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State Government Victoria  Better Health Channel Logo

Health.vic
Victoria's hub for health services and business

DHHS
A gateway to the strategies, policies, programs and services delivered by the Department of Health & Human Services.

Seniors Online
Victorian government portal for older people, with information about government and community services and programs.

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Food poisoning - prevention

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Summary

- Food poisoning bacteria can multiply very quickly, particularly in certain conditions.
- Pregnant women, young children, the elderly and those with an illness are more at risk of food poisoning.
- Take care when preparing, storing or serving food, especially potentially high-risk foods.
- See your doctor as soon as possible if you experience symptoms of food poisoning.

Food poisoning is caused by eating contaminated food and affects a large number of Australians every year. Food can be contaminated when it is handled, stored or prepared incorrectly. Some foods carry a higher risk of causing food poisoning, and some people are more at risk of getting food poisoning than others.

Food poisoning and bacteria

Food poisoning occurs when sufficient numbers of particular types of bacteria, or their toxins, are present in the food you eat. These bacteria are called pathogens.

High-risk foods

Food contamination is not just limited to foods you may consider risky, such as chicken or fish. Prepared fruits, vegetables and salads can also be potentially dangerous. Contaminated food will usually look, smell and taste normal. Food poisoning bacteria can grow and multiply on some types of food more easily than others.

Potentially high-risk foods include:
- raw and cooked meat, including poultry such as chicken and turkey, and foods containing these, such as casseroles, curries and lasagne
- dairy products, such as custard and dairy-based desserts like custard tarts and cheesecake
- eggs and egg products, such as quiche
- smallgoods such as hams and salamis
- seafood, such as seafood salad, patties, fish balls, stews containing seafood and fish stock
- cooked rice and pasta
- prepared salads like coleslaws, pasta salads and rice salads
- prepared fruit salads
- ready-to-eat foods, including sandwiches, rolls, and pizza that contain any of the foods above.

High-risk groups for food poisoning

Some people are more at risk of getting food poisoning than others. Take special care when buying, storing and preparing food for these people.

Vulnerable groups include:
- pregnant women
- the elderly
- young children
- people with chronic illness.

Causes of food poisoning

Pathogens such as Salmonella, Campylobacter and E. coli may be found in our food-producing animals. Care in processing, transport, storage, preparing and serving of food is necessary to reduce the risk of contamination.

Food poisoning bacteria can multiply very quickly, particularly in certain conditions. The factors that affect bacterial growth include:

- **Time** – in ideal conditions, one bacterium can multiply to more than two million in seven hours.
- **Temperature** – food poisoning bacteria grow best in the temperature range between 5 °C and 60 °C. This is referred to as the ‘temperature danger zone’. This means that we need to keep perishable food either very cold or very hot, in order to avoid food poisoning.
- **Nutrients** – most foods contain enough nutrients for bacteria to grow. This is especially the case with potentially high-risk foods such as dairy and egg products, meat and poultry and seafood.
- **Water** – bacteria need water for their growth. Without water, growth may slow down or stop. That is why dried foods do not spoil.
- **pH** – is the measure of acidity or alkalinity and is also important for controlling bacterial growth. Low pH (acid conditions) generally stops bacterial growth, but where the pH of food is neutral, as is the case for many foods, most bacteria grow quite well.

Symptoms of food poisoning

The symptoms of food poisoning may vary depending on the type of bacteria causing the illness. Symptoms can range from mild to very severe. They can occur almost immediately after eating, or a number of hours later, and they can last from 24 hours to five days.

When you get sick, you usually experience one or more of:
- nausea
- stomach cramps
- diarrhoea
- vomiting
- fever
- headaches.
Some food-borne pathogens cause other symptoms. For instance, pathogenic *Listeria* bacteria may cause miscarriage or meningitis in susceptible people. Food poisoning can also lead to other long-term illnesses and symptoms.

### If you think you have food poisoning

If you experience some of these symptoms and think you have food poisoning, see your doctor as soon as possible. It’s also a good idea to report your illness to your local council or the Department of Health, so that the causes can be investigated. This is particularly important if you think the illness is related to eating out at a restaurant or café, or to food purchased from a shop or take-away outlet.

### How to prevent food poisoning

There are some simple rules you can follow to minimise the risk of food poisoning. You should take steps to:

- Prevent food from being contaminated
- Prevent the bacteria in the food from growing and multiplying.

