

# Simple steps to better health

Advice from  
Queensland's  
Chief Health Officer



# Simple steps to better health

- Choose healthy food and drinks.
- Say no to tobacco.
- Be active every day.
- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Be sun safe all year round.
- If you drink alcohol, keep at low risk levels.
- Detect cancer early.
- Manage your blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels.
- Reduce your risk of diabetes.

## Choose healthy food and drinks

The facts are:

- Healthy eating is a key to a longer enjoyable life.
- Good nutrition protects against diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease.
- Only 10% of adults eat enough vegetables for good health.
- Most people consume too much salt, saturated fat and sugar in their food and drinks.
- Breastfeeding babies exclusively for around the first 6 months provides all the nourishment they need.

### A guide to healthy eating

- Enjoy a variety of nutritious foods every day.
  - Eat plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruits.
  - Eat cereals including breads, rice, pasta and noodles - preferably wholegrain.
  - Include low fat milks, yoghurts, cheeses or alternatives such as calcium-enriched soy based products (low fat milk is not suitable for children under two years of age).
  - Include lean meat, fish, poultry, eggs or alternatives such as legumes.
  - Drink plenty of water.
- Take care to
  - limit saturated fat and moderate total fat intake
  - choose foods low in salt and don't add salt to your food
  - limit foods and drinks containing added sugars and don't add sugar to beverages such as tea and coffee.



### Breast is best

- Breastfeeding is the natural way to feed all infants to help them get the best start in life.
- Breast milk helps prevent many childhood illnesses as well as overweight, dental disease and chronic disease later in life.
- Feed babies only breast milk until around 6 months and continue to breast feed with healthy solid foods for at least 12 months.
- Introduce healthy solid food at around 6 months of age.



## Be active every day

The facts are:

- In Queensland, 1 in 2 adults and 2 in 3 children are active enough to benefit their health.
- Physical activity can reduce the rise of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, dementia and depression and help prevent unhealthy weight gain.

### How much physical activity is enough for good health?

- Children and young people need at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity each day.
- Adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity most days – this can be accumulated in a few shorter sessions of 10 to 15 minutes.
- If you need to lose weight you may need to be physically active for more than 30 minutes a day depending on your energy intake from food and drinks.
- Physical activity has many benefits beyond weight management.

### What can you do to be more active and improve your health?

- Sit less, move more.
- Walk briskly for at least 30 minutes every day.
- Walk whenever you can.
- Take the stairs instead of the lift or escalator.
- Park the car further away from your destination and walk the rest of the way.
- Children should not spend more than two hours a day using electronic media such as computers and TV for entertainment, particularly during daylight hours.



## If you drink alcohol, keep at low risk levels

### The facts are:

- There were about 27,000 hospitalisations due to alcohol in Queensland in 2006–2008, due mainly to alcoholism, liver cirrhosis, road traffic injury and some cancers.
- 1 in 5 young people drink at levels causing long term harm and enough to cause short term harm each week.
- Drinking less than 2 standard drinks a day reduces the lifetime risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury.

### Are you at risk?

**Yes**, if you have more than 2 standard drinks on any day.

**Yes**, if you have more than 4 standard drinks on any occasion.

**Yes**, your baby may be at risk if you consume any alcohol while you are pregnant, are planning a pregnancy or are breastfeeding.

**Yes**, if you consume any alcohol if you are under 18 years of age.

### What can you do?

For those who choose to drink, here are some tips to reduce your risk of alcohol-related harm:

- Make every second drink a non-alcoholic drink.
- Drink slowly, count your standard drinks.
- Choose drinks with low alcohol content such as light beer and wine.
- Eat before or while you are drinking.

Be aware that different types of alcohol drinks or container sizes have different amounts of alcohol. To help you know how much you are drinking, all alcohol beverages are labelled with the standard drinks amount.

