

2.23 Dietary behaviour

The dietary behaviour of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including fruit and vegetable consumption, type of milk consumed and salt intake

Data sources

Data for this measure come from the 2004–05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) and the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS).

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey

The 2004–05 NATSIHS collected information from 10,439 Indigenous Australians of all ages. This sample was considerably larger than the supplementary Indigenous samples in the 1995 and 2001 National Health Surveys. The survey was conducted in remote and non-remote areas of Australia and collected a range of information from Indigenous Australians. This included issues of health-related actions, health risk factors, health status, socioeconomic circumstances and women's health. The survey provides comparisons over time in the health of Indigenous Australians. It is planned to repeat the NATSIHS at 6-yearly intervals, with the next NATSIHS to be conducted in 2010–11. Selected non-Indigenous comparisons are available through the 2004–05 National Health Survey (NHS).

The questions on dietary behaviour in the NATSIHS are complex because respondents needed to understand and apply the inclusions/exclusions, understand the concept of a serve and assess their consumption levels accordingly, and think about their total consumption in what would constitute an average day. Data for all those aged 12–14 years, and 68% of those aged 15–17 years, were provided by a proxy, usually a parent. As a result, the data reflect the parent's knowledge of the child's consumption; this is likely to be less accurate for usual consumption of fruit items than for the type of milk and usual consumption of vegetable items collected in non-remote areas.

In remote areas, the questions on vegetable and fruit intake were amended to whether usually ate fruit and/or vegetables each day. Therefore it is not possible to produce indicators based on usual serves for remote areas from the 2004–05 NATSIHS, or for certain states and territories that have output restrictions for non-remote data items from the NATSIHS (South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory).

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducted the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) between August 2002 and April 2003. The 2008 NATSISS was conducted between August 2008 and April 2009. The survey provides information about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations of Australia for a wide range of areas of social concern including health, education, culture and labour force participation. The 2008 NATSISS included for the first time children aged under 15. The NATSISS will be conducted every six years, with the next survey planned for 2014.

The 2008 NATSISS collected information by personal interview from 13,300 Indigenous Australians across all states and territories of Australia, including those living in remote areas. The sample covered persons aged 15 years and over who are usual residents in selected private dwellings. It collected information on a wide range of subjects including family and culture, health, education, employment, income, financial stress, housing, and law and justice.

Data analyses

Current guidelines according to the Australian guide to healthy eating recommend daily intake of fruit and vegetables for children and adolescents as seen in Table 2.23.1. It is advised that children should eat a variety of fruit and vegetables daily: the quantities are dependent on their age, appetite, the composition of the remainder of their diet, and activity levels.

Table 2.23.1: Fruit and vegetable servings from the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating suggested for children and adolescents, 2011

	Fruit (serves)	Vegetable (serves)
4–7 years	1–2	2–4
8–11 years	1–2	3–5
12–18 years	3–4	4–9

Note: One serve of fruit is 150 grams; one serve of vegetables is 75 grams

Source: Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

Previous regulations stipulated that children should aim to consume a set number of serves of fruit or vegetables, the most widely quoted figures being two or more serves of fruit and five or more serves of vegetables daily regardless of their age and dietary composition.

Because of the variety of recommendations currently available, fruit and vegetable consumption as reported in this indicator is presented in terms of the number of serves consumed daily, allowing the reader to interpret the results according to whichever fruit and vegetable consumption guidelines they are familiar with.

Dietary habits

- In 2004–05, the majority of Indigenous people aged 12 years and over reported eating vegetables (95%) and/or fruit (87%) daily.
- After adjusting for differences in age structure between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, Indigenous persons aged 12 years and over were twice as likely to report no usual daily fruit consumption and seven times as likely to report no usual daily vegetable consumption as non-Indigenous persons of the same age (Table 2.23.2).
- Around 22% of Indigenous people aged 15 years and over reported they sometimes added salt after cooking and a further 44% reported they usually added salt after cooking (Table 2.23.3).
- Approximately 71% of Indigenous people aged 12 years and over reported they usually drank whole (full-cream) milk and 17% reported drinking low or reduced fat milk (Table 2.23.3).

- After adjusting for differences in age structure, Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over were twice as likely to report no usual daily fruit intake, no usual daily vegetable intake and whole milk as the usual type of milk consumed as non-Indigenous Australians (Table 2.23.3).

Dietary habits by age group

- In non-remote areas, Indigenous Australians aged 35–44 years were most likely to report a daily intake of five or more serves of vegetables (13%) and Indigenous Australians aged 55 years and over were most likely to report a daily fruit intake of two serves or more (Table 2.23.3).
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous people aged 12–14 years were more likely to report drinking whole milk (88% and 69%, respectively) than those in the older age groups (Table 2.23.3).
- The proportion of Indigenous people who reported usually adding salt after cooking increased with age (Table 2.23.3).

Table 2.23.2: Age standardised proportion^(a) of persons aged 12 years and over reporting no usual daily vegetable consumption and no usual daily fruit consumption, Australia 2004–05

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Ratio
	Per cent		
Does not eat vegetables daily	5.3	0.8	6.8
Does not eat fruit daily	13.2	6.6	2.0

(a) Proportions are directly age standardised to the 2001 Australian standard population.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS and 2004–05 NHS.

Table 2.23.3: Selected dietary habits, by Indigenous status and age, persons aged 12 years and over in non-remote areas, 2004-05

