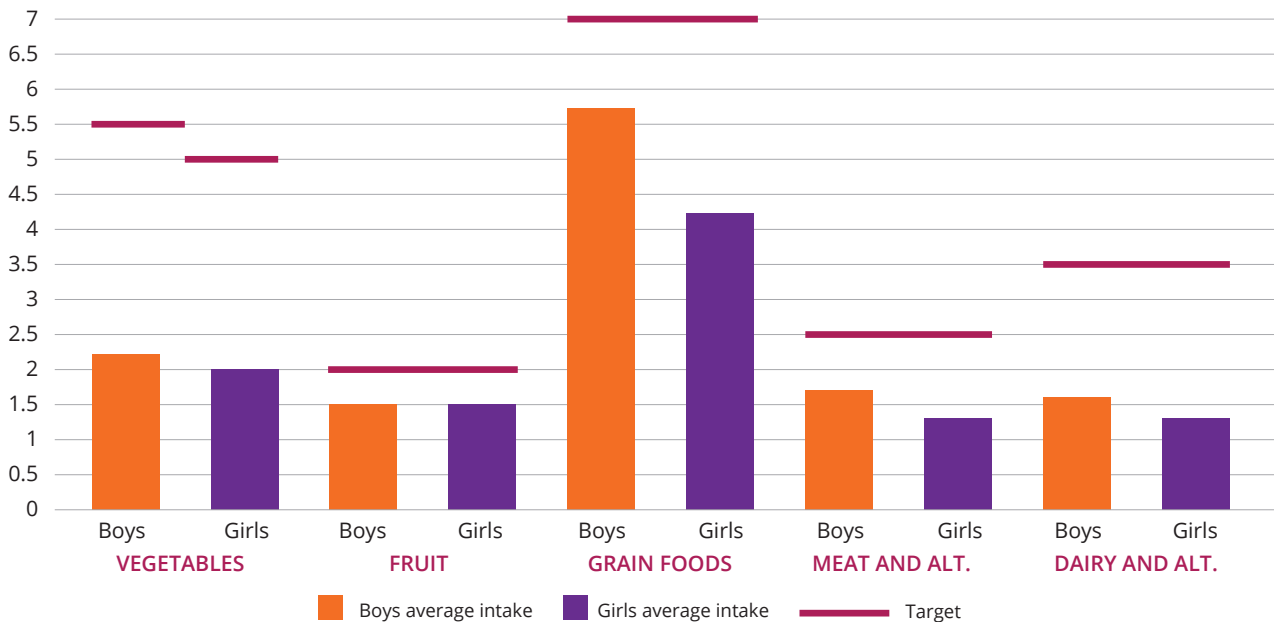


**41%** from discretionary foods.  
**59%** from 'non-discretionary' foods.



**13%** from saturated and trans fats.  
**13%** from added sugars.  
**74%** from other macronutrients.

**Average intake of serves of the 5 food groups, compared with the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommendations, for adolescent boys and girls aged 14–18, 2011–12**



# ADULTS

How well are adults aged 19–50 meeting the Guidelines?

## EATING HABITS



### ■ GENERALLY EAT ENOUGH

Iron, folate, iodine

### ■ DON'T EAT ENOUGH

Vegetables, fruits, grain foods, meat & alternatives, dairy & alternatives, fibre

### ■ EAT TOO MUCH

Sodium, saturated & trans fats, added sugars

# 97%

do not eat enough veggies

inadequate calcium intakes



inadequate iron intakes



### MAIN TYPES OF DISCRETIONARY FOODS

Alcoholic drinks, soft drinks, cakes & muffins, fried potato products, pastries



1 in 2

do not do enough exercise



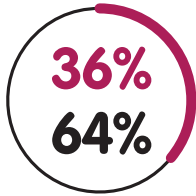
AGED 19–30



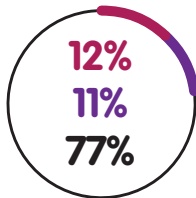
AGED 31–50

## ENERGY INTAKE

AGED 19–30



**36%** from discretionary foods.  
**64%** from 'non-discretionary' foods.

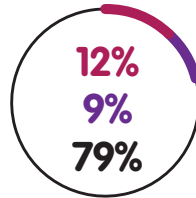


**12%** from saturated and trans fats.  
**11%** from added sugars.  
**77%** from other macronutrients.

AGED 31–50



**35%** from discretionary foods.  
**65%** from 'non-discretionary' foods.



**12%** from saturated and trans fats.  
**9%** from added sugars.  
**79%** from other macronutrients.

**Average intake of serves of the 5 food groups, compared with the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommendations, for men and women aged 19–50, 2011–12**



# OLDER ADULTS

How well are adults aged 51–70 meeting the Guidelines?