### Buying food

When you buy food:

- Try to keep potentially high-risk foods outside the ‘temperature danger zone’ and buy hot and cold foods at the end of your shopping trip.
- Keep hot foods and cold foods separate.
- Avoid food past its use-by date and always check labels.
- Avoid food in swollen, dented, leaking or damaged cans, containers or other packaging.
- Don’t buy frozen or chilled foods that have been left out of the freezer, and only buy hot foods that are steaming hot.
- Check that serving staff use separate tongs when handling separate food types, such as meats and vegetables.
- Check that serving staff wear gloves when they handle the food, but not when they are cleaning surfaces or taking money.
- Make sure that eggs in cartons identify the supplier, and never buy cracked or dirty eggs.
- Take your shopping home quickly and store it immediately.

### Preparing food to avoid food poisoning

When you prepare food:

- Wash your hands in warm, soapy water before preparing food.
- Don’t use the same cutting board for raw food that will be used for cooked (meat) and foods that are served raw (such as salads). This reduces the chances of cross contamination of food.
- Note that most food should be cooked to a temperature of at least 75 °C.
- Check the cooking temperature with a thermometer. If you don’t have one, make sure you cook poultry until the meat is white, particularly near the bone. Cook hamburgers, mince, rolled roasts and sausages right through until their juices run clear. Cook white fish until it flakes easily with a fork.

### Storing food to avoid food poisoning

When you store food:

- Separate raw food from cooked food, and store raw food at the bottom of the fridge to avoid juices dripping onto and contaminating other food.
- Check your fridge temperature is below 5 °C and your freezer temperature is below -15 °C.
- Allow cooked foods to cool to room temperature (about 21 °C) before storing in the refrigerator. (This should not take more than two hours – cooling will be quicker if you put the hot food into a number of smaller containers rather than leaving it in one large one.) This prevents the refrigerator temperature from rising and reduces the risk of bacterial growth in all food stored in the fridge.
- Cover all food with lids, tin foil or plastic wrap.
- Don’t store food in opened tin cans.

### Where to get help

- Your doctor
- NURSE-ON-CALL Tel. 1300 60 60 24 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)
- Your local council health department
- Food Safety Hotline Tel. 1300 364 352

### Things to remember

- Food poisoning bacteria can multiply very quickly, particularly in certain conditions.
- Pregnant women, young children, the elderly and those with an illness are more at risk of food poisoning.
- Take care when preparing, storing or serving food, especially potentially high-risk foods.
- See your doctor as soon as possible if you experience symptoms of food poisoning.
Did you know food poisoning is more common in summer than at any other time of the year? This is because bacteria grow faster in hot and humid weather. Use these simple tips and don’t let food poisoning ruin your summer.

Are you at risk?

Some of us are more at risk of food poisoning. Vomiting and diarrhoea can be quite serious for pregnant women, children, older people and people whose immune systems are not working properly. Causes range from poor food handling, preparation and storage to eating high-risk foods (such as listeria).
3. **Be food safe**

Our best bet for avoiding illness is to practise proper food safety. That means storing, preparing, handling and cooking food correctly. Keep food out of the temperature danger zone – between 5°C and 60°C – so bacteria can’t grow. Don’t hang around when you’re shopping – the longer food is out, the more germs there are! Take food home straight away and don’t leave it on the bench! Hint: take a cooler bag or esky with some ice packs to keep food chilled for the trip home.

4. **It’s in our hands**

Whether you are preparing, eating or handling food always wash your hands thoroughly. Bacteria that cause food poisoning, such as *Shigella* and *Giardia*, can spread through human contact. If you’re outdoors and there is no place to wash, take some hand sanitiser or some disposable wipes. Use separate tea towels in the kitchen – one for drying hands and one for drying dishes.
Beware of risky foods

Typical foods for summer celebrations are some of the riskiest. Watch out for raw meat (especially poultry) and cooked meat dishes (such as casseroles, curries and lasagne.) Others include – dairy products, egg dishes (e.g. quiche), smallgoods (watch those festive hams!), seafood, cooked rice, cooked pasta, prepared salads (even those containing fruit) and ready-to-eat foods.

Hint: high-risk food that has been left in the temperature danger zone (between 5°C and 60°C) for two hours can be reheated, refrigerated or eaten. Longer than two hours (but less than four) – eat immediately. After four hours – forget it. Put it straight in the bin!

Wash fruit and vegetables

Most of us don’t know exactly where and how raw food is grown. Soils can contain harmful bacteria and viruses. Pesticide residue or toxins from mould may also be present. Get into the habit of washing fruit and vegetables before cooking and eating. Wash under running water and dry with a paper towel. Always follow label instructions on any pre-packaged food such as salads, and eat them by the use-by date.

