

So, what exactly is healthy eating?

Firstly, let's talk about the [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#). They are a great guide to food and nutrition as they provide a framework for healthy eating for the general population. These guidelines aim to promote health and wellbeing and also reduce the risk of diet-related conditions and chronic disease. Based on scientific evidence, the guidelines are comprised of five key components:

1. To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious foods and drinks to meet your energy needs
2. Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day:
 - Plenty of vegetables, including different types and colours, and legumes/beans
 - Fruit
 - Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties, such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley
 - Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans
 - Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat
 - And drink plenty of water
3. Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt, added sugars and alcohol
4. Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding
5. Care for your food; prepare and store it safely

In conjunction with the Australian Dietary Guidelines, another useful tool to be aware of is the [Australian Guide to Healthy Eating](#). This is a food selection guide that visually represents the proportion of the five food groups recommended for consumption each day. It also visually represents the foods to use in small amounts (i.e. cooking oils) as well as the foods and drinks to consume only sometimes and in small amounts (i.e. discretionary foods). A guide to the recommended number of serves that an adult should be consuming per day, as well as what a serve actually looks like, can be found [here](#). By eating the recommended amounts from the five food groups and limiting foods that are high in saturated fat, added sugars and added salt, you will be getting enough of the nutrients that are essential for good health.

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Now what does this actually look like as a meal? We have put together the following resource which outlines how to plan and build a balanced plate. An easy way to think about this is to divide your plate into the following sections:

- Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate with colourful vegetables
- Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with starchy vegetables or wholegrains
- Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with a lean protein source
- Add a small amount of healthy fats

Give this method a try when preparing your next meal – can you build a balanced plate?

What's on your plate?

How to plan a balanced meal

Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate with colourful vegetables



Try stir frying, steaming and roasting. Add vegetables to your casseroles, curries, sauces and mince dishes.



Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with lean protein



Trim fat from meat. Choose lean mince. Choose skinless chicken. Include plant protein from legumes and tofu.

Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with starchy vegetables or wholegrain foods



Add a small amount of healthy fat.



Now mix it up

Remember, leftovers from a balanced dinner can make a healthy lunch. Save time and prepare an extra serve.







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