

# Healthy Food Charter:

Creating a vibrant  
healthy eating culture



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# Healthy Food Charter

## The Victorian Healthy Eating Enterprise: creating a vibrant healthy eating culture

### Food is a fundamental part of our everyday lives.

It plays a significant role in determining the health of our people, our environment and our prosperity as a state. Victorians are lucky to enjoy an abundant and diverse supply of food and an internationally competitive food industry. Our culture celebrates food. Producing, preparing and sharing food brings us together as a community, as a region and as a state.

### But we don't always make the best choices when it comes to food and health.

Consuming too much of the wrong types of foods and not enough of the right types has a direct link to certain chronic diseases and being overweight or obese. On the other hand, eating a healthy diet contributes to greater productivity, better physical and mental health, and supports optimum growth and development for our children and young people.

### So let's work together to make healthy food choices easy food choices.

A shift is necessary to think about good food as food that not only looks and tastes good, but is also good for you. The Victorian Government believes that making it easier for Victorians to make healthy food choices is one way to help shift this current imbalance.

Making healthy choices more readily accessible where we live, learn, work and play is integral to promoting healthy eating.

The Victorian Healthy Eating Enterprise (VHEE) encompasses a range of initiatives being undertaken by the Victorian Government in partnership with local government, business, industry, health professionals and communities, underpinned by a shared vision to improve the health and wellbeing of Victorians through food and healthy eating.

The VHEE provides a coordinated platform to support healthy eating by promoting access to nutritious and affordable food and providing Victorians with the knowledge and skills to be able to select, prepare and enjoy healthy, tasty meals. Its objectives are to:

- improve rates of consumption of fruit and vegetables
- reduce consumption of energy-dense and nutrient-poor food and drinks
- reduce consumption of salt and saturated and trans fats
- improve breastfeeding rates and maternal and infant nutrition
- increase the proportion of children and adults in the healthy weight range
- promote enjoyment of healthy foods
- improve access to nutritious food.

## Who the charter is for

The Healthy Food Charter is a guide for all those working in partnership with the Victorian Government to improve the health of Victorians through food. It can also be used by any other organisation, group or individual who can contribute to promoting healthy food or making healthy food choices easier. This charter provides the key healthy eating messages to be consistently delivered to the community and will assist individuals or groups spearheading healthy change. It can be used by:

- ambassadors and health champions providing health messages
- professionals and educators passing on the necessary skills to prepare and provide good food
- communities developing and implementing food policies and programs
- food industries involved in producing, processing, preparing or promoting healthy food
- organisations and businesses that want to influence healthier food procurement.

## How the charter fits with other nutrition policies and guidelines

Settings such as early childhood, schools, hospitals and workplaces already have specific nutrition policies or guidelines that they are required or encouraged to comply with (see section 4). The Healthy Food Charter does not replace these policies or guidelines. Instead, this charter describes some fundamental elements of healthy eating relevant not only to these settings, but to a wider audience.

The Healthy Food Charter has been developed using the evidence from the revised 2013 National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) *Dietary guidelines for Australians* and other key documents.

## Core foods

The term 'core foods' used throughout this document refers to the five food groups outlined in the *Australian guide to healthy eating*.<sup>1</sup> These groups include fruit, vegetables, legumes, grain foods such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley – mostly wholemeal or wholegrain, lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, nuts/seeds, dairy foods (mostly reduced fat) and/or appropriate dairy alternatives, such as fortified soy, and a small amount of mono and polyunsaturated fats. When eaten in appropriate amounts, these foods are the essential building blocks of good health.

## Discretionary foods

Discretionary foods and drinks are not necessary to provide the nutrients the body needs. Many of these foods and drinks are high in kilojoules (or energy dense), saturated fat, added sugars and salt or alcohol.

Examples include most sweet biscuits, cakes, desserts and pastries; processed meats and sausages; sweetened condensed milk; ice-cream and other ice confections; confectionary and chocolate; savoury pastries and pies; hamburgers; commercially fried foods; potato chips, crisps and other fatty or salty snack foods; snack bars; cream, butter and spreads that are high in saturated fat; sugar-sweetened soft drinks, fruit drinks and cordials, sports and energy drinks and alcoholic drinks.

These foods can be consumed only sometimes and in small amounts by physically active people, but they are not a necessary part of a healthy diet.

