

Dietary guidelines for Australians

The following is a summary from the Dietary Guidelines for Australians.

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods every day:

- Eat plenty of vegetables and legumes.
- Eat plenty of fruit.
- Eat plenty of cereals (including breads, rice, pasta and noodles), preferably wholegrain.
- Include milks, yoghurts, cheeses and/or alternatives such as soy-based products. Reduced fat varieties should be chosen whenever possible (but low fat milk is not suitable for children under two years of age).
- Include lean meat, fish, poultry or alternatives.
- Drink plenty of water.

Take care to:

- Limit saturated fats and moderate total fat intake.
- Choose foods low in salt.
- Eat only moderate amounts of sugars and foods and drinks containing added sugars.
- If you choose to drink alcohol, limit your intake (alcohol is not recommended for children).

Prevent weight gain - be physically active and eat according to your energy needs.

Care for your food - prepare and store it safely.

To help prevent bacteria infecting food and causing illness:

- Always wash hands carefully before preparing food.
- After handling raw meat or raw chicken, wash your hands with soap and water, then dry them thoroughly.
- Make sure kitchen equipment (knives, chopping boards, etc.) is clean.
- Keep hot foods hot (i.e. Over 60 degrees Celsius) and keep cold foods refrigerated (at or below five degrees Celsius).
- Return foods to the fridge straight after use (bugs can grow quickly at room temperature, but they hate the cold!).
- Always put leftovers straight into the fridge, and use within two to three days.
- When buying packaged foods, look for any damage to the packet which might indicate that the food has been contaminated. Don't use the food if you are worried.

Encourage and support breastfeeding.

- In the first six months of life, breast milk is the only food a baby needs.
- Almost all mums have enough breast milk for their baby to grow well.
- Breast milk is a baby's best and most natural food - it has special substances that protect the baby against infection and disease and help him/her grow.
- Breast milk is good for babies together with healthy food even when they are over 12 months old.
- Don't be embarrassed if you see someone breastfeeding in public - it's normal! If you feel relaxed about it, the mother will too and the baby will get the food it needs.
- It can take a bit of time for a new mum to get used to breastfeeding.
- Contacting a health professional early can make breastfeeding more enjoyable and keep mums breastfeeding for longer.

For further breastfeeding information, contact the Australian Breastfeeding Association's breastfeeding helpline on 07 3844 8977 or 07 3844 8166.