Pesky bugs and rodents

Rodents and bugs such as flies, mosquitoes and cockroaches tend to thrive in humid conditions. If you must use pesticides, make sure you put all food away or cover it first. Clean cooking surfaces and utensils after spraying. The best way to prevent bugs and other nasties is to put food away as soon as you can – don’t leave scraps on benches.
8. How about lunch?

A homemade lunch is not only healthy, but also good for the household budget. Get those soggy sandwiches and limp salads looking fresh by investing in a lunch box that’s insulated or has a freezer pack. Lunch needs to be chilled. Prepare the night before and store in the fridge or freezer. Remember, keep perishable foods (dairy products, eggs and sliced meats) cool and try to eat them within four hours. For refreshments, frozen water is best and helps keep food chilled. Hint: don’t pack food that has just been cooked – it goes off quickly.

9. Wining and dining

We all love catching up with friends and family. If you happen to be eating out or getting takeaway, know the risks. The same rules apply whether eating at home or out – hot foods need to be kept hot (at 60°C or hotter) and cold foods cold (at 5°C or less). If the place looks dirty, chances are their food hygiene practices are not up to scratch. Food should be fresh, crockery and cutlery, clean and dry. All dishes at buffets or self-serve restaurants should have their own utensils. Be on the lookout for pre-made food – if the food looks ‘tired’ it probably is. Be wary when taking home a ‘doggy bag’ – if in doubt, don’t eat it. Report any concerns to your local council or the Food Safety Hotline 1300 364 352.

Hint: cockroaches need water to survive, if you remove their water source, they’re less likely to want to hang around!
Enjoy the outdoors

We all love a barbie or a picnic – if you enjoy being outdoors make sure you’re ready to enjoy your food too. Follow this basic rule – keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Do a bit of planning before heading outside – prepare salads and cut up any meat. Keep raw meat away from other food by storing it in an insulated cooler. Sealed containers are great for storing high-risk foods. Keep all food in the fridge until you’re ready to start serving or cooking and pack it away as soon as you’re finished! Don’t forget to use separate plates and utensils to handle raw food. If you’re travelling by car, keep your esky out of sunlight. Hint: use frozen drinks for ice packs.

Don’t trust your senses

In ideal conditions, bacteria grow incredibly rapidly – one bacterium can multiply to a whopping two million in seven hours! Although food may look, smell and taste fine, it might be contaminated.
12. **Be a happy camper**

Unless you have access to a fridge, don’t take perishable food when camping – dry, UHT and canned foods are best. If you do have a cooler and want to take meat or pre-cooked meals, make sure they’re frozen. Frozen meat can be kept for two days and meals such as stews for one day. Pack a cooler with ice or ice packs. Cover your esky with a wet bag to promote evaporative cooling. Keep all food sealed and covered. If you’re not sure of the quality of the local water – boil it, take your own or use disinfecting tablets.

13. **Casting a line?**

There’s nothing better than the satisfaction you get eating fish you have caught. Unfortunately, not all of our waterways are clean – especially those in built up areas, such as Melbourne. Industrial chemicals can pollute our rivers and streams. Some freshwater fish can have high levels of mercury too. Take extra care if you are pregnant, have young children, are elderly or have low immunity.
Get to know our waterways

Be on the look out for areas affected by harmful algal blooms too. Steer clear of shellfish that has come into contact with algae toxins such as mussels, yabbies or crayfish. It is generally safe to eat fish caught in waters affected by harmful algae - make sure to wash it in clean water, gill and gut it. Only eat the flesh and put internal organs in the rubbish – don’t feed it to animals. Check with local councils or Emergency Victoria for the latest alerts. Remember, fish should be cooked until it flakes away easily with a fork. Don’t drink untreated water either.

Hint: report any concerns to the EPA on 1300 EPA VIC (1300 372 842).

Be food safe while travelling

If you’re lucky enough to travel overseas, make sure to take all the necessary precautions. Drink bottled water and avoid ice in drinks. Be on the look out for eateries that practise safe hygiene – busy restaurants and hotels are best. If you do eat at street stalls, choose steaming hot food straight off the grill. Avoid raw food and eat fruit and vegetables that can be peeled. Stay away from shellfish and unpasteurised dairy products. Always practise good personal hygiene to avoid infections such as amoebiasis.

Hint: remember this motto when travelling overseas – ‘cook it, peel it or leave it.’
Don’t forget baby

We don’t want our little ones getting sick. If you’re breastfeeding – get to know how to store, thaw and heat breastmilk. If you’re bottle-feeding – sterilise all equipment until your baby is 12 months old. When using formula, follow the instructions on the label and always use fresh, boiled water. Prepare formula only when needed – one bottle at a time. Never use leftover formula. Don’t warm bottles in a microwave either as germs can grow. One way to warm bottles is to stand them in a container of hot (not boiling) water for 10 minutes. If going out, carry formula and sterile hot water separately.