1 [https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/public\\_consultation/n55d\\_draft\\_dietary\\_guidelines\\_agthe\\_111212.pdf](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/public_consultation/n55d_draft_dietary_guidelines_agthe_111212.pdf)

# The five principles of the Healthy Food Charter

1	Easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showcase recipes that use easily accessible ingredients and equipment</li> <li>• Showcase recipes that are easy to prepare</li> <li>• Promote the same meals for children and adults</li> <li>• Promote healthy options for purchase</li> </ul>	
2	Fresh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use seasonal fresh produce whenever possible</li> <li>• Include at least one serve of fruit or vegetables in every breakfast</li> <li>• Include at least two serves of vegetables in every lunch and dinner</li> <li>• Include fruit or vegetables in every snack or dessert</li> <li>• Understand how to store and handle fresh produce safely</li> </ul>	
3	Balanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote variety, create meals with at least three food groups</li> <li>• Add fruits and vegetables to every snack and meal</li> <li>• Promote wholemeal and wholegrains</li> <li>• Promote use of legumes</li> <li>• Promote dairy foods – mostly reduced fat</li> <li>• Use lean meat and poultry</li> <li>• Promote use of oily fish</li> </ul>	
4	Healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always offer water</li> <li>• Limit sugar-sweetened drinks</li> <li>• Practise portion control</li> <li>• Promote poly- and monounsaturated fats and reduce foods containing saturated fat</li> <li>• Reduce salt (sodium)</li> <li>• Reduce added sugars</li> <li>• Choose healthy cooking methods</li> <li>• Follow policies and guidelines</li> </ul>	
5	Connected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy and share food</li> <li>• Understand how food is grown</li> <li>• Use seasonal ingredients</li> <li>• Enjoy local produce</li> <li>• Promote healthy food that is accessible to all</li> <li>• Connect to diverse communities and cultures</li> <li>• Reduce food waste</li> </ul>	

# 1 Easy



# Easy

Many individuals and families increasingly rely on purchased prepared meals to meet their dietary needs. In Australia, the average person eats out more than four times a week, with almost half of these meals classified as 'fast food'. Unfortunately, these meals are more energy dense, are served in larger portions and are often higher in saturated fat and salt than foods made at home.

A perceived lack of time is a common reason why people purchase meals rather than preparing them at home. Having healthy options available at food outlets across various settings (from restaurants through to workplaces and recreational facilities), as well as teaching people how to plan and prepare simple, quick meals to make at home would make it easier for the average Australian to eat healthier foods.

## How to promote easy healthy foods

### Showcase recipes that use easily accessible ingredients and equipment

- Use equipment that is readily available and affordable to the average household.
- Use ingredients that are readily available and affordable to the average household.
- Use terms or explanations that are easy to understand and follow.

### Showcase recipes that are easy to prepare

- Use fewer than 10 ingredients.
- Take half an hour or less to prepare (not including cooking time).
- Promote simple cooking methods.

### Promote the same meals for children and adults

- Separate menu options for children are unnecessary.
- Offer the same healthy meals to children.
- Consider **small** healthy serve options.

### Promote healthy options for purchase

- Indicate healthy options (for example, meals that comply with the principles in this charter) on menus or displays.
- Consider marketing strategies for healthy takeaway meals.
- Promote food businesses that sell healthy meals.

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Eating well and on a budget – it is possible:  
[www.foodcentsprogram.com.au/  
shop-smart/true-cost-of-food/](http://www.foodcentsprogram.com.au/shop-smart/true-cost-of-food/)

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# 2 Fresh



# Fresh

## Every adult needs at least five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit every day.

Australians don't eat enough fruit or vegetables. In Victoria, only 14% of adults eat the recommended two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables per day. Children also eat far less fruit and vegetables than they need.

Eating fruit and vegetables provides many benefits, including protection from cardiovascular disease and cancer. People and organisations that promote, prepare or provide healthy food have an essential role to play in tackling the perception that achieving the recommended daily intake of fruit and vegetables is difficult or unpalatable.

This can be simply achieved by providing more fruit and vegetables in every meal or snack offered. Doing this has the benefit of naturally displacing other less nutritious ingredients, increasing the nutrient profile of meals and adding the beautiful colour, texture and taste that only fruits and vegetables can provide.

