

GOOD HEALTH AND NUTRITION

HEALTHY WEIGHT



For many of us, life catches up. As we become busier and busier with our jobs, our kids and life in general regular physical activity and healthy eating go out the window, we put our health on hold. All of a sudden we realise we've put on a few extra kilos, or more. Clothes are tight and we can't keep up with the kids.

Right now, approximately 63% of Australian adults are overweight or obese and at risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some types of cancer. It's not too late to do something about it though.

There are many reasons to choose a healthy diet and start getting enough physical activity now. It will help you sleep better, give you more energy, reduce the risk of depression and can help prevent conditions such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes. So start today and wake up feeling better tomorrow.

Weight – a balancing act

Maintaining a healthy body weight is a matter of balancing the energy we put into our bodies (kilojoules from food) with the energy that we use up (kilojoules we burn) during our daily activities or exercise. If we don't use up the energy we eat or drink each day, over time our weight will increase. Diet and physical activity are central to the energy balance equation.

How healthy is your weight?

A simple way to work out if your weight falls into the healthy weight range for your height is to calculate your Body Mass Index (BMI).

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height(m)} \times \text{Height(m)}}$$

The following BMI classifications are intended for adults aged 18 and over:

BMI	Classification
Less than 18.5	Underweight
18.5 to 24.9	Healthy weight range
25 to 29.9	Overweight
Over 30	Obese

Note: BMI may overestimate weight classification in people with very muscular builds.

Carrying excess weight around your waist poses a greater risk to your health than around the hips and thighs. Using the following guide recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council, you can work out if you are carrying too much weight around your waist.

	Waist circumference	
	Men	Women
Increased health risk	Greater than 94cm	Greater than 80cm

Note: Values are specific to Caucasian men and Caucasian and Asian women.

BMI charts for children and ethnic-specific values for waist circumference are available. Consult a health professional such as a General Practitioner or an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) for further information.

Get your body moving

Getting exercise can be as simple as looking for ways to weave some moderate activity into your day – such as walking, cycling, even a game of cricket in the backyard with the kids. The National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activities (such as brisk walking or digging in the garden) on most, preferably all, days of the week. If you are unsure, talk to your doctor about what kind of physical activity plan is best for you.

Healthy eating

Choosing foods from the five core food groups in the proportions recommended by the Australian Dietary Guidelines will help you obtain the right amounts of nutrients you need without consuming excess kilojoules. Here are some tips to get you started:

- Follow the Australian Dietary Guidelines eatforhealth.gov.au.
- Eat more fruit and vegetables. Fill your plate with a variety of types and colours of vegetables and salad. These foods have few kilojoules and help keep you feeling fuller for longer. Eat two serves of fruit a day.
- Limit intake of fried potatoes, cakes and muffins, chocolate, crisps, meat pies, alcoholic drinks, soft drinks and energy drinks.
- Reduce portion size of meals.
- Rethink sugary drinks. Too many sugary drinks can lead to unwanted weight gain and tooth decay. Water and milk are good drinks to choose from.
- Plan meals and snacks. This will assist with shopping and preparing meals.
- Eat more mindfully, turn off the TV, slow down, enjoy your food and be more in touch with how hungry or satisfied you are.
- Limit alcohol intake. If you chose to drink alcohol, keep to no more than two standard drinks on any day.

Maintaining a healthy weight includes dairy foods

Milk, cheese and yoghurt are found in one of the five food groups that make up a healthy diet. Contrary to popular belief, research shows consumption of three to four daily serves of dairy foods, such as milk, cheese and yoghurt (including regular fat varieties), as part of a balanced diet is not linked to weight gain.

Unfortunately, most Australians are missing out on the health benefits that come with consuming milk, cheese and yoghurt as they don't include enough in their diet. It is estimated that most Australian children and 8 out of 10 Australian adults fail to meet their minimum recommended intake.

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

Studies show that including three to four serves of dairy foods within a kilojoule-controlled diet can help accelerate loss of weight and body fat, improve muscle retention and reduce waistlines.

Minimum recommended number of serves from the dairy food group

	Age (years)	No. of serves per day
Men	19–70	2 ½
	70+	3 ½
Women	19–50	2 ½
	50+	4
	Pregnant or breast feeding	2 ½
Boys	2–3	1 ½
	4–8	2
	9–11	2 ½
	12–18	3 ½
Girls	2–3	1 ½
	4–8	1 ½
	9–11	3
	12–18	3 ½

*Adapted from: 2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines. The dairy food group includes milk, cheese, yoghurt and/or alternatives.**



*Alternatives include: 250ml soy, rice or other cereal drink with at least 100mg of added calcium per 100ml.

Dairy foods are a natural source of 10 essential nutrients including calcium, potassium, phosphorous, magnesium, carbohydrate, protein, vitamin A, riboflavin, vitamin B12 and zinc.

For recipes and ideas on how to include adequate serves of dairy foods in your healthy eating plan visit dairy.com.au/health.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on weight management, consult a health professional such as your General Practitioner or an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD).