

Eat Well tips for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples fact sheet

Try the following to help you feel better every day

- Eat more bush foods. Plants and animal bush foods and seafoods are fresh and most are low in fat.
- Choose store foods that are most like bush foods - lean meats, fish and other seafood, fruit, vegetable, nuts and seeds.
- Eat more fruit and vegetables. Choose fresh fruit, dried fruit or canned fruit in natural juice. Choose more fresh vegetables, frozen vegetables, canned or dried vegetables. Remember to Go for 2 & 5® every day.
- Eat a healthy breakfast every day.
- Drink more water.
- Eat breads, cereals and legumes. Choose soup mix, baked beans, bean mix, pasta, noodles, rice and porridge. Eat some of these foods with each meal. Wholegrain or wholemeal breads and cereals are best.
- Use reduced fat milk, cheese and yoghurt.
- Eat less salt - avoid adding salt to your food.



Cut down on fats

- Eat more bush foods, fish and lean meat.
- Eat less fatty meat, tinned corned beef, sausages and pies.
- Eat less fried food like chips, fried fish, fried chicken wings or legs and fried meat.
- Eat less snack food like potato crisps, ice cream, chocolate and cake.
- Choose sandwiches or stews from the takeaway.
- Cut fat off meat before cooking and take the skin off chicken.
- If you use oil or margarine, use small amounts and choose canola or olive oil or polyunsaturated margarine or oil.



Eat less sugar

A lot of sugar we eat is hidden in foods and drinks. Too much sugar can make you fat. Here are some tips to cut back on sugar:

- Drink water instead of sweetened drinks (like soft drinks).
- Choose diet drinks instead of ordinary soft drinks, sports drinks or cordial.
- Limit fruit juice - it has lots of sugar.
- Eat less biscuits, cakes, chocolates, lollies and ice cream.
- Add less sugar to tea or coffee (aim for no sugar).
- Avoid alcohol.
- Choose low sugar breakfast cereals like porridge and wheat biscuits.



Keep healthy during pregnancy

- Eat regularly through the day.
- Eat plenty of healthy foods every day - vegetables, fruit, lean meat, fish, milk and other dairy products, breads, rice, noodles and cereal.
- Drink lots of water, avoid soft drinks, tea and coffee.
- Try not to eat cakes and biscuits, takeaway and fatty foods every day.
- Say 'no' to alcohol, smoking or other drugs.
- Keep active.
- Eat some bush foods if you can get them.

Encourage and support breastfeeding

- Breast milk gives babies all the food and drink they need for the first six months of life.
- Breast milk is good for babies together with healthy food even when they are over 12 months old.
- Breast milk is a baby's best and most natural food.
- Breast milk helps babies and mums stay healthy.
- Breast milk protects the baby against infection and diseases and helps him/her grow.
- Breast milk is always ready for your baby.
- You can express your breast milk for someone else to feed to your baby.
- Breastfeeding can help protect your baby from developing diabetes when he/she is older. This is particularly important if you had diabetes during your pregnancy.
- It can take a bit of time for a new mum to get used to breastfeeding. Talk to mums who have breastfed or contact a health worker who may be able to help make breastfeeding more comfortable.

Contact the Australian Breastfeeding Association's breastfeeding helpline on 07 3844 8977 or 07 3844 8166.

Starting your baby on solids

- Your baby is not ready to start solids if his/her head is floppy. Starting solids too early does not help your baby gain weight or sleep through the night.
- Your baby will be ready to start solids if he/she:
 - reaches out for food when you are eating
 - opens his/her mouth when you put a spoon near it
 - can hold his/her head steady and can sit up on your lap
 - can roll from front to back
 - is about six months old.
- Starting solids too late can cause baby to stop growing well. Baby may also become a very fussy eater and not learn how to chew properly.
- When starting your baby on solids:
 - Make the food smooth and mushy by adding breast milk or formula.
 - Do not add sugar or salt, babies have very sensitive taste buds and added salt can be bad for their kidneys.
 - Offer about half a teaspoon of solids after a breastfeed or formula. Slowly increase this as your baby gets used to solids.
 - Don't put the spoon or food in your mouth before giving it to your baby as this will help pass the germs that cause tooth decay to your baby.
 - If baby refuses solids don't worry, try again in a couple of days.
 - Some foods to start with may include:
 - ◆ iron fortified baby cereal
 - ◆ mashed vegetables
 - ◆ stewed and mashed fruit e.g. banana
 - ◆ mashed stew cooked without stock cubes or salt.
 - Start with one food and introduce a new food every three or four days.
 - Young babies can eat meat. As long as meat is very soft and easy to swallow babies can digest it.
 - Use a soft cloth to wipe over your baby's teeth and remove any food left on them or use a small soft toothbrush and brush very lightly.
 - Do not give tea to babies and toddlers. It can give them weak blood.
 - When your baby is about six months old, offer iron rich foods each day. Red meat, liver, kidney, bush meat, fish and chicken are best sources of iron.

Feeding Toddlers

- Toddlers have small stomachs so they need to eat more often than adults.
- Offer them small meals throughout the day.
- Give them plenty of time to eat - don't rush them.
- Feed them before they get too tired.
- Let them ask for more if they are hungry.
- Offer a choice of healthy foods.
- Let them decide how much they want to eat.
- Take food with you if you go out.
- Offer them drinks after food.
- Do not force them to eat.
- Toddlers can have fads of only wanting to eat one type of meal. These usually don't last for very long so don't stress about it.
- Don't bribe them with sweets to finish their plate.
- Sweet sticky foods cause tooth decay. Only offer them sometimes with meals, not as snacks.
- Choose foods from each of the food groups and combine them to make a meal (see the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guide to healthy eating).