## How to promote fresh healthy foods

Follow the recommended serving size per person per meal as outlined in the *Australian guide to healthy eating* (see 'Key references' for details). Choose seasonal produce to complement the charter's goals of choosing accessible and affordable foods.

## Use seasonal fresh produce whenever possible

- Use fresh, seasonal fruit when possible. Canned (in natural juice rather than syrup), dried and frozen fruits are suitable alternatives.
- Use fresh, seasonal vegetables when possible. Suitable alternatives include frozen, canned (no added salt) or dried vegetables (such as dried mushrooms).
- See section 5 of this report, 'Connected', for further information on how to find seasonal fresh produce.

### Include at least one serve of fruit or vegetables in every breakfast

- Find ways to incorporate fruits and vegetables into breakfast recipes (for example, corn crepes or pear pancakes).
- Add cooked fruits and vegetables to warm breakfasts, for example baked beans on toast with tomato and mushrooms, or stewed fruit with porridge.
- Add raw fruits and vegetables to breakfasts, for example a fruit salad with yoghurt, toast with sliced tomato and avocado, or chopped fruit on cereal.

### Include at least two serves of vegetables in every lunch and dinner

- Add extra vegetables to sandwiches, burgers, pizzas, casseroles, soups, curries, pastas and risottos.
- Include cooked vegetables or salad as part of every lunch or dinner menu item, rather than as an optional extra or side dish.

### Include fruit or vegetables in every snack or dessert

- Offer a crunchy vegetable or a piece of fruit as a snack.
- Place a large bowl of fruit close to the cash register as a snack available for purchase.
- Use other fruit options including unsweetened frozen fruit, fruit canned in natural juice and dried fruit.
- Add fruit and vegetables to muffins, cakes, scones, pikelets, pancakes and smoothies.
- Serve fruit-based desserts (for example, peach and pear crumble) or use unsweetened fruit puree as sauce on desserts.

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Note that fried or highly processed potato does not count as a vegetable serve (for example, chips, fries and crisps).

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### Understand how to store and handle fresh produce safely

- Store different types of fruits and vegetables appropriately.
- Always wash fresh produce before use.
- Prevent contamination of food by following safe food-handling practices, such as adequate cooking, correct holding temperatures and clean equipment.
- Avoid cross-contamination of foods and ensure personal hygiene.
- Avoid spoiled or mouldy food.
- Take particular care when serving food to more vulnerable population groups, such as pregnant women, infants, people with illnesses, and older adults.

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Your local greengrocer or retailer can assist you with practical information to store, prepare and enjoy fruit and vegetables.

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### Find out more about the health benefits of fruits and vegetables

- [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Fruit\\_and\\_vegetables\\_benefits?open](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Fruit_and_vegetables_benefits?open)

### Want some fruit and vegetable recipes?

- [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcrecipes.nsf/bycategory?open&restricttcategory=fruit&count=300](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcrecipes.nsf/bycategory?open&restricttcategory=fruit&count=300)
- [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcrecipes.nsf/bycategory?open&restricttcategory=vegetables&count=300](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcrecipes.nsf/bycategory?open&restricttcategory=vegetables&count=300)

### Need to know some food safety basics?

Everyone who works in a food business is responsible for ensuring that the food they sell or prepare for sale is safe for human consumption. The Victorian Department of Health's *Do food safely* website is a free online course about how to handle food safely. Please note that *Do food safely* is not an accredited course.

- [www.dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au/](http://www.dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au/)

### To learn more about handling fresh produce safely, see:

- [www.marketfresh.com.au/recipe/foodSafety.asp](http://www.marketfresh.com.au/recipe/foodSafety.asp)

### To get some tips on the best way to store different fruits and vegetables, visit:

- [www.marketfresh.com.au/recipe/Purchasing\\_tips.asp](http://www.marketfresh.com.au/recipe/Purchasing_tips.asp)

## What is a serve of fruit and vegetables?<sup>2</sup>

### One serve of vegetables can be:



½ cup cooked  
vegetables or  
cooked legumes

=



1 small  
potato

=



1 cup salad  
vegetables

### One serve of fruit can be:



1 medium piece  
(e.g. apple)

=



2 small pieces  
(e.g. apricots)

=



1 cup chopped  
or canned fruit

Source: Adapted from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2012.  
*Australia's food and nutrition 2012: in brief*, cat. no. PHE 164, AIHW, Canberra.