Hint: for plane travellers – water does not come to full boil on airlines so take enough supplies.

Lost power?

Sometimes unfortunately, not everything goes to plan and we may have lost power due to a natural disaster or another cause. If this happens to you, food can only be kept unrefrigerated up to four hours. Remember in summer though, food can go off a lot quicker in the heat. If it’s no longer cold to touch, throw it out.
Got food poisoning?

Think you have food poisoning? See a doctor as soon as you can. Germs are highly contagious so don’t go to childcare, kinder, school or work until diarrhoea stops. If you think it may have been caused from eating at a local restaurant, cafe, shop or takeaway outlet, contact your local council. If you live in Victoria, contact the Food Safety Hotline on 1300 364 352 or foodsafety@dhhs.vic.gov.au.

References

Healthy eating basics

- **Balancing energy in and energy out**
  
  A kilojoule is a unit of measure of energy, in the same way that kilometres measure distance.

- **Body mass index (BMI)**
  
  Body mass index or BMI is an approximate measure of your total body fat.

- **Children's diet - fruit and vegetables**
  
  If you eat and enjoy fruit and vegetables every day, your child may eventually follow your lead.

- **Dairy and dairy alternatives**
  
  Dairy products (and dairy alternatives) are packed with calcium, protein and lots of other essential nutrients. Calcium is vital for healthy teeth and bones. It is also important for your muscles.

- **Eggs**
  
  The humble egg is a powerhouse of nutritional goodness. Eggs are full of things your body needs. They are a great source of protein, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals (such as vitamin A, vitamin D).

- **Energy in food (kilojoules and calories)**
  
  A kilojoule is a unit of measure of energy, in the same way that kilometres measure distance.

- **Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)**
  
  FSANZ's role is to protect the health and safety of people in Australia and New Zealand by maintaining a safe food supply.

- **Getting enough protein**
  
  Protein is an important nutrient that helps your body grow and repair cells. Most Australians eat more than enough protein, but if you are vegetarian or vegan you may not be getting enough protein.

- **Healthy eating tips**
  
  A good balance between exercise and food intake is important to maintain a healthy body weight.

- **How to cut down on salt**
  
  Even if you are careful about the salt you consume, you may be surprised that some of the food you eat contains hidden salt that you’re not even aware of. Learn how to cut down on salt.

- **Kids and energy needs**
  
  It’s important for kids to eat a wide variety of foods for a healthy, well-balanced diet and to be physically active. Creating healthy habits during childhood helps to ensure lifelong health.

- **Look after your health at harvest time**
  
  Farmer health, wellbeing and safety are often neglected when facing the pressures of harvest. Simple safety measures can dramatically reduce the risk of injury and illness.

Food types
• Alcohol explained
The size of a standard drink can vary according to the type of alcohol.

• Cereals and wholegrain foods
Common cereal foods include bread, breakfast cereals and pasta.

• Dairy and dairy alternatives
Dairy products (and dairy alternatives) are packed with calcium, protein and lots of other essential nutrients. Calcium is vital for healthy teeth and bones. It is also important for your muscles.

• Fats and oils
Animal products and processed foods like fried fast food are generally high in saturated fats.

• Fish
Eating two or more serves of fish per week can reduce the risk of a range of diseases including dementia, depression and cardiovascular disease.

• Foods from plants and animals
Some of the foods we eat come from animals and others come from plants.

• Fruit and vegetables
Eating fruit and vegetables can help protect against some diseases including diabetes and some cancers.

• Getting enough protein
Protein is an important nutrient that helps your body grow and repair cells. Most Australians eat more than enough protein, but if you are vegetarian or vegan you may not be getting enough protein (or...)

• Herbs
Use herbs to enhance the flavour of virtually any dish, including desserts.

• Lunch at work
Did you know lunch is just as important as breakfast? In other words, don’t skip lunch: you need it every day! A nutritious lunch will give you the energy to get through an afternoon of work.

• Meat and poultry
Meat and poultry are a great source of protein and lots of other nutrients your body needs. Check your recommended intake of meat and poultry and try to stick with it.

• Nutrition – Summer fruit and vegetables (video)
Salads are a great way for you achieve your 5 serves of vegies every day.

• Nuts and seeds
Nuts are a healthy food and a good source of protein and healthy fats.

• Organic food
Organic foods are farmed in a more environmentally sustainable way than conventional foods.

• Simple ways to cut down on fat
Cutting down on fat is not as hard as you think. Here’s how to maintain a healthy weight by consuming the right amount and types of fat.

