

## Healthy eating for men aged 51 to 70

As a man between the ages of 51 and 70, your body becomes less efficient at absorbing nutrients from the food and drink you consume. Along with this, the amount of energy your body burns also reduces.

### Why eat healthily?

At this stage of your life, it's important that you eat enough nutritious food to keep your body functioning at the best possible level and absorb the nutrients that you need.

Find out more about [Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines](#).

### Healthy eating guidelines for midlife men

The [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#) outline what a healthy diet is for men aged 51 to 70 with average height and an inactive (sedentary) to moderately active lifestyle.

#### Australian Dietary Guidelines serving recommendations by food group

Food group	Example serving size	Serves per day	Example of essential nutrients
Grains (cereal) foods	1 slice of bread or ½ a medium roll or flat bread (40 g), ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, noodles, ½ cup of cooked porridge or polenta, 2/3 cup breakfast cereal flakes (30 g) or ½ cup muesli	6 serves	Fibre, carbohydrates, protein, iron, zinc, magnesium, B group vitamins, vitamin E
Vegetables and legume/beans	½ cup cooked vegetables (75 g), 1 cup salad vegetables, 1 small potato, ½ cup cooked dried or canned beans, chickpeas or lentils (no added salt)	5½ serves	Fibre, carbohydrate, vitamin C, vitamin E, magnesium, potassium, folate, protein, iron
Fruits	1 medium piece of fresh fruit (150 g), 30 g dried fruit (e.g. 4 dried apricot halves), 1 cup canned fruit (150 g)	2 serves	Fibre, carbohydrate, vitamin C, vitamin E, magnesium, potassium, folate

Food group	Example serving size	Serves per day	Example of essential nutrients
Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds, legumes/beans*	65 g cooked lean red meat (e.g. beef, lamb, pork, venison or kangaroo) or ½ cup of lean mince, 2 small chops, 80 g cooked poultry, 100 g cooked fish fillet or 1 small can of fish, 2 large eggs, 170 g tofu, 30 g nuts or seeds	2½ serves	Protein, essential fatty acids (found in fish, e.g. omega 3 and omega 6), iron, vitamin B12, iodine, zinc
Milk, yogurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat*	1 cup (250 ml) milk, 200 g tub of yoghurt, 40 g or 2 slices of cheese, 120 g ricotta cheese	2½ serves	Calcium, protein, vitamin A, vitamin B12, iodine, zinc, riboflavin
Saturated oils and fats (e.g. butter, cream, lard, coconut and palm kernel oils)		use in small amounts	

\* If you follow a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle, **plan your diet** to be sure it includes all the essential nutrients.

If you are taller or more active, you can have an additional 0–2½ serves per day, selected from:

- foods from any of the **five food groups**, or
- unsaturated spreads or oils (such as olive oil, canola oil, nut butters or avocado paste), or
- **discretionary choices**. However, discretionary choices are not needed as part of a healthy diet and, if eaten, should only be eaten occasionally.

### Is your weight putting you at risk of chronic disease?

For adults over the age of 18, the body mass index (BMI) can be used as an indicator to determine whether your body weight puts you at risk of diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases and some cancers. If you would like to know what your BMI is and what it means, use our **[Body mass index calculator](#)**.

### Eating for a healthy weight

Achieving or maintaining a healthy weight is all about balancing the energy you take in with the energy you burn (energy out). To find out more about the relationship between food and energy, see **[Balancing energy in and energy out](#)**.

### How to start healthy eating habits

It's never too late to improve your diet. Here's how you can.

### Fruit, vegetables and legumes/beans – help your body shine

Eat a variety of different coloured vegetables and fruit every day by including them in your meals and having them as snacks.

For more information, see 'Vegetables and legume/beans' and 'fruits' in the Australian Dietary Guidelines table.

Also see, **[Can you eat a rainbow](#)** for more information.

### **Wholegrain breads, cereals and grains – keep your heart and gut healthy**

Wholegrains are high in fibre which is important to heart and gut health. Fibre also helps you to feel fuller for longer and therefore helps with weight control.

For more information, see 'Grains (cereal) foods' in the Australian Dietary Guidelines table.

### **Lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds and legumes/beans – maintain your muscles**

These foods are high in protein, which is key for maintaining muscle mass in later years.

See 'Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds, legumes/beans' in the Australian Dietary Guidelines table for more information.

### **Dairy and dairy alternatives – keep your bones healthy**

Dairy is a great source of calcium, which is essential for bone health. Vitamin D from sunlight helps you to absorb the calcium you consume. It's important to get enough vitamin D and dietary calcium to maximise your bone density as you age.

If you prefer dairy alternatives, choose those that have been fortified with 100 mg of calcium per 100 ml.

For more information, see 'Milk, yogurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat' in the Australian Dietary Guidelines table.

Also see 'Bone health' on this page.

For more information about vitamin D and safe sunlight exposure, visit [SunSmart](#) and the [Cancer Council](#).

Foods that contain vitamin D are oily fish like salmon, tuna or mackerel, liver, egg yolks and some vitamin D-enriched foods such as breakfast cereals and milk.

### **Fluids – keep your body hydrated**

**Drink plenty of water** during both warm and cold weather and avoid sugary drinks. Staying hydrated is important during this life stage, so aim for around 2.6 litres (approximately 10 cups) of fluid every day.

### **Common dietary issues for men aged 51 to 70**

Here are some of the more common dietary issues that can affect men in this age group.

#### **Obesity**

Obesity is a risk factor for Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure (which increases risk of cardiovascular diseases), high cholesterol (which increases risk of coronary heart diseases) and some cancers (such as colon and rectum cancer).

You can use the body mass index (**BMI**) as an indicator to determine whether your body weight puts you at risk of chronic disease. A **waist circumference measurement** can indicate whether your body waist fat is putting you at risk of Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. (This may be the case if your waist circumference measures more than 94 centimetres.)

For information on healthy weight loss, see [Weight loss – a healthy approach](#) and [Body image and diets](#).

#### **Alcohol**

Alcohol is high in kilojoules and low in nutrients. Drinking alcohol can cause serious short- and long-term harm such as obesity, heart disease, liver disease and high cholesterol. It can also affect your mental health.

For more information, see [How alcohol affects your body](#).

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's publication **Cancer in Australia 2017**, alcohol is a known risk factor for the following cancers:

- colon and rectum
- liver
- lung
- oesophagus
- pancreas
- stomach.

The **National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Alcohol Guidelines** recommend that healthy men should drink no more than two standard drinks on any one day to decrease the lifetime risk of harm from alcohol-related diseases. These guidelines also recommend that healthy men should drink no more than four standard drinks on a single occasion to decrease the risk of alcohol-related injury.

For more information on what represents a standard drink, see **Alcohol content of a standard drink**.

### **Bone health**

**According to Osteoporosis Australia** a quarter of the people who have osteoporosis are men. Most risk factors for osteoporosis apply to both men and women, but men also have specific risk factors such as treatments for prostate cancer.

For good bone health it's important to include enough calcium in your diet. Adult men aged 70 and under need about 1,000 mg of calcium every day. See 'Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives' in the Australian Dietary Guidelines table.

To help your body absorb the calcium in your diet you also need to make sure you're getting enough vitamin D. Sunlight is a natural source of vitamin D.

For more information, see **Osteoporosis in men**.

Note that this page does not apply to men with specific health conditions. For more information, please consult:

- your **GP (doctor)**
- a dietitian accredited with the **Dietitians Association of Australia**
- a nutritionist accredited with the **Nutrition Society of Australia**.

**This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by:**

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