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the *Dietary guidelines for Australians* (see 'Key references') for further information on serving sizes, including for children.

# 3

# Balanced



# Balanced

There is growing interest in the relationship between food and health, and it is clear that a balanced diet is fundamental to a healthy lifestyle at every age. Having a nutritious diet means not only selecting healthy foods but also using healthy cooking methods.

Building these skills in our communities can have a positive impact on our individual and collective health and wellbeing. For everyday balance, we need to eat a variety of foods from the core food groups, such as fruits, vegetables and legumes, wholemeal and wholegrain foods, lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, milk, yoghurt, cheese (mostly reduced fat) or their alternatives.

## How to promote a balance of healthy foods

### To promote variety, create meals with at least three food groups

A meal with three or more food groups can be done simply. For example, serve fruit and yoghurt with porridge or mushrooms and eggs on grain toast. Use nutritious foods from the core groups, including:

- seasonal vegetables, both raw and cooked, and different types and colours such as leafy greens, orange and red vegetables
- seasonal fruit of all varieties, raw and cooked, and different types and colours such as citrus, tropical, stone fruit and berries
- wholegrain and wholemeal breads and cereals

- lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, nuts and seeds, legumes and beans
- milk, yoghurt, cheese (mostly reduced fat) or their alternatives.

### Add fruits and vegetables to every snack and meal

- Add extra vegetables and fruit (raw or cooked) to all meals where possible (see 'Fresh' for ideas).
- For maximum fibre and nutrients, keep the skin on fruits and vegetables whenever possible (make sure they are washed thoroughly).

### Promote wholemeal and wholegrains

- Add oats, bran or other wholegrain cereals to baked goods such as muffins, cakes and biscuits.
- Substitute wholemeal flour for half of the white flour when making breads, cakes, muffins, pancakes, pikelets or other cereal-based products.
- Use wholemeal or wholegrain bread as the standard option offered for plain or toasted sandwiches.
- Wholemeal or wholegrain English muffins or small pita breads make quick and easy single serve pizza bases.
- Use wholemeal pita bread or rolls filled with salad as a variation to sandwiches.
- Add rolled oats, brown rice or barley to casseroles, soups, meatloaf and burger patties.
- Experiment with brown rice or wholemeal pasta in recipes.

### Promote use of legumes

- Choose and promote vegetarian options by using legumes for some main meals, for example, chickpea or lentil burgers, vegetable and lentil patties and baked falafel.
- Extend the quantity of casseroles, curries and soups by adding beans or lentils.
- Use dry or tinned chickpeas, kidney beans, lima beans, butter beans, three-bean mix or brown lentils.
- Use hummus or lentil dips as spreads.

### Promote dairy foods – mostly reduced fat

- Cows' milk, cheeses and yoghurts are the most commonly consumed dairy products, but other sources include milk and products from goats or sheep.
- Reduced fat milks are not suitable for children under 2 years.
- Non-dairy alternatives include soy and various cereals (for example, rice). These need to be fortified with calcium to be considered an alternative to cows' milk, cheese and yoghurt.
- Butter, creams and ice-cream can be relatively high in saturated fat and/or added sugar. For this reason, they are not counted as a serve of dairy food and fall into the discretionary category of foods. If using these, choose reduced-fat versions.
- To reduce saturated fats, choose reduced-fat dairy products (that is, products labelled as skim, low-fat or light). 'Light' tasty cheeses that contain around 25 per cent fat still have a good taste, texture and melt well.

### Use lean meat and poultry

- Trim meats of visible fat before cooking and choose cuts without marbling (such as topside, blade, rump, pork fillet, trimmed lamb, kangaroo and skinless chicken).
- Limit processed and deli meats such as sausage, salami, ham and luncheon. If using these, always choose the reduced-fat version.
- Use lean mince.

### Promote use of oily fish

- Find good sources of sustainably sourced marine-based omega-3 polyunsaturated fats such as salmon, blue mackerel, gemfish, sardines, blue-eye trevalla, yellow-tail kingfish, herring, flathead, silver perch, sea mullet, canned salmon and tuna, and seafood including oysters, arrow squid, mussels, and scallops.
- Use fish canned in spring water and not brine, which is salty.

