What to Eat
Staying healthy for you and your family

Queensland Government
Background

The 2008 edition of *What to Eat* was redeveloped based on the results of the Nutrition Resource Review conducted in 2007. *What to Eat* was first printed in January 1994, with revised editions in 1995 and 1998. *What to Eat*, developed by Tropical Population Health Services, aims to raise awareness of the importance of healthy eating and physical activity for people who want to be healthy, especially for people living with diabetes.

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- Colleagues in Tropical Population Health Services, who have actively contributed to the development of *What to Eat*
- *Living Strong Program* – A healthy lifestyle program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Queensland Health, 2008
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition and Physical Activity Brief Intervention*, Tropical Population Health Services, 2008
- *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating*, adapted from the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGTHE) by the Department of Health and Community Services, Northern Territory.
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Introduction

What to Eat has been developed to help raise awareness of the importance of healthy eating and physical activity, with a specific focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

What to Eat will help you lead a healthy lifestyle by:
• choosing healthy food and drinks
• being physically active.

Having a healthy lifestyle will help:
• protect you and your family from illness
• keep you and your family strong, happy and healthy
• you and your family maintain a healthy weight.

Being healthy is important for the whole family.

What to Eat is useful when used together with Diabetes and Strong Families, which has more information about diabetes.
Choosing healthy food

We need to eat a wide variety of healthy foods to stay healthy and active. These can be traditional foods or foods from the store. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating gives us an idea of what foods to eat more or less of over the day.

The guide has three key messages:

- **Variety** - The ‘plate’ shows the food we need every day from the five food groups to stay healthy.

- **Water** - It’s important to drink plenty of water every day.

- **Extras** - Are high in fat and/or sugar and should only be eaten in small amounts.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating used with permission from the Department of Health and Community Services, Northern Territory.
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating

• Eating the right amount of foods from each food group will give your body the nutrients you need for good health
• It doesn’t say you have to eat all the foods shown on the plate every day
• The guide also includes traditional foods, and foods that are found in remote stores — for example, tinned and dried foods, and long-life milk.
What type of food and how much food?

- We should eat most foods from the vegetables, legumes, fruit and bread, cereals, rice, spaghetti and noodles food groups
- We should eat some foods from the milk, yoghurt, cheese, meat and meat alternatives food groups
- We should only eat small amounts of fats, oil and foods containing sugar
- Remember to drink plenty of water every day.
Bread, cereals, rice, spaghetti and noodles

Wholegrain and multigrain breads and cereals are better for you.

Try to choose:

- Breakfast cereals that are low in sugar and high in fibre, like porridge and wholegrain biscuit cereal
- Wholegrain scones and damper
- Spaghetti, noodles and other pasta
- Brown, long-grain and basmati rice
- White high-fibre bread instead of ordinary white bread.
All types of vegetables are good for your health. This includes traditional, fresh, frozen, dried or tinned vegetables:

- Orange vegetables (carrot and pumpkin)
- Green leafy vegetables (spinach, cabbage and broccoli)
- Salad vegetables (lettuce, tomato and cucumber)
- Potato, sweet potato and yam
- Legumes (split peas, lentils, chick peas and baked beans).
All types of fruit are good for your health. This includes traditional, fresh, frozen, tinned or dried fruit:

- Traditional fruits (bush berries, wild plum, wild passionfruit, desert fig and wongai)
- Tropical fruits (bananas, pineapple, mango and paw paw)
- Melons (watermelon and rockmelon)
- Stone fruits (apricots, plums and peaches)
- Other types of fruit (apples, oranges, pears and strawberries).
Milk, cheese and yoghurt are healthy foods — especially if you choose the low fat varieties. If you can’t drink milk, choose soy milk with added calcium or lactose free milk.

Includes dairy foods like:

- Fresh, long-life or powdered milk such as full cream, low fat, lite, skim and soy varieties
- Cheese such as regular, reduced fat or no fat
- Yoghurt and custard such as regular, reduced fat, no fat or flavoured varieties.
Meat and meat alternatives

Lean meat is the best choice.

Includes meats like:

- Bush meats (kangaroo, lean beef, goanna and emu)
- Poultry (chicken, turkey and goose)
- Seafood (fish, prawns, pippis, mussels and oysters)
- Tinned fish (tuna, salmon and sardines).