• Soft drinks, juice and sweet drinks - children
Encourage children to drink and enjoy water. Sweet drinks such as juice, cordial and soft drinks may cause health problems for children if consumed in large amounts.

• Soft drinks, juice and sweet drinks - limit intake
Consumption of drinks containing added sugar is associated with weight gain, reduced bone strength and tooth erosion and decay.

Vitamins and supplements

• 10 tips for getting enough vitamin D
A balanced UV approach is required to ensure some sun exposure for vitamin D while minimising the risk of skin cancer.

• Antioxidants
Antioxidants scavenge free radicals from the body’s cells, and prevent or reduce the damage caused by oxidation.

• Calcium
If you don’t have enough calcium in your diet, your bones will eventually become weak and brittle.

• Folate for pregnant women
Even women who aren’t planning to have a baby should increase their folate intake in case of unplanned pregnancy.

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- **Iodine**
  
  Good sources of iodine include fortified bread and any type of seafood, including seaweed.

- **Iron**
  
  Iron is important for transporting oxygen in the blood.

- **Vitamin and mineral supplements**
  
  Taking vitamin supplements is no substitute for a healthy diet.

- **Vitamin B**
  
  The eight B-group vitamins are essential for various functions within the body.

- **Vitamin D**
  
  A balanced approach to sunlight exposure will help you get enough vitamin D while protecting against skin cancer.

- **Vitamin D - maintaining levels in winter (video)**
  
  Vitamin D is important for healthy bones, muscles and the nervous system.

- **Vitamins - common misconceptions**
  
  There is no evidence that any one vitamin can slow ageing, restore sex drive or cure infertility.

**Health conditions and food**

- **Arthritis and diet**
  
  No special diet or 'miracle food' can cure arthritis, but some conditions may be helped by avoiding or including certain foods.

- **Asthma and food allergies**
  
  It is important to identify any foods or food chemicals that may trigger your asthma, but this must be done under strict medical supervision.

- **Cancer and food**
  
  Diet can influence your risk of developing some cancers, but there is no evidence that specific foods can cause or cure cancer.

- **Cholesterol - healthy eating tips**
  
  Replacing foods that contain saturated fats with foods that contain polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats will help to lower your cholesterol.

- **Coeliac disease and gluten sensitivity**
  
  Coeliac disease is an immune disease caused by gluten.

- **Diabetes and healthy eating**
  
  Healthy eating for people with diabetes is no different than for everyone else.

- **Eggs**
  
  The humble egg is a powerhouse of nutritional goodness. Eggs are full of things your body needs. They are a great source of protein, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals (such as vitamin A, vitamin D...)

- **Food allergy and intolerance**
  
  Food allergy is an immune response, while food intolerance is a chemical reaction.

- **Food poisoning - prevention**
  
  You can minimise the risk of food poisoning by taking simple precautions.

- **Getting enough protein**
  
  Protein is an important nutrient that helps your body grow and repair cells. Most Australians eat more than enough protein, but if you are vegetarian or vegan you may not be getting enough protein (or...)

- **Have you had an allergic reaction to packaged food?**
  
  The Food Standards Code requires that certain foods must be listed on the package of a food, or made known to the customer upon request. If you experience an allergic reaction to a known allergen not...

- **Health check**
  
  This health assessment questionnaire will identify which zones of your lifestyle are contributing to your personal health risk and provide actions you can take to make positive change.

- **Heart disease and food**
  
  A diet low in saturated fats and high in fibre and plant foods can substantially reduce your risk of developing heart disease.

- **Huntington's disease and diet issues**

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Weight loss is often associated with Huntington's disease, but it doesn't appear to be a direct result of diet.

- Lunch at work
  Did you know lunch is just as important as breakfast? In other words, don't skip lunch; you need it every day! A nutritious lunch will give you the energy to get through an afternoon of work.

- Mood and food
  Your mood can affect your food choices, and your food choices may affect your mood.

- Pregnancy and diet
  Good nutrition during pregnancy can help to keep you and your developing baby healthy.

- Scurvy
  Scurvy is uncommon in Australia but anyone whose diet is inadequate in vitamin C is at risk.

- Type 2 diabetes - healthy eating and exercise (video)
  People with type 2 diabetes talk about positive lifestyle changes that improve their quality of life.

Food science and technology

- Carbohydrates and the glycaemic index
  The glycaemic index (GI) can be a useful tool to control blood sugar levels.

- Fats
  The humble egg is a powerhouse of nutritional goodness. Eggs are full of things your body needs. They are a great source of protein, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals (such as vitamin A, vitamin D).