	12-14		15-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55 and over		Total non-age-stand.		Total age-standardised		Ratio
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	
Per cent																	
Usual daily intake of vegetables																	
Doesn't usually eat vegetables	1.7	1.2	2.3	1.5	1.3	0.9	1.3	0.7	1.8	0.5	1.7	0.4	1.7	0.8	1.7	0.8	2.0
1 or less serves	20.4	22.6	24.2	27.4	26.6	23.6	21.2	20.2	20.8	18.0	16.0	13.4	22.6	19.8	21.6	20.4	1.1
2 serves	18.6	21.5	20.5	23.7	18.7	23.6	16.6	20.8	13.9	18.0	15.1	15.2	17.9	19.7	17.0	20.2	0.8
3 serves	29.0	27.9	28.3	24.7	29.0	25.0	30.8	27.5	35.7	28.1	37.0	28.6	30.7	27.1	32.1	26.9	1.2
4 serves	18.4	17.7	16.3	14.2	15.5	16.3	17.4	17.8	16.5	19.0	18.8	23.6	16.8	18.8	17.0	18.3	0.9
5 serves	8.5	7.1	5.6	5.6	4.7	6.9	9.7	8.0	9.2	10.0	8.2	12.5	7.1	9.0	7.6	8.6	0.9
6 serves or more	3.4	2.0	2.7	2.9	4.2	3.6	3.0	4.8	2.1	6.5	3.2	6.2	3.1	4.8	3.1	4.7	0.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100.0	100.0	..
Usual daily intake of fruit																	
Doesn't usually eat fruit	5.4	4.7	14.2	9.6	12.6	8.4	12.0	7.8	12.0	6.2	6.5	3.4	11.5	6.6	11.0	6.9	1.6
1 or less serves	40.8	39.1	46.3	43.8	48.2	45.1	53.3	42.4	43.5	37.9	36.8	32.1	46.0	39.3	45.3	40.0	1.1
2 serves	30.0	29.8	23.6	24.1	23.7	25.6	22.8	26.6	19.0	28.9	27.9	30.3	24.0	27.6	23.9	27.3	0.9
3 serves	15.9	15.3	10.3	14.0	9.3	12.6	6.3	14.6	13.8	16.8	17.9	19.9	11.2	16.0	11.8	15.6	0.8
4 serves	5.6	6.3	2.9	4.6	3.9	5.3	3.2	4.9	8.0	6.0	6.9	8.2	4.5	6.1	5.0	5.9	0.9
5 serves	1.8	2.6	1.7	2.2	1.7	1.7	1.3	2.0	2.8	2.6	3.0	3.6	1.9	2.6	2.1	2.4	0.8
6 serves or more	0.6	2.2	1.0	1.8	0.7	1.4	1.1	1.6	1.0	1.7	1.1	2.4	0.9	1.8	1.0	1.8	0.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	6.6	100.0	100.0	..

(continued)

Table 2.23.3 (continued): Selected dietary habits, by Indigenous status and age, persons aged 12 years and over in non-remote areas, 2004–05

	12–14		15–24		25–34		35–44		45–54		55 and over		Total non-age-stand.		Total age-standardised		Ratio
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	
Per cent																	
Usual type of milk																	
Whole	88	69	81	55	76	49	73	48	68	37	58	35	76	45	71	45	1.6
Low/reduced fat	8	22	11	25	12	28	17	29	16	38	24	35	14	31	17	31	0.5
Skim	1 ^(b)	4	4	11	6	13	7	13	6	13	11	17	5	13	7	13	0.5
Soy	n.p.	n.p.	— ^(b)	3	2 ^(a)	4	n.p.	4	2 ^(b)	5	2 ^(a)	5	1	4	1	4	0.3
None of the above ^(c)	n.p.	n.p.	— ^(b)	1 ^(a)	— ^(a)	1	n.p.	1	3 ^(b)	1	1 ^(b)	1	1	1	1	1	0.7
<i>Total drinks milk</i>	98	98	97	95	96	96	98	95	96	94	95	94	97	95	96	95	1
Does not drink milk	2	2	3	5	3	4	2 ^(a)	5	4	6	5 ^(a)	6	3	5	4	5	0.7
Total^(d)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	..
Salt added after cooking																	
Never/rarely	..	n.a.	38	n.a.	35	n.a.	32	n.a.	25	n.a.	27	n.a.	33	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.
Sometimes	..	n.a.	24	n.a.	23	n.a.	18	n.a.	24	n.a.	21	n.a.	22	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.
Usually	..	n.a.	38	n.a.	42	n.a.	50	n.a.	51	n.a.	52	n.a.	44	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.
Total^(c)	..	n.a.	100	n.a.	100	n.a.	100	n.a.	100	n.a.	100	n.a.	100	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.

- (a) Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.
 (b) Estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use.
 (c) Includes evaporated or sweetened condensed milk.
 (d) Includes usual type of milk not known.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis 2004–05 NATSIHS and 2004–05 NHS.

Dietary habits by sex

- A higher proportion of Indigenous males aged 12 years and over reported not eating fruit daily than Indigenous females (16% compared with 12%) (Table 2.23.4).
- Indigenous females aged 15 years and over were nearly twice as likely as Indigenous males to report drinking skim milk as the usual type of milk consumed (7% compared with 4%) (Table 2.23.5).
- There was little difference in the proportion of Indigenous males and females reporting eating vegetables daily or adding salt after cooking.

Table 2.23.4: Selected dietary habits, by sex, Indigenous persons aged 12 years and over, 2004–05

Dietary behaviours	Males	Females	Persons
	Per cent		
Vegetable intake			
Eats vegetables daily	93	95	95
Does not eat vegetables daily	6	5	5
Total^(a)	100	100	100
Fruit intake			
Eats fruit daily	84	88	86
Does not eat fruit daily	16	12	14
Total^(a)	100	100	100
Usual type of milk consumed			
Whole	81	76	79
Low/reduced fat	10	12	11
Skim	3	6	5
Soy	1	1	1
None of the above ^(b)	1	1	1
<i>Total drinks milk</i>	96	96	96
Does not drink milk	4	4	4
Total^(c)	100	100	100
Salt added after cooking			
Never/rarely	27	32	30
Sometimes	25	24	25
Usually	47	44	46
Total^(d)	100	100	100

(a) Includes whether eats fruit/vegetables not known.

(b) Includes evaporated or sweetened condensed milk.

(c) Includes usual type of milk not known.

(d) Includes frequency salt is added after cooking not known.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS.

Table 2.23.5: Selected dietary habits, by Indigenous status and sex, persons aged 15 years and over in non-remote areas, 2004–05

	Males					Females					Persons				
	Non-age-standardised		Age-standardised		Ratio	Non-age-standardised		Age-standardised		Ratio	Non-age-standardised		Age-standardised		Ratio
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.		Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.		Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	
%	%	%	%		%	%	%	%		%	%	%	%		
Usual daily intake of vegetables															
Does not eat vegetables	2	1	2	1	2.2	1	1	1	1	1.9	2	1	2	1	2.1
1 serve or less	25	23	25	24	1.0	21	16	19	17	1.1	23	20	22	20	1.1
2–4 serves	64	64	65	64	1.0	67	67	67	67	1.0	65	66	66	65	1.0
5 serves or more	9	12	9	12	0.7	11	16	12	15	0.8	10	14	11	14	0.8
Total	100	100	100	100	1.0	100	100	100	100	1.0	100	100	100	100	1.0
Usual daily intake of fruit															
Does not eat fruit	14	9	14	9	1.5	11	5	9	5	1.9	12	7	11	7	1.6
1 serve or less	47	44	47	44	1.1	46	35	44	36	1.2	47	39	46	40	1.1
2–4 serves	36	44	36	43	0.9	41	55	43	54	0.8	38	50	40	49	0.8
5 serves or more	3	4	3	4	0.8	3	5	3	5	0.7	3	4	3	4	0.7
Total	100	100	100	100	1.0	100	100	100	100	1.0	100	100	100	100	1.0