## Want to know more about the *Dietary guidelines for Australians*?

### *NHMRC Dietary guidelines for Australians*

The dietary guidelines provide recommendations for Australians based on the latest evidence for maximising health and preventing chronic disease.

### *NHMRC Australian guide to healthy eating*

This is a resource developed for consumers which translates the more technically written dietary guidelines (mentioned above) into everyday language and practice. It provides a pictorial 'plate diagram', which shows the core foods mentioned at the beginning of this document, and recommended serve sizes for different age and gender groups. It gives advice on the types and amounts of the various food groups needed for good health.

Both documents are available at

- [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)

To see a detailed list of omega-3 levels in fish and seafood, visit:

- [www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Omega3levelsinfishandseafood.pdf](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Omega3levelsinfishandseafood.pdf)



# 4

# Healthy



# Healthy

The average Victorian diet includes too many foods and drinks high in total and saturated fats, salt and sugar, and these are served in increasingly larger portion sizes. This means that discretionary (or non-core) foods (such as cakes, biscuits, snack bars, pastries, chocolate, confectionary, crisps and savoury snack foods and soft drinks) are making up more than a third of the average Australian adult's diet and more than 40 per cent of the average child's kilojoule intake.

Discretionary foods are not needed at all for health. There is an extraordinarily abundant and diverse supply of nutritious food available to Victorians that can be promoted to address our unbalanced diets. Healthy food can be the tastiest, most convenient and enjoyable food on offer – without excessive amounts of added fat, salt or sugar.

## How to provide and promote healthy foods

### Always offer water and limit sugar-sweetened drinks

- Provide and promote water at all times.
- Replace soft drinks, energy drinks, sports drinks, flavoured mineral water, caffeinated drinks, juices and cordials with water.
- Try adding mint, lemon, or herbal teas to water for added flavour.
- Use real fruit and low fat dairy in smoothies and milkshakes.
- When promoting or choosing juices, choose those with no added sugar.

## Practise portion control

- Provide serving sizes as per the *Australian guide to healthy eating* (see 'Key references' for details) – remember people tend to eat the entire portion placed in front of them.
- If up-selling meals with side orders, ensure the default option is the healthy option (such as offering a side salad rather than hot chips and water rather than soft drink).
- Offer half-serves of meals and reduce the price accordingly for the reduced-size item.
- Take opportunities to educate people about portion sizes. For example, reduce serve sizes of desserts and baked goods as these are generally energy (kilojoule) dense.

## Use poly- and monounsaturated fats and oils and reduce foods containing saturated fat

Saturated fats are found in foods such as fat on meat, chicken skin, full-fat dairy products, butter, pastries, baked foods and many takeaway and snack foods, for example hot chips or crisps.

Poly and monounsaturated fats and oils include olive, canola, vegetable, linseed (flaxseed), safflower, soybean, sunflower, nut oils, margarine, tahini or avocado.

Reduce the amount of saturated fat by choosing alternatives and modifying recipes.

- Choose lean meats and poultry.
- Replace full-fat dairy products with reduced-fat alternatives (that is, products labelled as skim, low-fat, or light). 'Light' tasty cheeses that contain around 25 per cent fat still have a good taste, texture and melt well.
- Use reduced-fat evaporated milk instead of cream, reduced-fat coconut milk instead of coconut cream and natural low-fat yoghurt instead of sour cream.
- Use naturally lower-fat cheeses, such as ricotta or cottage cheese.
- Use salad dressings made with poly- or monounsaturated oils, in small amounts.
- Use spray or brush-on oils instead of pouring oil over food to reduce the overall amount of fat used.
- Use different spreads such as avocado, hummus, low-fat tzatziki or low-fat mayonnaise as alternatives to margarine and butter.
- Use filo pastry or bread instead of pastries such as short crust or puff, which are high in saturated fat.
- Try a layer of couscous, rice or potato under or on top of meat or vegetable pie fillings instead of pastry.
- Use ramekins (individual crockery pie dishes) with a pastry lid instead of pastry cases for pies.