- Fats and oils
  Animal products and processed foods like fried fast food are generally high in saturated fats.

- Fibre in food
  A diet high in fibre keeps the digestive system healthy.

- Food additives
  The long-term effects of consuming a combination of different additives in our food are currently unknown.

- Food - genetically modified (GM)
  Some foods include ingredients that have been genetically modified (GM), or are made using ingredients derived from GM organisms.

- Food irradiation
  Food irradiation can kill insects, moulds and bacteria, but it cannot kill viruses.

- Food labels
  Food labels carry useful information to help you make good choices about food.

- Food - pesticides and other chemicals
  Chemicals such as pesticides, antibiotics and hormones are used to boost food production and ensure adequate food supply.

- Food processing and nutrition
  Careful cooking and storage will help retain the nutrients in your food.

- Meat and poultry
  Meat and poultry are a great source of protein and lots of other nutrients your body needs. Check your recommended intake of meat and poultry and try to stick with it.

- Mercury in fish
  Pregnant women and young children should limit consumption of fish that contain high levels of mercury.

- Protein
  The human body can't store protein, so it must be supplied daily from the foods we eat.

- Salt
  Too much sodium (salt) can cause high blood pressure and many other health conditions.

- Sugar
  Too much sugar in the diet can contribute to health problems, so limit foods and drinks with high amounts of added sugar.

Planning shopping and cooking
• 10 tips for healthy shopping
  Make a shopping list for healthier food choices ...

• Breakfast
  Children who skip breakfast may lack sufficient vitamins and minerals including iron, calcium, zinc and vitamin B2 ...

• Celebrations - Christmas Day the healthy way (video)
  Victorian State Public Health Nutritionist, Veronica Graham shows us how to cook a light and healthy Christmas meal without overindulging. Whatever way you celebrate, there are ways to eat healthily ...

• Celebrations - healthy birthday parties (video)
  Birthday parties can be healthy as well as fun. Flip Shelton reports on some great ideas for healthy and tasty treats for your child’s next birthday ...

• Cooking healthy alternatives (video)
  Chef Andrew Blake shows people how to cook healthy fish and chips, spring rolls and pancakes ...

• Cooking tips for busy people
  If you lack the time or motivation to cook, try these tips ...

• Eating out - healthy food from different cultures (video)
  Nutritionist Shane Bilsborough takes us on a tour of Melbourne’s restaurants. Some popular food from different cultures is high in fat and kilojoules. There are, however, some healthy alternatives ...

• Food labels
  Food labels carry useful information to help you make good choices about food ...

• Food shopping - a family’s healthy market shop (video)

• Food shopping - fresh produce choices at local markets (video)
  Reporter Flip Shelton takes us on a tour and shows us what fresh produce is available at a local market ...

• Food to have sometimes
  Junk food should be kept to a minimum. It usually contains a lot of fat, salt or sugar ...

• Food variety and a healthy diet
  If you eat a variety of good food, your diet will provide you with adequate nutrition ...

• Healthy budget - tucker talk tips
  You can buy more food if you spend most of your money on basic healthy foods like bread, cereals, fruit and vegetables ...

• Healthy cooking tips
  Eating healthy food doesn’t mean giving up your favourite foods and switching to eating only salads ...

• Healthy eating tips
  A good balance between exercise and food intake is important to maintain a healthy body weight ...

• How to cut down on salt
  Even if you are careful about the salt you consume, you may be surprised that some of the food you eat contains hidden salt that you’re not even aware of. Learn how to cut down on salt ...

• Lunch at work
  Did you know lunch is just as important as breakfast? In other words, don’t skip lunch: you need it every day! A nutritious lunch will give you the energy to get through an afternoon of work ...

• Lunch - avoid the fast food fix (video)
  Nutritionist Shane Bilsborough shows us how much money it takes to burn off a fast food lunch. Join tradies, Corky and Danny as they find out how to maintain a healthy weight ...

• Lunch boxes - healthy shopping ideas (video)
  Victorian State Public Health Nutritionist Veronica Graham takes us shopping for the right foods to include in your child’s lunchbox ...

• Lunch boxes - how to make them healthy (video)
  Victorian State Public Health Nutritionist Veronica Graham shares three healthy and delicious lunchbox examples for the kids and provides some great food preparation tips to save you time throughout ...