If you don’t eat meat, make sure you have plenty of legumes (split peas, lentils, chick peas and baked beans) and eggs.
Water is the best drink to choose.

Includes:
• Tap water
• One plain bottle of water (unflavoured and unsweetened)

Try to drink two litres (eight glasses) of water every day.

During physical activity and in hot weather you need more water. This does not include tea, coffee, soft drink, flavoured milk or juice.
Eat least foods

Eat less of these foods as too much of these foods can make you put on weight and damage your health.

Only eat these foods in small amounts some of the time. This does not mean every day.
Knowing the fats in your food

There are different types of fat in your food. Some of these fats are:

- Saturated fats
- Polyunsaturated fats
- Monounsaturated fats

**Saturated fats from VEGETABLE sources**

**Saturated fats from ANIMAL sources**

Saturated fats cause high cholesterol and increase your risk of heart disease.
Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats are a better type of fat.

Polyunsaturated fats are found in:
- plant foods such as walnuts, brazil nuts and sunflower seeds
- some fish such as salmon, tuna and canned sardines
- margarines and oils such as sunflower, safflower and soybean.

Monounsaturated fats are found in:
- margarines and oils such as canola and olive oil
- plant foods such as avocados, raw nuts, seeds.

Cut back on high fat foods to stay healthy.
Eat only a small amount.
A Nutrition Information Panel is available on every food packet, which can help you make healthy food choices.

The Nutrition Information Panel can help people when shopping as it shows how much fat and sugar is in the food.

When reading a food label, always look at the per 100g column so that you can compare the fat and sugar content of different foods.

**To eat healthy, look for:**
- foods with less than 10g of total fat (per 100g of food)
- foods with less than 15g of sugar (per 100g of food).

Try to choose foods with low fat and sugar content.

Some healthy foods (e.g. cheese) are high in fat. Try to eat these foods only in small amounts.

### Nutrition Information Panel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving per package: 4</th>
<th>Per 85g Serve</th>
<th>Per 100g Serve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving Size: 85g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENERGY</th>
<th>Avg Quantity per serve</th>
<th>Avg Quantity per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>710kj ((170\text{Cal}))</td>
<td>835kj ((233\text{Cal}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROTEIN</td>
<td>17.1g</td>
<td>20.1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAT - TOTAL</td>
<td>10.9g</td>
<td>12.8g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATURATED</td>
<td>6.5g</td>
<td>7.7g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARBOHYDRATE</td>
<td>1.1g</td>
<td>1.3g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- SUGAR</td>
<td>1.1g</td>
<td>1.3g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SODIUM</td>
<td>455mg</td>
<td>535mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tips for healthy cooking

- Choose lean cuts of meat and trim off the fat before cooking. With chicken and turkey, the fat is in the skin, so take off the skin before cooking.
- Skim any fat off the stew or curry in the pot and add lots of vegetables.
- Lentils and chick peas are great to add to stew or curry dishes, as they bulk up the meal and will make the meal go further.
- Bully beef is high in fat and salt. If you choose to have bully beef, a better choice is the reduced fat variety. To make a healthier meal, drain the fat off during cooking and add lots of vegetables.
- Grill, bake or poach your fish and serve with lots of salad or vegetables.
- In curries, use evaporated light milk and a little coconut cream powder instead of coconut cream, which is high in fat.
Making healthy food taste good

You don’t need salt to make food tasty. Too much salt can make your blood pressure high.

To reduce salt in your food:
- Choose low or reduced salt foods
- Don’t add salt during cooking
- Try to avoid foods high in salt such as potato crisps, hot chips and two-minute noodles.

Try using herbs and spices to make your meals tasty.

Add a low-fat salad dressing, balsamic vinegar or lemon juice to your salads, instead of salad dressings that are high in fat and salt.
Thirsty? What should you drink?

- If you are thirsty, water is the best choice
- During physical activity and in hot weather you need to drink more water than normal
- This does not include tea, coffee, soft drink, flavoured milk or juice
- Soft drinks and cordials can be very high in sugar
- If you have diabetes, sugary drinks can make your blood glucose levels go up quickly
- Sugary drinks are not good for your teeth.

Coffee and tea

Try to limit to 2-3 cups per day, and have your coffee and tea in between meals, so you don’t prevent iron absorption. This can lead to anaemia.
Be careful about how much you eat

You may need to cut down the size of the meals you eat.

Include more vegetables in your meals to bulk your meals up, and to make you feel fuller for longer.

Small changes can make a big difference.
Meal ideas

Smaller meals are better than having one big meal.

It is important to eat regular meals throughout the day to avoid feeling hungry and eating too many unhealthy snacks.

**Breakfast ideas:**
- Wholegrain cereal and reduced fat milk
- Toast/damper (multigrain or wholemeal) with tomato, creamed corn, baked beans, spaghetti, reduced fat cheese or avocado
- Porridge
- Fruit and yoghurt
- Boiled or poached eggs
- Leftovers from the night before.

**Lunch ideas:**
- Sandwiches, toasted sandwiches, wraps and rolls filled with salad, lean meats, avocado, baked beans, egg, tuna, reduced fat cheese or banana
- Lean meat and vegetable stew or curry with rice
- Pasta with vegetables or salad
- Salads with lean meats, chicken or egg
- Rice cakes with tuna/sardines, reduced fat cheese and tomato.
Dinner ideas:
- Lean meat and vegetable stew or curry with rice
- Stir fry noodles, lean meat and lots of vegetables
- Fried rice made with lean meat and lots of vegetables
- Grilled or baked fish and salad
- Spaghetti with lean mince and vegetables
- Lean roast chicken and vegetables.

Snack ideas:
- Fruit — fresh, frozen, canned, dried or traditional fruits
- Yoghurt
- Baked beans
- Reduced fat cheese and crackers
- Tuna and crackers
- Corn thins with tomato, avocado or reduced fat cheese
- Sandwiches
- Vegetable sticks (carrot, celery and capsicum).

Drink ideas:
- Water is the best choice.
Be active everyday

Just 30 minutes a day, or three lots of 10 minutes helps you stay healthy.

Move More
Being active every day is important for overall health.

Build up your activity level slowly and make it enjoyable by being active with family and friends.

Physical activity helps you:
• maintain a healthy weight
• keep your blood glucose level, blood pressure and cholesterol under control.

Being active can be as easy as:
• walking the kids to school
• going out to get traditional foods
• mowing the lawn
• turning the TV off
• joining a local club
• playing traditional games
• being active with your family.
Be active safely

- Start slowly (don’t overdo it) and gradually increase your amount of activity each day
- Stretch your muscles before and after your activity to prevent soreness
- Avoid the hottest time of the day
- Wear a hat (use sunscreen)
- Drink water before, during and after any activity, especially in hot weather
- If at anytime you feel pain or become short of breath, stop the activity
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothing
- Keep at your own pace

- Find a friend to be active with you
- Have fun and enjoy the activity
- If you are weight training, make sure you get advice on using the equipment properly.

Talk to your doctor before starting any physical activity.
Useful links and resources

Queensland Health
Information is available about healthy living, including nutrition, physical activity and food safety. www.health.qld.gov.au/healthieryou

Nutrition Australia 📞 07 3257 4393
Contact for a range of nutrition advice and support.
www.nutritionaustralia.org

National Heart Foundation 📞 1300 362 787
Contact for brochures, catering and recipe ideas.
www.heartfoundation.org.au

Building a Healthy, Active Australia 📞 1800 020 103
This website provides a range of information and initiatives on healthy eating, regular physical activity, and overweight and obesity to assist all Australians to lead healthy and active lives. www.healthyactive.gov.au

Eat Well Be Active 📞 1300 656 191 www.your30.qld.gov.au

Go for 2 and 5 📞 07 3405 5253
The website includes a large range of recipe ideas and helpful hints to include more serves of fruit and vegetables every day.
www.gofor2and5.com.au

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

Other programs

Contact your community nutrition team or health centre for more information on healthy lifestyle programs in your local community.
Eat good food to be Healthy and Strong

Vegetables
(including legumes – baked beans, kidney beans & split peas).

Fruit

Milk, cheese and yoghurt

Meat
(including bush meat, chicken, eggs & fish (including nuts & legumes – baked beans).

Breads, cereals, rice, spaghetti & noodles

Drink plenty of water

Eat in small amounts

Northern Territory Government
Department of Health and Community Services