(continued)

Table 2.23.5 (continued): Selected dietary habits, by Indigenous status and sex, persons aged 15 years and over in non-remote areas, 2004–05

	Males					Females					Persons				
	Non age-standardised		Age-standardised		Ratio	Non age-standardised		Age-standardised		Ratio	Non age-standardised		Age-standardised		Ratio
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.		Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.		Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	
%	%	%	%		%	%	%	%		%	%	%	%		
Usual type of milk															
Low/reduced fat	13	29	15	28	0.5	16	34	18	34	0.5	15	32	16	31	0.5
Skim	4	10	6	10	0.6	7	17	8	17	0.5	6	14	7	13	0.5
Whole	77	51	74	52	1.4	71	37	68	37	1.8	74	44	71	45	1.6
Soy	1	4	1	4	0.4	1	5	2	5	0.3	1	5	2	4	0.3
None of the above ^(a)	1	1	1	1	1.4	0	1	0	1	0.3	1	1	1	1	0.7
<i>Total drinks milk</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>1.0</i>
Does not drink milk	3	6	3	5	0.6	4	5	4	5	0.8	3	5	4	5	0.7
Total^(b)	100	100	100	100	1.0	100	100	100	100	1.0	100	100	100	100	1.0
Salt added after cooking															
Never/rarely	31	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.	36	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.	33	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.
Sometimes	22	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.	22	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.	22	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.
Usually	47	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.	42	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.	44	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.
Total^(c)	100	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.	100	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.	100	n.a.	..	n.a.	n.a.

(a) Includes evaporated or sweetened condensed milk.

(b) Includes usual type of milk not known.

(c) Includes frequency salt added after cooking not known.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS and 2004–05 NHS.

Dietary habits by state/territory

The dietary habits of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are presented in Tables 2.23.6a and 2.23.6b below. Note that data on the number of daily serves of vegetables and fruit are presented for New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia only because of output restrictions for these data items.

- In 2004–05, the proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over who reported eating five serves or more of vegetables daily was 8% in New South Wales, 9% in Queensland, 12% in Victoria and 14% in Western Australia (Table 2.23.6a).
- The proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over reporting eating two or more serves of fruit a day was 41% in New South Wales and Queensland, 43% in Victoria and 45% in Western Australia.
- The proportion of Indigenous persons reporting drinking whole milk as the usual type of milk consumed was highest in Queensland (80%) and lowest in Victoria (62%).
- The proportion of Indigenous persons reporting usually adding salt after cooking was highest in Western Australia (57%) and lowest in Victoria (35%) and Tasmania/the Australian Capital Territory (37%).
- Non-Indigenous Australians were more likely to report eating five serves or more of vegetables than Indigenous Australians in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia. Rates were similar for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in Victoria (Table 2.23.6b).
- Non-Indigenous Australians were more likely to report eating five serves of fruit or more than Indigenous Australians in three of the four jurisdictions for which data are presented (New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland) (Table 2.23.6b).
- Indigenous Australians were more likely to report whole milk as the usual type of milk consumed in the four jurisdictions for which data are presented.

Table 2.23.6a: Selected dietary habits, by state/territory, Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over, non-remote areas, 2004–05

Dietary behaviours	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas/ACT	NT	Aust.
	Per cent							
Vegetable intake								
Does not eat vegetables	1	3	2	2	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	2
1 serve or less	24	22	19	29	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	23
2–4 serves	67	62	70	55	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	66
5 serves or more	8	12	9	14	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	10
Total^(a)	100	100	100	100	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	100
Fruit intake								
Does not eat fruit	13	11	13	9	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	12
1 serve or less	46	45	46	46	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	47
2–4 serves	39	40	38	39	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	38
5 serves or more	2	3	3	6	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	3
Total^(a)	100	100	100	100	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	100
Usual type of milk consumed								
Whole	75	62	80	68	69	64	75	74
Low/reduced fat	13	22	10	22	15	21	14	15
Skim	6	6	6	3	9	9	6	6
Other ^(b)	1	6	2	1	2	2	2	2
<i>Total drinks milk</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>94</i>
Does not drink milk	4	4	2	5	5	4	4	4
Total^(c)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Salt added after cooking								
Never/rarely	34	33	31	23	36	45	29	33
Sometimes	20	31	22	19	23	18	27	22
Usually	45	35	47	57	41	37	44	45
Total^(d)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

n.p. Not published because of output restrictions for non-remote data items for these states and territories.

(a) Includes whether eats fruit/vegetables not known.

(b) Includes soy milk and evaporated or sweetened condensed milk.

(c) Includes usual type of milk not known.

(d) Includes frequency salt is added after cooking not known.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS.

Table 2.23.6b: Selected dietary habits, by Indigenous status, persons aged 15 years and over, non-remote areas, NSW, Vic, Qld and WA, 2004–05

Dietary behaviours	NSW			Vic			Qld			WA		
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Ratio
	%	%		%	%		%	%		%	%	
Vegetable intake												
Does not eat vegetables	1	1	1.2	2	1	4.5	2	1	3.2	1	1	2.2
1 serve or less	22	22	1.0	22	21	1.0	18	19	1.0	28	16	1.8
2–4 serves	68	65	1.0	62	63	1.0	71	66	1.1	56	66	0.8
5 serves or more	9	11	0.8	14	15	0.9	9	14	0.7	15	18	0.8
Total^(a)	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..
Fruit intake												
Does not eat fruit	12	7	1.6	10	7	1.5	13	8	1.6	9	6	1.5
1 serve or less	44	40	1.1	45	39	1.2	45	41	1.1	46	39	1.2
2–4 serves	42	49	0.9	42	50	0.8	39	47	0.8	38	50	0.8
5 serves or more	2	4	0.6	3	5	0.7	3	4	0.7	6	5	1.3
Total^(a)	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..
Usual type of milk consumed												
Whole	74	47	1.6	59	41	1.4	76	48	1.6	64	41	1.6
Low/reduced fat	14	27	0.5	23	35	0.7	12	30	0.4	26	39	0.7
Skim	7	14	0.5	6	13	0.5	7	12	0.6	3	10	0.3
Other ^(b)	2	6	0.2	8	6	1.3	2	5	0.4	1	4	0.3
<i>Total drinks milk</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>3.0</i>
Does not drink milk	4	5	0.7	4	5	0.8	3	5	0.5	5	5	0.9
Total^(c)	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..