20 years ago: 17 g (371 kJ)

Today: 130 g (2,500 kJ) or about 7 times larger

### Butter versus margarine: which is best?

The main difference between margarine and butter is that butter is made from animal fats, while margarine is made from plant fats and skim milk. In recent decades margarine spreads have been reformulated to improve their healthiness. In Australia, most brands have phased out the use of hydrogenated oils, and are free from trans fats (which was historically the main concern with margarine).

There are also other alternatives to butter and margarine such as olive oil, avocado, nut butters or hummus, but when a recipe will only work with butter or margarine, consider choosing margarine to reduce the saturated fat content of the dish.

### Reduce salt (sodium)

- Check food labels and nutrition information panels on packaged foods and choose those that are labelled 'no added salt' or 'low salt'. 'Low salt' means less than 120 milligrams of sodium per 100 grams.
- If the 'no salt' or 'low salt' options are not available, choose 'reduced-salt' products or read the nutrition information panel and compare different brands to find the product with the lowest salt option available (compare the sodium mg per 100 g columns).

### An overall guide<sup>3</sup> is:

120 mg sodium or less per 100 g = low\*  
120 mg to 600 mg sodium per 100 g = moderate\*\*  
Over 600 mg sodium per 100 g = high\*\*

- Choose low or reduced-salt stock powders, stocks, sauces and gravies.
- Do not add salt to the water when cooking pasta, noodles, rice or vegetables.
- Remove salt from the table.
- If using canned vegetables, choose those labelled 'no added salt'.

- Choose canned fish in spring water over brine, which is salty.
- Limit the use of processed meat such as salami, sausages and ham.
- Don't automatically add the amount of salt stated in recipes – try adding half or less. If a recipe includes other salty ingredients like stock powder, Asian sauces, olives, capers, anchovies, bacon, ham or smoked salmon, you shouldn't need extra salt.

### All salt is the same

Sea salt, rock salt, pink salt and vegetable salt all contain sodium and have similar health implications as ordinary table salt.

- Reduce salt without sacrificing taste by reducing salt slowly and replacing salt in cooking or on foods with other flavour boosters such as herbs (for example basil, coriander), spices (for example cumin, pepper), fresh ginger, garlic, chilli, vinegars and lemon and lime juices or zest.

### Converting sodium into salt

To find out how much salt is in a product (in mg), multiply the amount of sodium (in mg) by 2.5.

For example: 400 mg sodium in a serve of food  
 $400 \times 2.5 = 1,000$  mg (or 1 gram) of salt

<sup>3</sup> Australian Division of World Action on Salt and Health, 'Consumer guidelines for reducing salt consumption', viewed May 2012, <[http://www.awash.org.au/cons\\_low\\_understandinglabels.html](http://www.awash.org.au/cons_low_understandinglabels.html)>.

\* The definition of low salt that we use here is based on the Food Standards Australia New Zealand figure of 120 mg or less. <<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/>>

\*\* As there is no Australian standard of moderate and high salt intake, the figures we use here are based on the United Kingdom's Food Standards Agency definitions. <<http://www.food.gov.uk/>>

## Reduce added sugars

- Check ingredients for added sugars including glucose, glucose syrup, corn syrup, malt syrup, dextrose, sucrose, maltose, fructose, concentrated fruit juice, fruit sugar syrup, icing sugar, brown sugar, coffee sugar, raw sugar, caster sugar, treacle, molasses, honey and golden syrup.
- Reduce sugar by one-quarter to one-third in baked goods such as cakes and biscuits. This generally should not affect the overall quality of the finished product, although it will be a little less sweet.
- Extra spices such as cinnamon or nutmeg and flavourings such as vanilla essence can be added to compensate for reduced sweetness.
- To provide sweetness, use fresh fruit, unsweetened frozen fruit, fruit canned in natural juice or dried fruit. These can also be used as ingredients in recipes to give sweetness if sugar has not been added or has been reduced.
- Stew fruit without added sugar – use cinnamon or cloves to add extra flavour.
- Honey and raw sugar may be natural, but they are still added sugars. They contain similar amounts of kilojoules and sugar to white sugar.