## EATING HABITS



### ■ GENERALLY EAT ENOUGH

Iron, folate, iodine

### ■ DON'T EAT ENOUGH

Vegetables, fruits, grain foods, meat & alternatives, dairy & alternatives, fibre

### ■ EAT TOO MUCH

Sodium, saturated & trans fats, added sugars

# 94%

do not eat enough veggies



**9 in 10** women have inadequate calcium intakes



**6 in 10** men have inadequate calcium intakes



**3 in 5**

do not do enough exercise

### MAIN TYPES OF DISCRETIONARY FOODS

Alcoholic drinks, cakes & muffins, sweet biscuits, pastries, chocolate

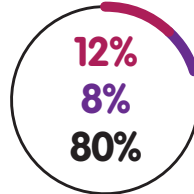




## ENERGY INTAKE

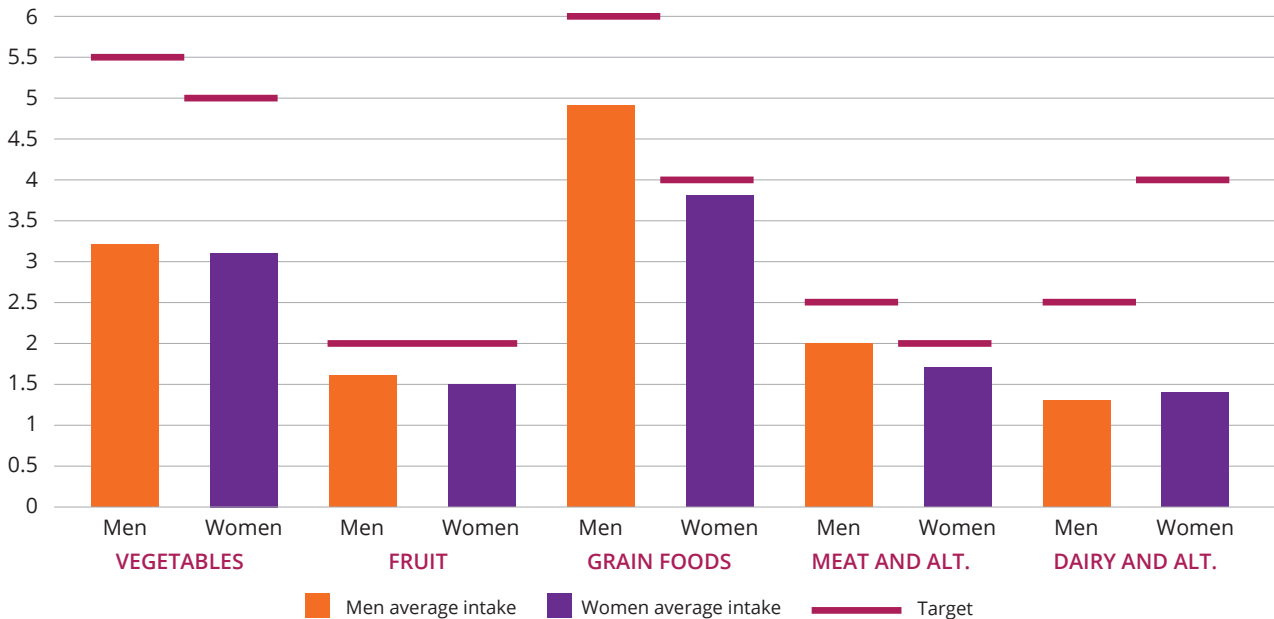


**33%** from discretionary foods.  
**67%** from 'non-discretionary' foods.



**12%** from saturated and trans fats.  
**8%** from added sugars.  
**80%** from other macronutrients.

**Average intake of serves of the 5 food groups, compared with the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommendations, for men and women aged 51-70, 2011-12**



# SENIORS

How well are adults aged 71 and over meeting the Guidelines?

## EATING HABITS



### ■ GENERALLY EAT ENOUGH

Iron, folate, iodine, grain foods (women)

### ■ DON'T EAT ENOUGH

Vegetables, fruits, grain foods (men), meat & alternatives, dairy & alternatives, fibre

### ■ EAT TOO MUCH

Sodium, saturated & trans fats, added sugars

more than  
**99%**

do not eat enough veggies



**9 in 10** people have inadequate calcium intakes



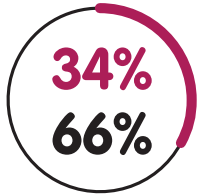
**4 in 5** do not do enough exercise

### MAIN TYPES OF DISCRETIONARY FOODS

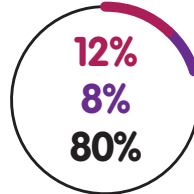
Alcoholic drinks, cakes & muffins, sweet biscuits, pastries