(continued)

Table 2.23.6b (continued): Selected dietary habits, by Indigenous status, persons aged 15 years and over, non-remote areas, NSW, Vic, Qld and WA, 2004–05

- (a) Includes whether eats fruit/vegetables not known.
- (b) Includes soy milk and evaporated or sweetened condensed milk.
- (c) Includes usual type of milk not known.

Note: Data for South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory are not presented because of output restrictions for non-remote data items for these states and territories.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS and 2004–05 NHS.

Dietary habits by remoteness

- Fruit and vegetables may be less accessible to Indigenous people in remote areas. In remote areas, 20% of Indigenous Australians aged 12 years and over reported no usual daily fruit intake compared with 12% in non-remote areas. The disparity was even greater for vegetables, where 15% of Indigenous people in remote areas reported no usual daily intake compared with 2% in non-remote areas (Table 2.23.7).
- Indigenous people in remote areas were more likely to report drinking whole milk (87%) than those in non-remote areas (76%).
- Indigenous people in remote areas were more likely than those in non-remote areas to report sometimes or usually adding salt after cooking (83% compared with 66%) (Table 2.23.7).

Table 2.23.7: Selected dietary habits, by remoteness, Indigenous persons aged 12 years and over, 2004–05

Dietary behaviours	Remote	Non-remote	Total
	Per cent		
Vegetable intake			
Eats vegetables daily	84	98	95
Does not eat vegetables daily	15	2	5
Total^(a)	100	100	100
Fruit intake			
Eats fruit daily	80	88	86
Does not eat fruit daily	20	12	14
Total^(a)	100	100	100
Usual type of milk consumed			
Whole	87	76	79
Low/reduced fat	4	14	11
Skim	2	5	5
Soy	— ^(b)	1	1
None of the above ^(c)	1 ^(b)	1 ^(b)	1 ^(b)
<i>Total drinks milk</i>	95	97	96
Does not drink milk	5	3	4
Total^(d)	100	100	100
Salt added after cooking			
Never/rarely	16	35	30
Sometimes	30	23	25
Usually	53	43	46
Total^(e)	100	100	100

(a) Includes whether eats fruit/vegetables not known.

(b) Estimate is subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes.

(c) Includes evaporated or sweetened condensed milk.

(d) Includes usual type of milk not known.

(e) Includes frequency salt is added after cooking not known.

Source: ABS 2006a.

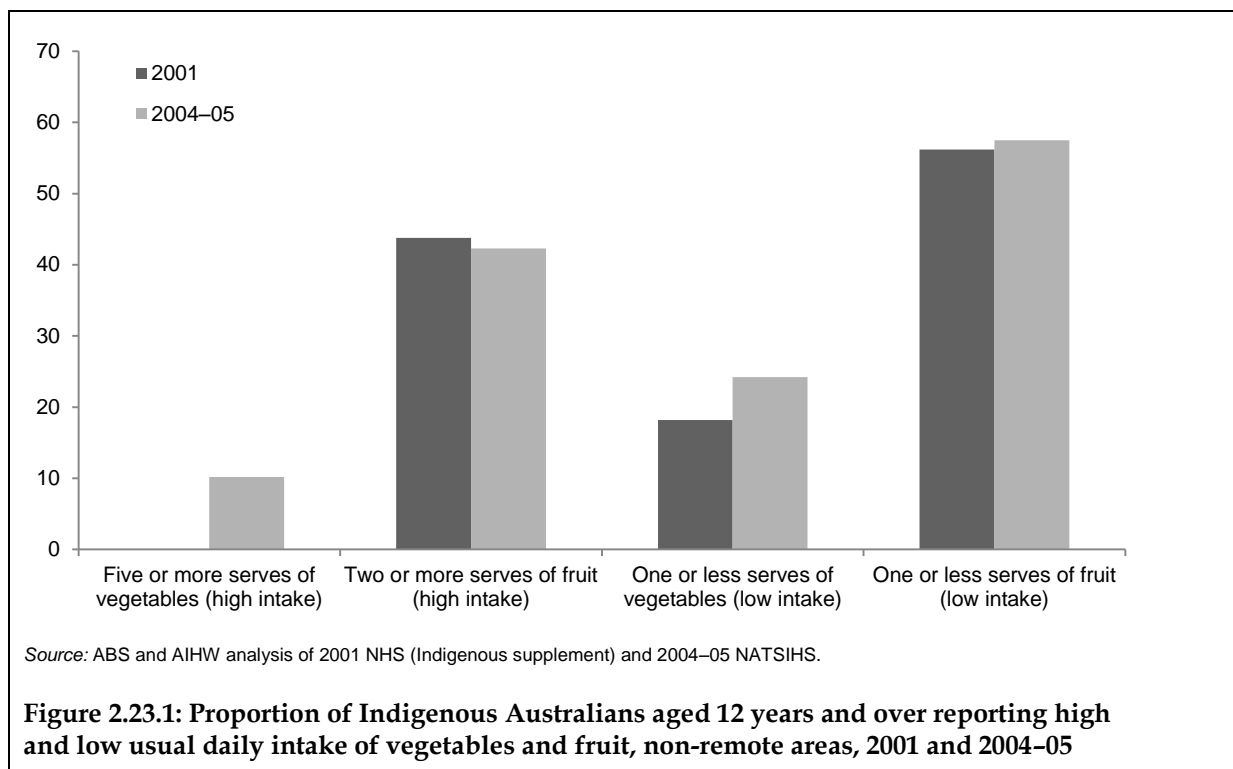
Time series analyses

- In 2004–05, approximately 24% of Indigenous Australians aged 12 years and over reported a low usual daily vegetable intake (one or less serves per day) compared with 18% in 2001 (ABS 2002). The proportion reporting a low usual daily fruit intake (one or less serves per day) was similar in 2001 and 2004–05 (56% and 58%, respectively) (Table 2.23.8; Figure 2.23.1).

Table 2.23.8: Proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 12 years and over reporting high and low usual daily intake of vegetables and fruit, non-remote areas, 2001 and 2004–05

	2001	2004–05
	Per cent	
Five or more serves of vegetables (high intake)	n.a.	10.2
Two or more serves of fruit (high intake)	43.8	42.3
One or less serves of vegetables (low intake)	18.2	24.2
One or less serves of fruit (low intake)	56.2	57.5

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2001 NHS (Indigenous supplement) and 2004–05 NATSIHS.



