



# Healthy eating

A healthy diet supports a healthy body and mind. It is filled with a wide range of foods from the five food groups, including:

1. Vegetables and legumes
2. Fruit
3. Grains and cereals
4. Lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds
5. Dairy products and alternatives

Further to consuming foods within these five groups, we may also choose to eat foods for enjoyment or social reasons on occasion too. A healthy diet will look different for everyone, but the basic structure will be similar.



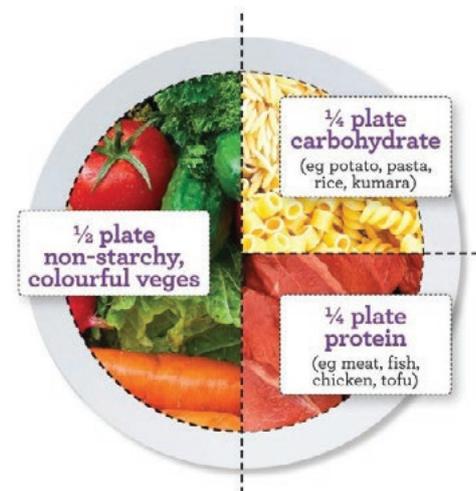
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## The healthy plate model

A practical way to help you achieve this is by adopting the healthy plate model. In this model, half of the plate is made up of vegetables, which can be raw, cooked, fresh or frozen; one quarter of the plate is made up of protein-rich foods, which can be animal based (fish, chicken, beef, pork, lamb, eggs etc.) or plant based foods (lentils, chickpeas, beans, tofu, tempeh); the last quarter of the plate is made up of carbohydrate-rich foods (rice, pasta, bread, potato etc.), and then a small amount of healthy fats (extra virgin olive oil, avocado, nuts or seeds). This model can be applied to the meals we cook at home - for example, a beef stir-fry with lots of veggies and rice, or adding a salad or veggies if we order takeaway such as pizza or a pasta dish.

Our body requires a range of nutrients to function optimally. Through the consumption of a wide range of foods from the food groups, we can increase the chance that our body is getting all the vitamins and minerals it needs to support good health and optimal wellness, as well as prevent against future lifestyle related diseases. Having variety in the foods we eat not only ensures that we are able to meet our body's needs for different nutrients, but also means that our meals are more interesting and we don't get bored of the food we are eating.





# Tips for sustainable behaviour change

**By ditching the 'all or nothing' thinking** – Don't try to change everything at once; instead, pick one thing that you would like to change (e.g. having fruit as an after-dinner snack) and focus on that for a week or two, then, move onto the next thing you are hoping to change when this has become part of your routine. This method is a lot more achievable and sustainable than trying to change everything at once, as that can be overwhelming and is often too restrictive.

**By focusing on the positive** – We will be a lot more successful with our behaviour change if we focus on positive things we would like to add to our diet, instead of the things we would like to give up or reduce. The beauty of focusing on the positives to increase in our diet (e.g. aiming to have three different veggies with lunch and dinner) is that we will be filling up on the nutritious stuff and 'crowding out' the less healthy foods anyway.

**By having a plan and being prepared** - We only have so much decision-making power each day, and our lives are filled with making decisions. If we leave what to eat for dinner until after work, it will be all too much and we will fall back on what we know and what is easy for us. If, however, we put aside some time when we are relaxed and have capacity to put together a rough plan of what our dinners will look like for the week and buy all the ingredients that we will need, the 'what to eat for dinner' decision has already been made, the ingredients are ready, and we no longer need to make decisions after a long day.

**By stocking your kitchen with food you want to be eating more of** - If nutritious ingredients or foods aren't available, we won't eat them. As above, if we make a plan for what we want our meals to look like for the week and buy these ingredients, this is what we will prepare. It's a great idea to have longer-life staples (i.e. tins of legumes, tomato and fish) stocked in your pantry and fridge so you can make an easy meal or snack if you haven't been prepared with shopping. Keeping a fruit bowl or jar of nuts on the kitchen bench is a great reminder to have some fruit or nuts as a snack when we are hungry.

**By making sure your meals are balanced and you are eating enough** – Undereating doesn't lead anywhere positive. Our bodies need food, and when our bodies are well nourished, we can get on with the important things and stop thinking about food all the time. Our hunger plays an important role in making sure our bodies get the food that they need; often we fear hunger, but hunger is actually a sign that our bodies are working efficiently and using the fuel that we are providing it with. Eating regularly is a good way to make sure that we eat appropriately for our appetite, and leave the meal feeling good and energised. Having balanced meals via the healthy plate model is a good way to ensure our bodies are getting the fuel that they need and we are satisfied from our meals.

**By getting support** - Getting support can be a crucial step in making behavioural changes and working out a balanced and sustainable approach to eating more healthfully. Setting up a support system means that you are making a commitment to the changes you want to implement, and support helps to encourage you and keep you accountable. This is a great tool to help you stay on track with what you are doing, but is especially important when things aren't going the way you necessarily want them to.