## ENERGY INTAKE

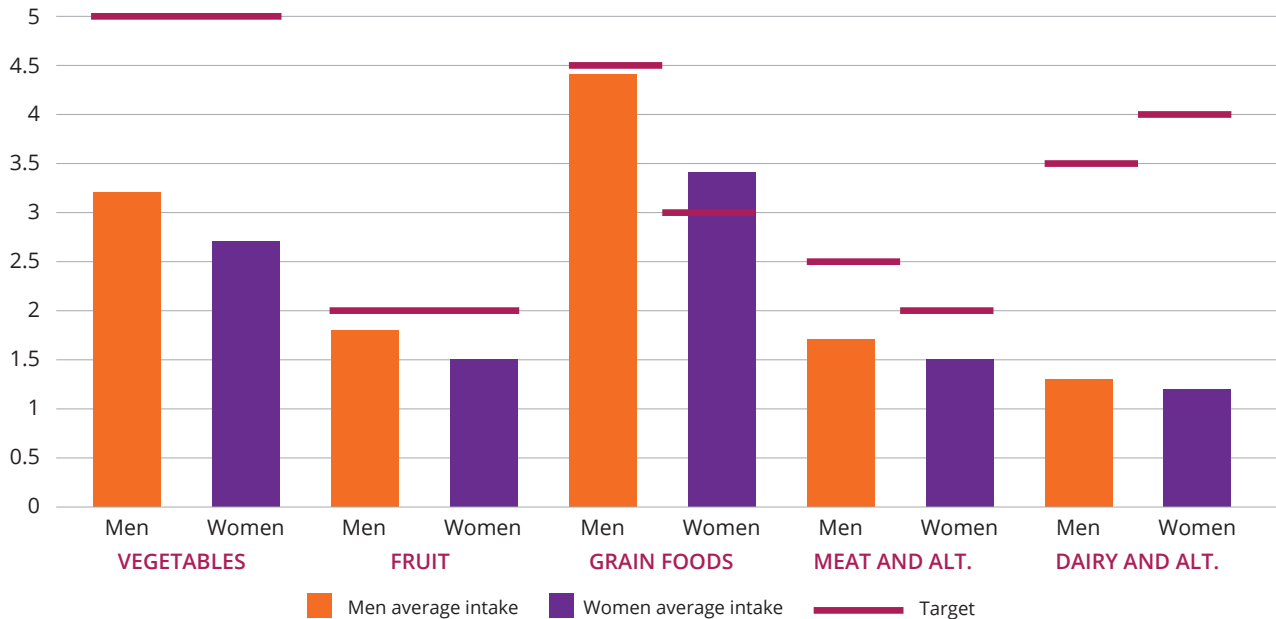


**34%** from discretionary foods.  
**66%** from 'non-discretionary' foods.



**12%** from saturated and trans fats.  
**8%** from added sugars.  
**80%** from other macronutrients.

### Average intake of serves of the 5 food groups, compared with the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommendations, for men and women aged 71 and over, 2011-12



# How do our diets vary across population groups?

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AND NON-INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS














Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians have similar diets overall. However, there are some differences between particular age groups:

- Indigenous adults aged 19–50 and 71 and over eat less fruit, vegetables and dairy products and alternatives compared with non-Indigenous adults. Indigenous adults aged 19–50 also consume less grain foods.
- Indigenous women aged 19–30 and Indigenous adults aged 31–50 get more of their energy from discretionary foods compared with non-Indigenous adults.
- Indigenous adults aged 19–30 and 31–50 have higher intakes of added sugars and lower intakes of fibre.
- Indigenous children aged 4–8 and Indigenous boys aged 9–13 do more exercise than non-Indigenous children.
- Non-Indigenous adults aged 19–30 and 31–50 do more exercise than Indigenous adults.

### Remoteness area

People living in *Major cities* generally consume more grain foods and meat and alternatives, and less added sugars, than their counterparts in more remote areas.

People in less remote areas are also more likely to meet the physical activity guidelines, and are less likely to be overweight or obese, than those in remote areas. These overall differences in activity levels are due to the differences among males, as activity levels are similar among females irrespective of where they live.

	 Major cities	 Inner regional	 Outer regional/Remote
 Vegetables (serves/day)	2.7	2.7	2.6
 Fruit (serves/day)	1.6	1.5	1.4
 Grain foods (serves/day)	4.6	4.2*	4.3*
 Meat and alternatives (serves/day)	1.8	1.6*	1.7
 Dairy products and alternatives (serves/day)	1.5	1.5	1.6
 Added sugars	12 tsp	15 tsp*	13 tsp*
 Saturated and trans fats (% of energy)	12	13*	13*
 Sodium (mg/day)	2,381	2,475	2,468
 Fibre (g/day)	22	22	21
 Physical activity <sup>(a)</sup> (%)	50	43*	40*
 Overweight and obesity (%)	53	57	61*

\* Significantly different compared with *Major cities*

a) Sufficient levels of physical activity for the population aged 18–64, which is classified as meeting at least 150 minutes a week over 5 sessions.