• Reading food labels - tucker talk tips
  Labels on packaged food can give you useful information about the nutrition, ingredients, storage and weight of the food. Add full stop to pull quote ...
Food safety and storage

- Avoid food poisoning - Cook Safe (video)
  Learn how to prepare and cook food safely at home.
- Avoid food poisoning - Shop Safe (video)
  Learn how to keep your hot and cold foods separate and shop safely for food.
- Avoid food poisoning - Store Safe (video)
  Learn how to store food safely in your fridge at home.
- Be savvy with food this summer
  How to keep food fresh and safe in warmer weather.
- Cockroaches
  Cockroaches prefer to live in kitchens and other food preparation areas, so they can feed off food spills.
- Don't let food poisoning ruin your summer (slide show)
  How to avoid food poisoning this summer.
- Eggs
  The humble egg is a powerhouse of nutritional goodness. Eggs are full of things your body needs. They are a great source of protein, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals (such as vitamin A, vitamin D).
- Emergencies - coping without gas or electricity
  In a gas or electricity blackout you may have to think laterally to come up with ways to continue bathing, eating and keeping warm.
- Fishing - eat your catch with care
  People who fish in the Lower Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers need to be careful about eating their catch because of the risk of chemical exposure.
- Food poisoning - listeria
  Listeria infection is uncommon but very dangerous for the elderly, people whose immune systems are not working properly and pregnant women and their unborn babies.
- Food poisoning - prevention
  You can minimise the risk of food poisoning by taking simple precautions.
- Food safety and storage
  High-risk food should be kept at 5 °C or below, and above 60 °C to avoid the temperature danger zone and food poisoning.
- Food safety - eggs
  To enjoy eggs safely, buy clean, keep cool and cook well.
- Food safety for summer celebrations (video)
  In the hot weather there is a higher risk of food poisoning but if you follow some simple rules when you prepare, handle and store food it will significantly reduce your risk of getting sick.
- Food safety outdoors
  Food poisoning is a real risk when taking food outside the home, especially in warmer weather.
- Food safety when cooking
  Most foods should be cooked to at least 75 °C to minimise the risk of food poisoning.
- Food safety when eating out
  If you have any doubt about the safety of food when you're out, don't eat it.
- Food safety when shopping
  When you shop, choose, pack and transport food carefully.
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)
  FSANZ's role is to protect the health and safety of people in Australia and New Zealand by maintaining a safe food supply.

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Food – use-by and best-before dates

Check the ‘use-by’ or ‘best before’ date when you buy food.

Dieting and diets

10 tips on how to eat more calcium

Reduce your intake of coffee, alcohol and soft drinks. 10 tips on how to eat more calcium.

Body image and diets

Some people diet because they have a poor body image, not because they want to be a healthy weight.

Dairy and dairy alternatives

Dairy products (and dairy alternatives) are packed with calcium, protein and lots of other essential nutrients. Calcium is vital for healthy teeth and bones. It is also important for your muscles.

Food allergy and intolerance

Food allergy is an immune response, while food intolerance is a chemical reaction.

Food for sport - tucker talk tips

Carbohydrate is the most important nutrient for athletes.

Getting enough protein

Protein is an important nutrient that helps your body grow and repair cells. Most Australians eat more than enough protein, but if you are vegetarian or vegan you may not be getting enough protein.

Gluten-free diet

Gluten sensitivity can be managed with a gluten-free diet.

Heart disease and food

A diet low in saturated fats and high in fibre and plant foods can substantially reduce your risk of developing heart disease.

How to cut down on salt

Even if you are careful about the salt you consume, you may be surprised that some of the food you eat contains hidden salt that you’re not even aware of. Learn how to cut down on salt.

Mood and food

Your mood can affect your food choices, and your food choices may affect your mood.

Simple ways to cut down on fat

Cutting down on fat is not as hard as you think. Here’s how to maintain a healthy weight by consuming the right amount and types of fat.

Sporting performance and food

Good nutrition and a healthy diet are essential to improving your sports performance.

Tips to keep our snacks on track

Most of us are prone to the odd snack or two. Check out these simple tips to keep your snacks on track.

Vegetarian and vegan eating

A well-planned vegetarian or vegan diet can meet nutritional needs during all stages of life.

Vegetarian diets and children

Children can eat a vegetarian diet and stay healthy as long as their extra nutritional needs are met.

Weight loss and fad diets

With a balanced eating plan, it's what you leave in that makes all the difference.

Weight management services

Always consult with your doctor before choosing any weight management service.

Women's nutrition for life

‘Nutrition for life’ identifies a woman’s four main life stages and how to eat healthily for each of them. Following this information can lead to better health at any stage of your life.

Nutritional needs throughout life

Women's nutrition for life

‘Nutrition for life’ identifies a woman’s four main life stages and how to eat healthily for each of them. Following this information can lead to better health at any stage of your life.