Fruit and vegetable intake by selected health and population characteristics

- In 2004-05, a higher proportion of Indigenous Australians with fair/poor health reported no usual daily vegetable intake and/or no usual daily fruit intake than those with excellent/very good health status (Table 2.23.9).
- Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over in the lowest (1st) quintile of household income were much more likely than those in the highest quintile to report no usual daily fruit and/or vegetable intake.
- Indigenous Australians who reported Year 9 or below as their highest year of school completed and did not have a non-school qualification were much more likely to report no usual daily fruit and/or vegetable intake than those whose highest year of school completed was Year 12 and who had a non-school qualification.
- A higher proportion of Indigenous people who were renting reported no usual daily vegetable intake (7%) and no usual daily fruit intake (16%) than those who were home owners (1% and 11% respectively).

Table 2.23.9: Dietary risk behaviours, by selected health and population characteristics, Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over, 2004–05

	No usual daily vegetable intake	No usual daily fruit intake
	Per cent	
Self-assessed health status		
Excellent/very good	4.7	12.9
Good	6.3	16.6
Fair/poor	6.5	16.2
Household income		
1st quintile (lowest)	7.8	16.8
5th quintile (highest)	0.2	5.8
Financial stress—unable to raise \$2,000 within a week for something important	2.6	10.4
Highest year of school completed		
Year 12	3.8	9.4
Year 9 or below	7.7	16.9
Whether has non-school qualification		
Has a non-school qualification	3.3	13.3
Does not have a non-school qualification	7.2	16.1
Employment		
Employed	5.0	14.3
Unemployed	4.0	14.4
Not in the labour force	6.8	15.6
Housing		
Owner	0.5	11.1
Renter	7.4	16.4
Stressors in last 12 months^(a)		
Serious illness or disability	6.2	14.6
Other stressors	5.7	14.7
<i>Total experienced stressors</i>	5.8	14.7
No stressors	4.6	15.3
All persons aged 15 years and over	5.7	14.9
Total number persons aged 15 years and over	16,681	43,610

(a) Persons aged 18 years and over.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS.

Fruit and vegetable intake by selected chronic diseases and health risk factors

- In 2004–05 Indigenous Australians suffering from cancer were more likely to consume vegetables and fruit on a daily basis than Indigenous Australians without cancer. In comparison, Indigenous Australians without diabetes were more likely to consume vegetables and fruit on a daily basis than Indigenous Australians with diabetes (Table 2.23.10).
- Indigenous Australians who reported high levels of physical activity were most likely to consume vegetables on a daily basis, however Indigenous Australians who reported moderate levels of physical activity were most likely to consume fruit on a daily basis.
- Indigenous Australians in the overweight/obese weight ranges were more likely to have a daily intake of vegetables and fruit than those not within the overweight / obese weight ranges.
- Indigenous Australians aged 18 years and over with reported short-term risky/high-risk alcohol consumption were less likely to eat fruit (22% reporting no usual daily fruit intake compared with 13%) and vegetables (8% reporting no usual daily vegetable intake compared to 4%) on a daily basis than those not reporting risky alcohol consumption.
- Indigenous Australians aged 18 years and over who reported being current smokers were more likely to report no usual daily fruit intake (19% compared with 10%) and no usual daily vegetable intake (6% compared with 5%) than Indigenous persons who were ex-smokers or who had never smoked.

Table 2.23.10: Dietary risk behaviours, by selected chronic diseases and other risk factors, Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over, 2004–05

	No usual daily vegetable intake	No usual daily fruit intake
	Per cent	
Circulatory problems		
Yes	4.7	13.3
No	5.9	15.2
Has diabetes		
Yes	8.5	13.1
No	5.4	15.0
Has cancer		
Yes	1.7	10.3
No	5.7	14.9
Physical activity^(a)		
Low/sedentary	1.7	13.4
Moderate	1.8	7.3
High	0.5	10.1
Overweight/obesity		
Yes	4.8	14.8
No	7.2	15.1
Long-term risky/high-risk alcohol consumption^(b)		
Yes	5.9	19.6
No	5.5	13.9
Short-term risky/high-risk alcohol consumption^(b)		
Yes	7.8	21.5
No	3.6	13.1
Smoking status^(b)		
Current	6.4	19.3
Ex-smoker	4.9	10.0
Never smoked	4.6	9.9
All persons aged 15 years and over	5.7	14.9
Total number persons aged 15 years and over	16,681	43,610

(a) Non-remote areas only.

(b) Persons aged 18 years and over.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS.

Whether ran out of food in the 12 months before the survey

- In 2004–05, approximately 24% of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over reported they ran out of food in the 12 months before the survey compared with 5% of non-Indigenous Australians (Table 2.23.11).
- Approximately 8% of Indigenous people reported they went without food when they couldn't afford to buy more compared with 2% of non-Indigenous people.
- Indigenous Australians aged 15–24, 25–34 and 35–44 years were most likely to report they went without food when they couldn't afford to buy more.
- The proportion of Indigenous Australians who reported they ran out of food in the previous 12 months was much higher in the Northern Territory (45%) than the other states and territories (between 18% and 29%).
- Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over living in remote areas were more likely to report having run out of food in the last 12 months (36%) than those in non-remote areas (20%).

Table 2.23.11: Proportion of persons aged 15 years and over who ran out of food and couldn't afford to buy more at some time over the previous 12 months,^(a) by Indigenous status 2004–05

	Ran out of food when couldn't afford to buy any more									Did not run out of food		
	Went without food			Did not go without food			Total ran out of food					
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio
	Per cent						Per cent					
Sex												
Males	7	2	3.7	14	3	5.7	21	4	4.9	79	96	0.8
Females	8	2	4.1	18	3	5.7	27	5	5.1	73	95	0.8
Persons	8	2	4.0	17	3	5.7	24	5	5.0	76	95	0.8
Age												
15–24	8	4	2.1	17	5	3.2	24	9	2.7	76	91	0.8
25–34	8	3	3.0	19	4	4.5	27	7	4.0	73	93	0.8
35–44	9	2	4.4	17	4	4.6	26	6	4.5	74	94	0.8
45–54	7	2	3.3	14	2	6.3	21	4	4.9	79	96	0.8
55+	5	1	8.7	12	1	13.2	17	2	11.4	83	98	0.8
State/territory												
NSW	7	2	3.9	11	2	4.8	18	4	4.4	82	96	0.9
Victoria	10	2	5.1	12	3	3.9	21	5	4.4	79	95	0.8
Qld	7	2	3.3	13	4	3.8	21	6	3.6	79	94	0.8
WA	8	2	4.3	18	3	5.7	26	5	5.2	74	95	0.8
SA	9	2	4.4	20	3	6.7	29	5	5.7	71	95	0.8
Tas/ACT	9	2	4.1	10	4	2.7	19	6	3.2	81	94	0.9
NT	7	—	—	38	3	14.7	45	3	17.4	55	97	0.6
Australia	8	2	4.0	17	3	5.7	24	5	5.0	76	95	0.8
Remoteness area												
Remote	7	1	5.1	28	4	8.1	36	5	7.2	64	95	0.7
Non – remote	8	2	4.0	12	3	4.1	20	5	4.1	80	95	0.8
Total no.	19,676	283,628	..	42,674	425,252	..	62,350	708,880	..	195,913	1.4 mill	..

(a) Information for some persons aged 15–17 years was provided by a parent or guardian.

Source: AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS.

Dietary behaviour of children aged 4 to 14 years

Fruit and vegetable consumption

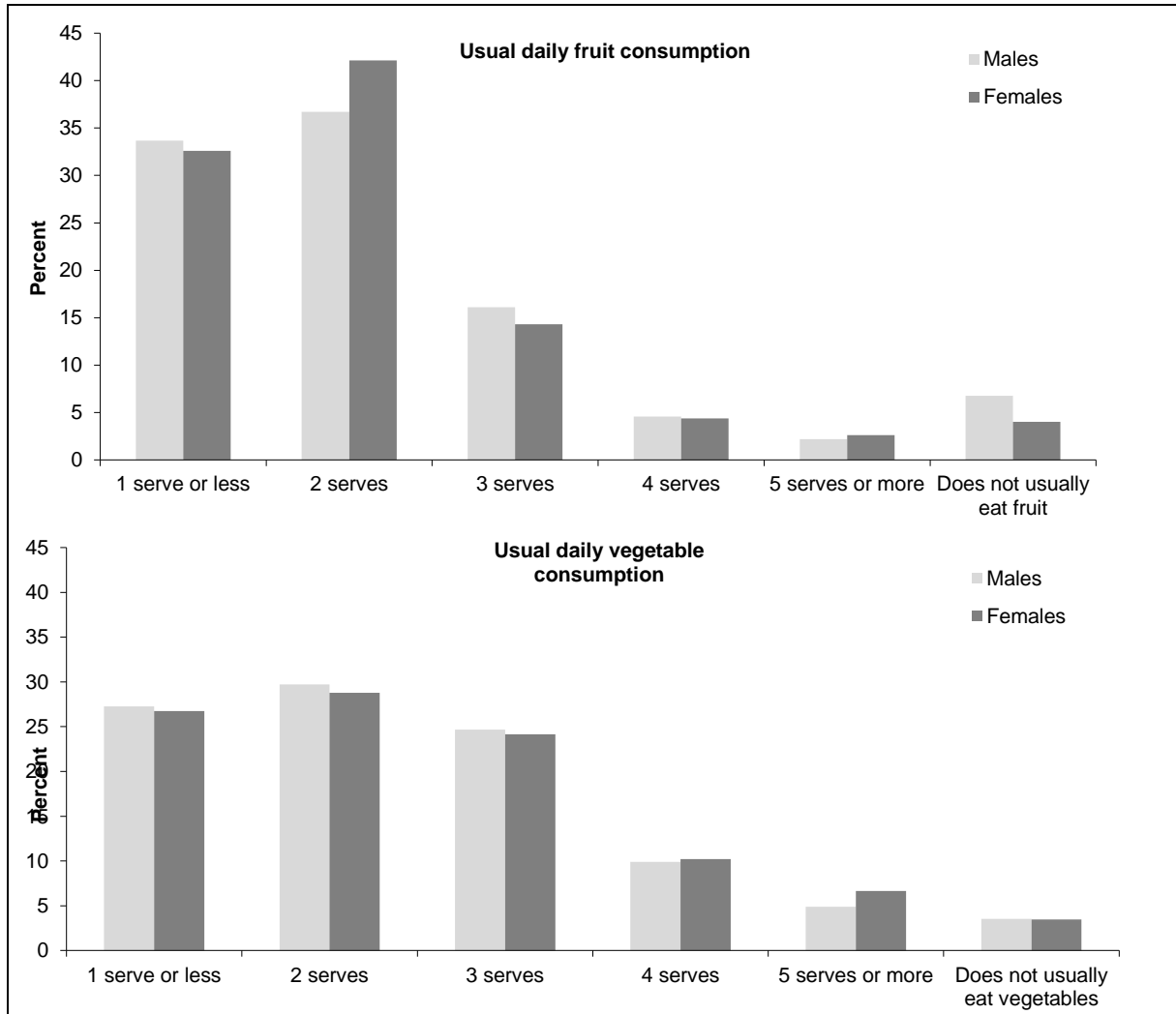
- In 2008, approximately 5% of Indigenous children aged 4 to 14 years did not usually eat fruit and 4% did not usually eat vegetables (Table 2.23.12; Figure 2.23.2). Approximately 33% had one serve or less of fruit per day and approximately 27% had one serve or less of vegetables per day.

Table 2.23.12: Number of serves of fruit and vegetables consumed daily, Indigenous children aged 4 to 14 years, by sex, non-remote areas, 2008

	Males	Females	Persons
	Per cent		
Number of serves of fruit child usually eats in a day			
1 serve or less	33.7	32.6	33.1
2 serves	36.7	42.1	39.4
3 serves	16.1	14.3	15.2
4 serves	4.6	4.4	4.5
5 serves or more	2.2	2.6	2.4
Does not usually eat fruit	6.8	4.0	5.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number^(a)	53,960	51,469	105,429
Number of serves of vegetables child usually eats in a day			
1 serve or less	27.3	26.7	27.0
2 serves	29.7	28.8	29.3
3 serves	24.7	24.2	24.4
4 serves	9.9	10.2	10.0
5 serves or more	4.9	6.6	5.7
Does not usually eat vegetables	3.5	3.5	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number^(a)	54,041	51,738	105,779

(a) Excludes not known responses.

Source: AIHW analyses of 2008 NATSISS.



Source: AIHW analysis of 2008 NATSISS.

Figure 2.23.2: Usual daily fruit and vegetable consumption for Indigenous children aged 4 to 14 years, by number of serves of fruit and vegetables usually consumed daily, by sex, non-remote areas, 2008

Fruit and vegetable consumption by state/territory

- In 2008, data on the number of serves of fruit and vegetables consumed daily by Indigenous children aged 4 to 14 years was available from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. Of these, Victoria had the highest proportion of children with high daily intake of fruit (65%) and vegetables (7.1%) and Western Australia had the lowest (58% and 3.8%, respectively) (Table 2.23.13; Figure 2.23.3).

Table 2.23.13: Number of serves of fruit and vegetables consumed daily, Indigenous children aged 4 to 14 years, by state/territory^(a), non-remote areas, 2008

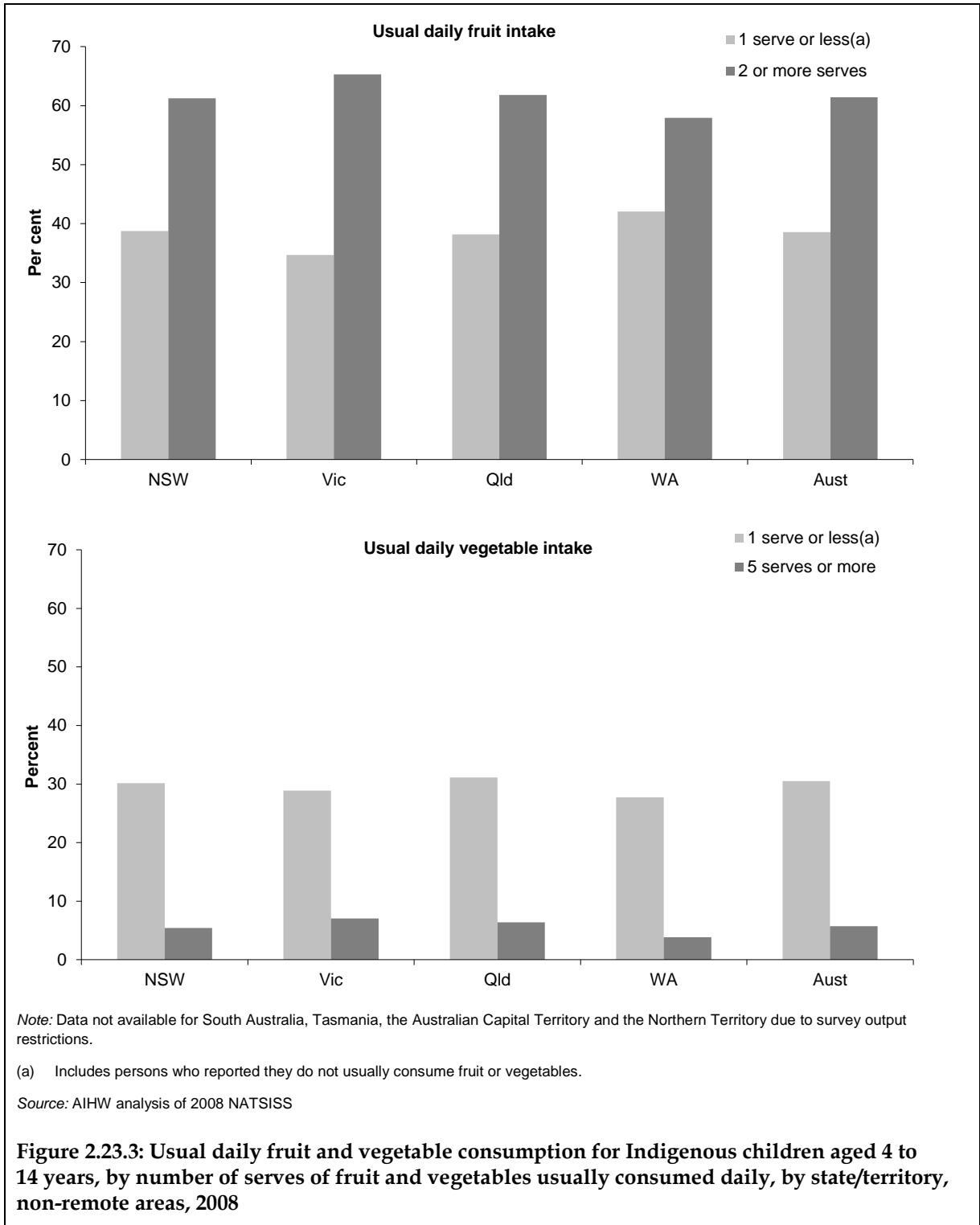
	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	Australia
	Per cent				
Number of serves of fruit child usually eats in a day					
1 serve or less (low intake) ^(b)	38.7	34.7	38.2	42.1	38.6
2 or more serves (high intake)	61.3	65.3	61.8	57.9	61.4
Total number^(c)	40,109	8,997	30,337	10,672	105,429
Number of serves of vegetables child usually eats in a day					
1 serve or less (low intake) ^(b)	30.2	28.9	31.1	27.7	30.5
5 serves or more (high intake)	5.4	7.1	6.4	3.8	5.7
Total number^(c)	40,298	8,997	30,362	10,745	105,779

(a) Data not available for South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory due to survey output restrictions.

(b) Includes persons who reported they do not usually consume fruit or vegetables

(c) Excludes not known responses.

Source: AIHW analyses of 2008 NATSISS.



Additional information

Research on traditional and non-traditional diets of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Available research suggests that traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hunter-gatherers consumed a varied diet in which animal foods were a major component. Their diet was not high in fat because the wild animal meat consumed was extremely lean. A wide variety of uncultivated plant foods were eaten, which were generally high in fibre and contained carbohydrates that digested slowly. Traditional foods generally had a low energy density and high level of nutrients. The low-energy intake of the diet and the labour intensity of procuring food would have protected Indigenous people against obesity and associated health conditions such as diabetes (O'Dea 1991).

Today, many Indigenous people consume a diet high in fat, sugar and energy-dense foods. Poverty and food insecurity have been recognised as important factors in the poor-quality diet of many Indigenous people, especially those living in remote communities. Food prices are generally higher in remote areas for many types of food. The price of basic healthy foods is at least 50% higher in remote locations than in *Major cities* (NHMRC 2003). Foods of better nutritional choice, including fresh fruits and vegetables, are often expensive because of transport and overhead costs, or only minimally available (Shannon 2002). Remote stores, on average, sell half the fruit and one-quarter of the vegetable intake per capita of that of the Australian community overall (Lee et al. 1994). In comparison, takeaway and convenience food items, which are often energy dense and high in fat or sugar, are less affected by issues of cost and availability.