### All sugars have similar kilojoules

White sugar = brown sugar = raw sugar = honey

## Choose healthy cooking methods

- Use baking and grilling on a rack or pan roasting as preferred methods of cooking rather than frying.
- Consider whether menu items can be:
  - steamed or blanched in water
  - grilled, roasted or baked on a rack
  - stir-fried or pan-fried with minimal oil
  - cooked in a microwave.
- Use oil sprays or a brush of oil instead of ‘drizzling’.
- Use baking paper on trays for oven baked items.
- Use non-stick cookware to avoid adding fat.
- Consider oven baking as an alternative to deep-frying when preparing commercial crumbed and coated products – ask your supplier for specific instructions if you’re not sure.
- Consider cooking and serving food in a bamboo steamer.

### Need some healthy recipes?

To see how easy it is to make common recipes in line with the principles of the Healthy Food Charter visit

- [www.health.vic.gov.au/nutrition](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/nutrition).

Other recipes can also be found at the Better Health Channel:

- [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

### Understanding nutrients

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Nutrient Panel Calculator helps food manufacturers calculate the average nutrient content of their food products and prepare a nutrition information panel.

- [www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodstandards/nutritionpanelcalculator/](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodstandards/nutritionpanelcalculator/)

FSANZ NUTTAB 2010 food nutrient database is an online searchable database containing nutrient data for 2,668 foods available in Australia and up to 245 nutrients per food.

- [www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumerinformation/nuttab2010/](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumerinformation/nuttab2010/)

### Follow policies and guidelines

- For hospitals (retail outlets and staff catering) and other workplaces: *Healthy choices: food and drink guidelines for Victorian public hospitals*
- For hospitals (inpatient menus) and residential aged care facilities: *Department of Human Services Nutrition standards for menu items in Victorian hospitals and residential aged care facilities*
- For licensed children's services: *Get up & grow: healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood*
- For primary and secondary schools: *Department of Education and Early Childhood Development School canteens and other school food services policy and food planner.*

### Need Help? Use the Victorian Healthy Eating Advisory Service

Anyone responsible for providing food and drinks in early childhood services, schools, workplaces and hospitals can contact the Victorian Healthy Eating Advisory Service for practical healthy eating and nutrition advice.

This service funded by the Department of Health includes:

- resources, support and practical advice on healthy eating and nutrition via a telephone advice line, email and website
- support to work towards meeting the requirements of relevant healthy food policies and guidelines
- training for health professionals and food service staff.

Telephone 1300 22 52 88 or email [vheas@nutritionaustralia.org](mailto:vheas@nutritionaustralia.org)

- [www.vheas.vic.gov.au](http://www.vheas.vic.gov.au)

Other food businesses and food educators can refer to the Heart Foundation resources on healthy eating, which include a comprehensive site especially for food industry and caterers.

- [www.heartfoundation.org.au/information-for-professionals/food-professionals/Pages/catering-preparing-foods.aspx](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/information-for-professionals/food-professionals/Pages/catering-preparing-foods.aspx)
- [www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Recipe-Guidelines.pdf](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Recipe-Guidelines.pdf)



# 5 Connected



# Connected

Food is a great medium for building individual, communal and societal connectedness. By celebrating our food – where it comes from, how we prepare it and with whom we share it – each of us can contribute to positive social, economic and health outcomes for all Victorians.

This charter emphasises the many roles that food plays in connecting people to our environment, to other people, to culture and to enterprise. Victorians enjoy a wide variety of cuisines, which are constantly evolving with new cultural influences. The availability of culturally appropriate food is important for the identity and connectedness of Victoria's diverse communities.

Food growers, producers and retailers are an essential part of our regional communities and our food system. Knowing where our food comes from and taking care in food preparation can inspire a connection to food that is often lost in our busy lives. Making healthy food accessible and affordable for those who are least able to eat well can support wellbeing and reduce social isolation.

Connecting with our food in these different ways contributes to a community in which future generations may also enjoy the outstanding variety and quality of healthy food available in Victoria.

## How to be connected with healthy foods

### Enjoy and share food

- Rather than eating on the run, sit down and enjoy your food whenever possible.
- Share meals with friends, neighbours and work colleagues whenever you can.
- Enjoy eating together as a family.

### Understand how food is grown

- Connecting with how and where food is grown encourages people to eat better.
- Growing fruits, vegetables and herbs is a great way to increase interest in their consumption and learn more about the production of food. If you don't grow your own, try visiting a nearby garden or farm to get up close and personal with fruits, vegetables or herbs.
- A surprising number of people do not know where different foods come from or what is involved in producing particular foods. So, where relevant, include explanations of the origin of foods or ingredients, for example, on a menu.

### Use seasonal ingredients

- Buy fruit and vegetables that are in season as they will be more affordable and tastier. Many greengrocers and supermarkets provide this information in store, or see the links below for this information online.

### Enjoy local produce

- Take the time to get to know your food producers, greengrocers, butchers, bakers and other retailers. They can assist with understanding Victoria's wonderful and diverse food supply. Food markets, farmers markets and produce home delivery services are other ways to access healthy foods.

### Promote healthy food that is accessible to all

- Having access to nutritious and affordable food is a prerequisite for good health and can promote social inclusion.
- Take active measures to engage disadvantaged groups or communities in food-related programs. This may include people on low incomes, people with a disability, people from refugee or migrant backgrounds and some Aboriginal Victorians.

### Connect to diverse communities and cultures

- Connecting with diverse cultures and community groups through food can expand your knowledge and appreciation of different cuisines and practices.
- Establishing a connection with other people and communities can bring about positive community health and social outcomes.
- Offer and promote culturally appropriate food.

### Reduce food waste

- Food businesses can reduce waste, as well as help Victorians who would otherwise go hungry, by becoming involved in fresh food rescue programs. See over the page for details.
- For food service outlets, consider assessing plate wastage. If food is regularly being returned uneaten, consider reducing portion sizes.

## Need to explore your local area?

### Check out these websites for some help:

The Locavore Edition website provides information for consumers about regional food producers and suppliers.

- [www.locavored.com](http://www.locavored.com)

The Local Harvest website has been designed to provide a resource to make it easy to find local and more sustainable food sources.

- [www.localharvest.org.au](http://www.localharvest.org.au)

Funded by the State Government of Victoria the Better Health Channel website contains accurate and up-to-date information on health and nutrition, and includes plenty of healthy recipes.

- [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

The Melbourne Markets Market Fresh website includes a comprehensive guide to fresh fruit, vegetables, seasonal availability, nutrition, videos and recipes. It also includes a search function to locate your nearest greengrocer or retail market.

- [www.marketfresh.com.au](http://www.marketfresh.com.au)

Based on Victoria's open-air Queen Victoria Market, this website contains recipes and helpful information on seasonal availability.

- [www.qvm.com.au/qvm/seasonal\\_produce.aspx](http://www.qvm.com.au/qvm/seasonal_produce.aspx)

## Want to waste less?

Sustainability Victoria's 'ResourceSmart' website contains resources and information for both businesses and households wanting to reduce food waste.

- [www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/default.aspx](http://www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/default.aspx)

The New South Wales Food Authority has a website dedicated to reducing waste. Check it out at:

- [www.lovefoodhatewaste.com.au](http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com.au)

## Ever considered food rescue programs?

Food rescue programs redistribute surplus food to community food programs around Australia. Food is donated by producers, wholesalers, markets, supermarkets, caterers and events. These programs not only reduce food waste, but also help Victorians who may otherwise go without nutritious food.

Second Bite

- [www.secondbite.org.au](http://www.secondbite.org.au)

Fare Share

- [www.fareshare.net.au](http://www.fareshare.net.au)

or Food Bank

- [www.foodbank.com.au](http://www.foodbank.com.au)

# Key references

## ***NHMRC Dietary guidelines for Australians***

The *Dietary guidelines for Australians* provide evidence-based guidelines on healthy eating for Australians to maximise wellbeing and prevent chronic disease. The guide also includes technical documents for health professionals/industry.

## ***NHMRC Australian guide to healthy eating***

This consumer-targeted resource helps translate dietary guidelines into practice. It provides a pictorial 'plate diagram' and recommended serve sizes for different age and gender groups, giving advice on the types and amounts of the various food groups needed for good health.

Both available at:

- [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)

## ***NHMRC Nutrient reference values for Australia and New Zealand***

The nutrient reference values provide the specific levels of intake of nutrients needed to meet the known nutritional needs of Australians and New Zealanders. They are based on available scientific knowledge.

- [www.nrv.gov.au](http://www.nrv.gov.au)

Prevention and Population Health Branch,  
Department of Health

Website : [www.health.vic.gov.au/prevention](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/prevention)

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