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
• Bottle feeding - nutrition and safety
  Breastmilk or commercial infant formula is necessary for all babies less than 12 months...

• Breastfeeding and your diet
  Breastfeeding women need to eat regularly and include a wide variety of healthy foods in their diet...

• Dairy and dairy alternatives
  Dairy products (and dairy alternatives) are packed with calcium, protein and lots of other essential nutrients. Calcium is vital for healthy teeth and bones. It is also important for your muscles...

• Disability - managing underweight
  There are a number of ways that a person with a disability can successfully avoid unwanted weight loss...

• Eating tips for babies
  First foods for babies can be prepared easily and cheaply at home without salt, seasonings and sweeteners...

• Eating tips for children (3) - older toddlers
  Offer children the same foods as the family, with a variety of textures and flavours for balanced nutrition...

• Eating tips for preschoolers
  Children are able to decide how much food they need for activity and growth if allowed to eat according to their appetite...

• Eating tips for school children
  Snacks are an important part of a healthy diet for active children, so offer nutritious as well as high energy snacks...

• Eating tips for young toddlers
  Children have a natural ability to sense when they are hungry and when they are full...

• Eggs
  The humble egg is a powerhouse of nutritional goodness. Eggs are full of things your body needs. They are a great source of protein, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals (such as vitamin A, vitamin D...

• Food and your life stages
  The nutritional requirements of the human body change as we move through different life stages...

• Food for babies - tucker talk tips
  Before six months, breastmilk or formula is the only food and drink that your baby needs...

• Getting enough protein
  Protein is an important nutrient that helps your body grow and repair cells. Most Australians eat more than enough protein, but if you are vegetarian or vegan you may not be getting enough protein for...

• Good food for Elders - tucker talk tips
  Good nutrition, a healthy diet and physical activity can help Elders prevent or manage health problems...

• Healthy active Koori kids - tucker talk tips
  Good nutrition and physical exercise help to keep Koori kids healthy and avoid diseases when they get older...

• Healthy budget - tucker talk tips
  You can buy more food if you spend most of your money on basic healthy foods like bread, cereals, fruit and vegies...

• Healthy eating during pregnancy - tucker talk tips
  Some foods should be avoided during pregnancy as they carry bacteria that could harm your unborn baby...

• Healthy eating for adolescent girls
  Eating healthy food is important at any age, but it’s especially important for teenagers...

• Healthy eating for women in midlife
  As you get older you need fewer calories, but your need for other nutrients remains unchanged. Healthy...

• Healthy eating for women in their later years
  Being well nourished improves women’s mental and physical health and quality of life at all life stages...

• Healthy eating for young women
  Good nutrition is especially important during this stage of your life when there is so much happening: independent living, career development, travel, establishing relationships, babies and families...

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Lunch at work

Did you know lunch is just as important as breakfast? In other words, don’t skip lunch: you need it every day! A nutritious lunch will give you the energy to get through an afternoon of work...

Nutrition needs when you’re over 65

Nutrition needs vary with age and gender. Now you’re older, the foods and drinks that make up a healthy diet may need to be slightly different from when you were younger. In general, you...

Nutrition Week

Nutrition Week...

Related Information

Nutrition Week

Fishing - eat your catch with care

People who fish in the Lower Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers need to be careful about eating their catch because of the risk of chemical exposure...

Food - pesticides and other chemicals

Chemicals such as pesticides, antibiotics and hormones are used to boost food production and ensure adequate food supply...

Food safety and storage

High-risk food should be kept at 5°C or below, and above 60°C to avoid the temperature danger zone and food poisoning...

Eggs

The humble egg is a powerhouse of nutritional goodness. Eggs are full of things your body needs. They are a great source of protein, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals (such as vitamin A, vitamin D...

Food poisoning - prevention

Eggs

Food poisoning - prevention

Related information on other websites

Choice - guide to avoiding food poisoning.

Victorian Department of Health - defoodsafely

Victorian Department of Health - Food safety at home.

Victorian Department of Health - Keeping food safe.

Content Partner

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by: Department of Health and Human Services - RHP&R - Health Protection - Food Safety and Regulation

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NURSE-ON-CALL

1300 60 60 24

24 HOUR HEALTH ADVICE FOR ALL VICTORIANS

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Multilingual resources on food poisoning and how to prevent it

- Bottle and formula preparation
- Campylobacteriosis
- Community groups fundraising events food safety obligations
- Food poisoning and how to prevent it
- Foodborne disease
- Fridge food safety
- Keeping the kitchen clean
- Personal hygiene for people working with food
- Safe food, safe kitchens
- Your guide to food safety
- Listeria - the facts
- Listeriosis

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