A standard drink is:

- 2 Pots light beer: 2 x 285 mL (2.7%)
- Stubbie mid-strength beer: 375 mL (3.5%)
- Pot of full strength beer: 285 mL (4.9%)
- Small glass of wine: 100 mL (12%)
- Nip of spirits or liqueur: 30 mL (40%)

Each of these typical drinks is more than a standard drink:



1.8  
180ml  
Average restaurant  
serve of Wine  
12% Alc.Vol



1.5  
375ml  
Full Strength Beer  
4.9% Alc.Vol



1.5  
375ml  
Pre-mix Spirits  
5% Alc.Vol

## Detect cancer early

### The facts are:

- Cancer is a major cause of premature death. In 2007 in Queensland, 2,200 males and 1,519 females died from cancer before the age of 75 years which is 39% of premature deaths.
- One-third of all cancers can be prevented and early detection can greatly reduce the risk of premature death.



### Are you at risk?

Common risk factors for cancer are:

- tobacco smoking
- overweight and obesity
- physical inactivity
- risky alcohol consumption
- poor diet.

### What can you do?

- People turning 50, 55 or 65 years of age between 1 January 2008 and 31 December 2010 can take up the offer of free bowel cancer screening.
- Women should have:
  - a breastscan every two years - BreastScreen Queensland offers free screening for women over 50 years – call 13 20 50 for an appointment
  - a Pap smear to detect cervical cancer every two years for those aged 20 to 69 years – ask your doctor.
- Even if you have had the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, Pap smears are still important as the vaccine does not protect against all types of human papillomavirus.



# Achieve and maintain a healthy weight

**The facts are:**

- In Queensland, more than 1 in 2 adults and 1 in 4 children are overweight.
- The more overweight you are the higher your risk of serious diseases such as type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart attack and high blood pressure.

## Is your weight putting you at increased risk of serious disease?

**Yes,** if your waist measurement is more than 80cm for women or 94cm for men.

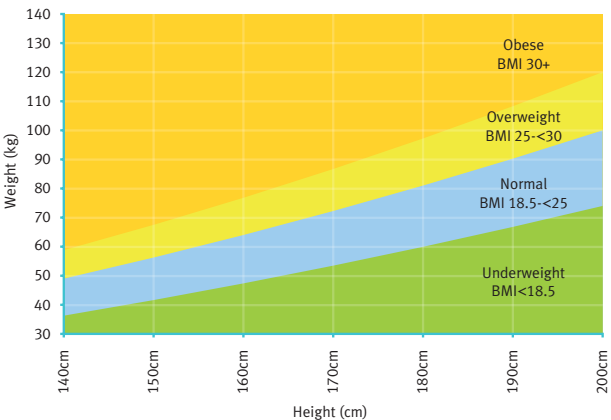
**Yes,** if your Body Mass Index (BMI) is over 25. You can use the chart below to quickly check if you are in the high risk zone.

## What can you do to achieve and maintain a healthy weight?

- Choose healthy foods and drinks.
- Cut down on fatty foods, and foods and drinks high in sugar and alcohol.
- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes every day.
- If you are overweight, ask your doctor, dietician or health professional for advice about how to lose weight.



Australian Better Health Initiative  
A joint Australian, State and Territory government initiative.



## Say no to tobacco

### The facts are:

- The benefits of quitting smoking start immediately and within 1 year your risk of dying from heart disease will be half that of a continuing smoker.
- 3,000 Queenslanders die each year from cancers caused by tobacco.
- There is no safe exposure to tobacco smoke. Non-smokers who live with a smoker have about 30% greater risk of developing heart disease than those who live in a smoke-free environment.
- 20% of pregnant women smoke. Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of miscarriage, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and low birth weight.

### Are you at risk?

**Yes**, if you smoke tobacco.

**Yes**, if you breathe in smoke from someone who is smoking tobacco near you – at home, at work, in a motor vehicle, waiting for public transport.

### What can you do?

- Don't start smoking.
- If you do smoke – quit.
- Keep tobacco smoke away from children to protect their health.
- Call the Quitline on 13 78 48 for support.



