

There are many ways to choose a healthy diet. The following tables, based on the sample serves recommended by the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*, show two examples of a healthy diet. Follow the steps below to choose the best one for you.

The amount and type of food needed varies with age and sex, and pregnancy and breastfeeding.

### Five steps to healthier eating

- 1. Using tables 1–3, identify the number of sample serves from the five food groups that is suggested for you. The tables show healthy eating patterns for children and adolescents (Table 1), adult and pregnant and breastfeeding women (Table 2) and men (Table 3).**
- 2. Choose your preferred eating pattern. Select from a diet based on eating a lot of bread, cereal, rice, pasta and noodles (shown in the orange rows) or one which includes more from all of the groups (shown in the blue rows).**
- 3. Using the tables, choose the number of sample serves you need according to your level of physical activity and body size. If you are fairly sedentary and/or of small to average size, you should use the lower number. If you are active and/or of average to large size, you should use the higher number.**

Some very large and very active people will need even more, while some very small and inactive people will need even less than shown in the tables. The best guide to how much you need to eat is hunger. Eat when you are hungry and stop eating when you feel full.

- 4. Write your personal healthy eating pattern into Table 4. You may like to do this for other members of your household.**
- 5. Consider some changes. What changes are needed to the way you eat now? What changes can you realistically manage right now? Plan for three realistic changes and write them in the space provided. Some common dietary changes that many people could make include:**
  - replacing an extra food (see pg 14) with 2 slices of bread
  - reducing your serve size of meat or chicken and eating more vegetables, potatoes, legumes, rice, pasta or noodles
  - increasing or decreasing your intake of milk, cheese and yoghurt
  - carrying a bottle of water with you to avoid buying soft drink.

**Table 1: Sample serves from the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating suggested for children and adolescents.**

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS	BREAD, CEREALS, RICE, PASTA, NOODLES	VEGETABLES, LEGUMES	FRUIT	MILK, YOGHURT, CHEESE	MEAT, FISH, POULTRY, EGGS, NUTS, LEGUMES	EXTRA FOODS
CHILDREN 4-7 YEARS	5-7	2	1	2	1/2	1-2
	3-4	4	2	3	1/2-1	1-2
CHILDREN 8-11 YEARS	6-9	3	1	2	1	1-2
	4-6	4-5	1-2	3	1-1 1/2	1-2
ADOLESCENTS 12-18 YEARS	5-11	4	3	3	1	1-3
	4-7	5-9	3-4	3-5	1-2	1-3

**Table 2: Sample serves from the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating suggested for women.**

WOMEN	BREAD, CEREALS, RICE, PASTA, NOODLES	VEGETABLES, LEGUMES	FRUIT	MILK, YOGHURT, CHEESE	MEAT, FISH, POULTRY, EGGS, NUTS, LEGUMES	EXTRA FOODS
WOMEN 19-60 YEARS	4-9	5	2	2	1	0-2 1/2
	4-6	4-7	2-3	2-3	1-1 1/2	0-2 1/2
PREGNANT	4-6	5-6	4	2	1 1/2	0-2 1/2
BREASTFEEDING	5-7	7	5	2	2	0-2 1/2
60+ YEARS	4-7	5	2	2	1	0-2
	3-5	4-6	2-3	2-3	1-1 1/2	0-2

**Table 3: Sample serves from the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating suggested for men.**

MEN	BREAD, CEREALS, RICE, PASTA, NOODLES	VEGETABLES, LEGUMES	FRUIT	MILK, YOGHURT, CHEESE	MEAT, FISH, POULTRY, EGGS, NUTS, LEGUMES	EXTRA FOODS
19-60 YEARS	6-12	5	2	2	1	0-3
	5-7	6-8	3-4	2-4	1½-2	0-3
60+ YEARS	4-9	5	2	2	1	0-2½
	4-6	4-7	2-3	2-3	1-1½	0-2½

**Table 4: Personal healthy eating pattern.**

NAME	BREAD, ETC.	VEGES.	FRUIT	MILK	MEAT, ETC.	EXTRA FOODS

Note: It is assumed that many people will add small amounts of margarine to bread and use small amounts of oil in cooking.

**Three changes my household and I could make most easily to eat in a healthier way:** .....

1. ....

2. ....

3. ....

When you feel these changes are well established, you may wish to plan for further changes to the way you eat.  
Repeat steps 4 and 5.

**Physical activity is important too.**

You may also want to think about increasing your physical activity level. Thirty minutes of moderate activity every day (like walking), even if done in three ten minute bursts, will make you fitter and healthier.