There is evidence to suggest that people living in poverty tend to maximise calories per dollar spent on food. Energy-dense foods rich in fats, refined starches and sugars represent the lowest cost options, whereas healthy diets based on lean meats, whole grains and fresh vegetables and fruits are more costly (Drewnowski & Spencer 2004). A study that analysed the store turnover of food supplies at six remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory found a very high consumption of energy, fat and sugar, with fatty meats making the largest contribution to fat intake. In comparison to national consumption data, intake of sweetened carbonated beverages and sugar was much higher in these communities. The proportion of energy derived from refined sugars was approximately four times the recommended intake. The diets of people living in these communities had high levels of animal fat (mainly from poor-quality meat) and very low levels of fruit and vegetables (Lee et al. 1994).

A study that looked at the therapeutic potential of a traditional lifestyle and diet involved a trial of a group of 10 middle-aged Indigenous people with diabetes who were overweight or obese in the West Kimberly region of Western Australia. The group reverted to a traditional hunter-gatherer diet for 7 weeks. After this short time living off their traditional lands, the people involved in the study lost an average of 7 kg and the metabolic abnormalities of diabetes and risk factors for heart disease (blood pressure, blood cholesterol, triglycerides) all improved markedly (O'Dea 1984).

Data quality issues

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey

The NATSIHS uses the standard Indigenous status question. The NATSIHS sample was specifically designed to select a representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. It has therefore overcome the problem inherent in most national surveys with small and unrepresentative Indigenous samples. As with other surveys, the NATSIHS is subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. Calculations of standard errors and significance testing help to identify the accuracy of the estimates and differences.

Information recorded in this survey is essentially 'as reported' by respondents. The ABS makes every effort to collect accurate information from respondents, particularly through careful questionnaire design, pre-testing of questionnaires, use of trained interviewers and assistance from Indigenous facilitators. Nevertheless, some responses may be affected by imperfect recall or individual interpretation of survey questions.

Non-Indigenous comparisons are available through the National Health Survey (NHS). The NHS was conducted in *Major cities* and *Inner and outer regional* and *Remote and Very remote areas*, but *Very remote* areas were excluded from the sample. Time series comparisons are available through the 1995 and 2001 National Health Survey.

In *Remote and very remote* communities there were some modifications to the NATSIHS content in order to accommodate language and cultural appropriateness in traditional communities and help respondents understand the concepts. Some questions were excluded and some reworded. Also, paper forms were used in communities in remote areas and computer-assisted interview (CAI) instruments were used in non-remote areas. The CAI process included built-in edit checks and sequencing.

Further information on NATSIHS data quality issues can be found in the NATSIHS 2004–05 publication (ABS 2006a).

Dietary behaviour data

The questions on dietary behaviour are complex as respondents needed to understand and apply the inclusions/exclusions, understand the concept of a serve and assess their consumption levels accordingly, and think about their total consumption in what would constitute an average day. Overall, it is considered that the indicators of vegetable and fruit intake in the non-remote component of the 2004–05 NATSIHS are of a lower quality than most other items from the survey, but are considered sufficiently reliable for the purposes of assessing broad intake levels for population groups, and for comparisons between population groups. Using the data for other purposes should be done with care. Data for all those aged 12–14 years, and 68% of those aged 15–17 years, were provided by a proxy, usually a parent. As a result, the data reflect the parent's knowledge of the child's consumption; this is likely to be less accurate for usual consumption of fruit items than for the type of milk and usual consumption of vegetables items collected in non-remote areas (ABS 2006b).

Picture prompt cards were used to help non-remote respondents understand the concept of a serve; one prompt card showed six examples of single serves of different vegetables and another card showed six single serves of fruit. If respondents had difficulty in reporting, interviewers were encouraged to prompt in terms of asking respondents about their usual consumption of vegetables and fruit at breakfast, lunch and dinner and for snacks. Remote respondents were asked whether they usually ate fruit and/or vegetables each day. In addition to products excluded in non-remote areas, fruit or vegetables considered to be bush tucker were also excluded.

In remote areas the questions on vegetable and fruit intake were amended to whether the respondents usually ate fruit and/or vegetables each day. Therefore it is not possible to produce indicators based on usual serves for remote areas from the 2004–05 NATSIHS.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey

The NATSISS is conducted in all states and territories and includes remote and non-remote areas. The 2008 sample was 13,300 persons in 6900 households, with a response rate of 82% of households. Up to three randomly selected Indigenous people were chosen from selected households to participate in the survey. Trained ABS interviewers conducted the survey using face-to-face interviews. In non-remote areas interviewers used a notebook computer to record responses, while in remote areas a paper questionnaire was used. Interviewers obtained the consent of a parent or guardian before interviewing those aged 15 to 17 years. Indigenous persons usually resident in non-private dwellings such as hotels, motels, hostels, hospitals, short-stay caravan parks, prisons and other correctional facilities were excluded.

The NATSISS uses the standard Indigenous status question. The NATSISS sample was specifically designed to select a representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Information recorded in this survey is 'as reported' by respondents, and therefore may differ from information available from other sources or collected using different methodologies.

Data on health related indicators have been age-standardised to the 2001 total Australian population to account for differences in the age structures of the states and territories and the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population.

Time series comparisons for the 2008 survey are available through the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey and the 2002 NATSISS. However not all data elements align across the three (1994, 2001 and 2008) NATSISS surveys, hence care is required when reviewing results across the three surveys. There are no strictly comparable non-Indigenous results available for the 2008 NATSISS because the latest General Social Survey (which has been used in the past to compare with Indigenous results from the NATSISS) was run in 2006, with the next being run in 2010. Data from other ABS surveys run in 2008 may, however, be used to obtain rough non-Indigenous comparisons for some data items. Where possible, the ABS has provided recommendations for non-Indigenous data comparisons these have been adopted in this report.

The 2008 NATSISS has a relatively large level of under-coverage when compared to other ABS surveys. There was also an increase in under-coverage compared to previous ABS Indigenous surveys. For example, the estimated under-coverage in the 2004-05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) was 42%. The overall under-coverage rate for the 2008 NATSISS is approximately 53% of the in-scope population at the national level. This rate varies across the states and territories (ABS 2010).

Further information on NATSISS data quality issues can be found in the 2008 NATSISS User's guide (ABS 2010).

List of symbols used in tables

n.a.	not available
–	rounded to zero (including null cells)
0	zero
..	not applicable
n.e.c.	not elsewhere classified
n.f.d.	not further defined
n.p.	not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

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