Time since last cigarette	Benefits
20 minutes	Heart rate drops.
12 hours	Blood levels of carbon monoxide drop dramatically.
72 hours	Sense of taste and smell improve. Circulation improves.
2 weeks– 3 months	Heart attack risk begins to drop, lung function improves.
1– 9 months	Coughing and shortness of breath decrease.
1 year	Risk of coronary heart disease is half that of continuing smokers.
5 years	Stroke risk reduced to that of a non-smoker 5 to 15 years after quitting. Risk of smoking related cancers decreases.
10 years	Risk of lung cancer death is about half that of a continuing smoker and keeps on declining. Risk of cancer of the bladder, kidney and pancreas decreases.
15 years	Risk of coronary heart disease is the same as for a non-smoker. Risk of death in former smokers declines to the same level as people who have never smoked.

## Be sun safe all year round

### The facts are:

- Queenslanders have the highest rates of skin cancer in the world.
- Exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun or from solariums increases the risk of skin cancer including melanoma.
- 50.9% of Queensland adults reported being sunburnt in the past 12 months.
- About half of all Queenslanders are currently practicing 3 out of the 5 recommended sun protection behaviours.

### Are you at risk?

**Yes**, if you don't protect your skin from exposure to the sun in five ways all year round.

### What can you do to reduce your risk of skin cancer?

- Protect yourself in five ways:
  - Slip on sun protective clothing.
  - Slop on SPF 30+ sunscreen. Reapply every two hours.
  - Slap on a broad-brimmed hat.
  - Seek shade.
  - Slide on wrap-around sunglasses.
- Practice sun safety all year round, not just in summer.
- Sun protection is especially important in early life – from infancy to adolescence – as skin damage occurring during this time increases the risk of skin cancer later in life.
- Check your own skin regularly and if you notice a change in size, shape or colour to any spots on your skin, have them checked by your doctor.



## Manage your blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels

### The facts are:

- About 1 in 3 adult Queenslanders report high blood pressure or high cholesterol.
- High blood pressure can lead to heart attack, stroke and kidney failure.
- High cholesterol is one of the major risks for heart disease.

### When is your blood pressure too high?



High blood pressure, or hypertension, is generally defined as more than 140 mmHg systolic over 90 mmHg diastolic.

### What can you do to control your blood pressure?

- Choose foods and drinks low in salt. Avoid adding salt to your food. Avoid adding salt when cooking.
- Check your blood pressure through a 'Know your numbers' participating pharmacy.
- Ask your doctor to check your blood pressure regularly.
- Be physically active.
- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

### Blood cholesterol and health risk

The total level of cholesterol in the blood is a combination of HDL (good) cholesterol and LDL (bad) cholesterol. Your doctor will check both your HDL and LDL cholesterol. A low level of HDL cholesterol and a high level of LDL cholesterol in the blood will place you at risk of heart disease.





## What can you do to reduce your cholesterol?

- Moderate your total fat intake, reduce saturated fats and trans fatty acids. Here are some tips:
  - Choose fish and lean cuts of meat and poultry.
  - Choose polyunsaturated and monounsaturated oils and spreads.
  - Use low fat or reduced fat milk or calcium-enriched soy milk, yoghurts and cheese.
  - Limit fried foods, high fat take-away food, sausages, bacon and salami.
- Talk to your doctor about your cholesterol level.

## Reduce your risk of diabetes

### The facts are:

- There is an alarming rise in the number of people with type 2 diabetes.
  - People who are overweight or obese have the highest risk of type 2 diabetes. In Queensland, nearly two-thirds of all men and half of all women are overweight.
- Maintaining a healthy weight would prevent, or at least delay, type 2 diabetes in up to 60% of cases. This can best be achieved by healthy eating and regular physical activity.
  - Talk to your doctor about your risk of type 2 diabetes.



For more information or to access  
The Health of Queenslanders 2010:  
Third Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland

[www.health.qld.gov.au/cho\\_report](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/cho_report)

Need advice or support:

Call

**13 HEALTH**  
**(13 43 25 84)**

[www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au)

**Toward** **2**  
Tomorrow's Queensland

**2020 target** is to make Queenslanders  
the healthiest people in Australia.

**Goal:** Cut by one-third obesity, smoking,  
heavy drinking and unsafe sun exposure.

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