## Socioeconomic groups

People in the highest socioeconomic groups generally eat food that is closer to meeting the Australian guidelines and is better for health than people in the lowest socioeconomic groups.

People in the highest socioeconomic groups eat more fruit, grain foods, meat and alternatives, dairy products and alternatives and fibre, and fewer added sugars than people in the lowest socioeconomic groups. They are also more likely to follow the physical activity guidelines.

These favourable diet and activity patterns are reflected in lower rates of overweight and obesity for people in the highest socioeconomic groups, for both males and females.



		1—lowest	2	3	4	5—highest
	Vegetables (serves/day)	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.8
	Fruit (serves/day)	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.7*	1.8*
	Grain foods (serves/day)	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.8*
	Meat and alternatives (serves/day)	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.8*	1.8*
	Dairy products and alternatives (serves/day)	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6*
	Added sugars (g/day)	13 tsp	13 tsp	13 tsp	12 tsp	11 tsp*
	Saturated and trans fats (% of energy)	13	12	13	12	12
	Sodium (mg/day)	2,441	2,334	2,424	2,411	2,448
	Fibre (g/day)	21	22	22	23*	24*
	Physical activity <sup>(a)</sup> (%)	37	43	44*	52*	60*
	Overweight and obesity (%)	59	56	56	53*	50*

\* Significantly different to the lowest socioeconomic group

a) Sufficient levels of physical activity for the population aged 18–64, which is classified as meeting at least 150 minutes a week over 5 sessions.

# How have our diets changed over time?

*Much of the information in this booklet paints a negative picture of the quality of Australians' diets.*

But there have been some positive changes between 1995 and 2011–12. These include a decrease in the contribution of sugar and fat to energy intake, while we are getting more of our energy from starch and protein.

However, people aged 51 and over are now getting a greater proportion of their energy intake from alcohol than they did in 1995.

People aged up to 50 are consuming less discretionary food than in 1995, while consumption remains similar for those aged 51–70 and has increased for people aged 71 and over. Despite this, current intake of discretionary food is still lower for those aged 51 and over, than for younger people.

Children are eating more grain food and meat and alternatives than they did in 1995, and similar numbers of serves of the other food groups. Adults are eating fewer vegetables but more meat and alternatives than they did in 1995.



## Change in contribution of macronutrients to energy intake, 1995 to 2011-12

Macronutrient	Age group (years)							
	2-3	4-8	9-13	14-18	19-30	31-50	51-70	71+
Protein	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Total fat	↓	↓	↓	~	↓	↓	~	~
Saturated fat	↓	↓	↓	~	↓	↓	↓	~
Starch	↑	↑	↑	~	~	↓	↓	↓
Total sugars	↓	↓	↓	↓	~	~	↓	~
Added sugars	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	~	~	~
Alcohol	..	..	..	~	~	~	↑	↑

↑ = intake has gone up ↓ = intake has gone down ~ = no change recorded .. = not applicable

## Change in food group intake (as serves per 10,000 kJ of energy), 1995 to 2011-12

Food group	Age group (years)							
	2-3	4-8	9-11	12-13	14-18	19-50	51-70	71+
Vegetables	~	~	~	~	~	↓	↓	↓
Fruit	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
Grain foods	↑	↑	~	↑	~	~	~	~
Meat and alternatives	↑	↑	~	~	↑	↑	↑	↑
Dairy products and alternatives	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
Discretionary food	↓	↓	~	↑	~	↑	~	↑

↑ = intake has gone up ↓ = intake has gone down ~ = no change recorded .. = not applicable

# Food for thought...

*In Australia, we have a diverse and abundant supply of many foods that help make up a healthy diet.*

Despite this, Australians overall do not meet the national dietary and physical activity guidelines, contributing to high levels of overweight or obesity. Our preference for energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods begins as young as 2. This means that many of us do not establish good eating practices in childhood that we can continue into adulthood.

Dietary intakes are not uniform across Australia. People in higher socioeconomic groups generally have better diets than those in lower socioeconomic groups. Similarly, people living in cities generally have better diets those living in rural and remote areas.

It is clear that changes are needed to improve the nutritional quality of Australians' diets and that multiple areas require improvement, rather than a single food group, food type or nutrient.





All information and figures in this booklet are sourced from the  
AIHW report *Nutrition across the life stages*  
[www.aihw.gov.au/reports/food-nutrition/nutrition-across-the-life-stages](http://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/food-nutrition/nutrition-across-the-life-stages)

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