Sporting performance and food

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Summary

- Good nutrition can enhance sporting performance.
- A well-planned, nutritious diet should meet most of an athlete’s vitamin and mineral needs, and provide enough protein to promote muscle growth and repair.
- Foods rich in unrefined carbohydrates, like wholegrain breads and cereals, should form the basis of the diet.
- Water is a great choice of fluid for athletes to help performance and prevent dehydration.

The link between good health and good nutrition is well established. Interest in nutrition and its impact on sporting performance is now a science in itself.

Whether you are a competing athlete, a weekend sports player or a dedicated daily exerciser, the foundation to improved performance is a nutritionally adequate diet.

Daily training diet requirements

The basic training diet should be sufficient to:

- provide enough energy and nutrients to meet the demands of training and exercise
- enhance adaptation and recovery between training sessions
- include a wide variety of foods like wholegrain breads and cereals, vegetables (particularly leafy green varieties), fruit, lean meat and low-fat dairy products to enhance long term nutrition habits and behaviours
- enable the athlete to achieve optimal body weight and body fat levels for performance
- provide adequate fluids to ensure maximum hydration before, during and after exercise
- promote the short and long-term health of athletes.

The athlete’s diet

An athlete’s diet should be similar to that recommended for the general public, with energy intake divided into:

- more than 55 per cent from carbohydrates
- about 12 to 15 per cent from protein
- less than 30 per cent from fat.

Athletes who exercise strenuously for more than 60 to 90 minutes every day may need to increase the amount of energy they get from carbohydrates to between 65 and 70 per cent.

More recent advice also provides guidelines for carbohydrate and protein based on grams per kilogram (g/kg) of body weight. The current recommendations for fat intake are for most athletes to follow similar recommendations to those given for the general community, with the preference for fats coming from olive oils, nuts, avocado, nuts and seeds. Athletes should also aim to minimise intake of high-fat foods such as biscuits, cakes, pastries, chips and fried foods.

Carbohydrates and exercise

During digestion, all carbohydrates are broken down into sugar (glucose), which is the body’s primary energy source. Glucose can be converted into glycogen and stored in the liver and muscle tissue. It can then be used as a key energy source during exercise to fuel exercising muscle tissue and other body systems. Athletes can increase their stores of glycogen by regularly eating high-carbohydrate foods.

If carbohydrate in the diet is restricted, a person’s ability to exercise is compromised because there is not enough glycogen kept in storage to fuel the body. This can result in a loss of protein (muscle) tissue, because the body will start to break down muscle tissue to meet its energy needs, and may increase the risk of infections and illness.

Carbohydrates are essential for fuel and recovery

Current recommendations for carbohydrate requirements vary depending on the duration, frequency and intensity of exercise. Foods rich in unrefined carbohydrates, like wholegrain breads and cereals, should form the basis of the athlete’s diet. More refined carbohydrate foods (such as white bread, jams and lollies) are useful to boost the total intake of carbohydrate, particularly for very active people.

Athletes are advised to adjust the amount of carbohydrate they consume for fuelling and recovery to suit their exercise level. For example:

- Light intensity exercise (30 mins/day): 3-5 g/kg/day
- Moderate intensity exercise (60 mins/day): 5-7 g/kg/day
- Endurance exercise (1-3 hrs/day): 6-10 g/kg/day
- Extreme endurance exercise (more than 4 hrs/day): 8-12 g/kg/day
Sporting performance and glycaemic index

The glycaemic index (GI) ranks food and fluids by how ‘carbohydrate-rich’ they are and how quickly they affect the body’s blood sugar levels. The GI has become of increasing interest to athletes in the area of sports nutrition.

More research is required to confirm the best recommendations for sports nutrition. However, there is a suggestion that low GI foods may be useful before exercise to provide a more sustained energy release.

Moderate to high GI foods and fluids may be the most beneficial during exercise and in the early recovery period. However, it is important to remember the type and timing of food eaten should be tailored to personal preferences and to maximise the performance of the particular sport in which the person is involved.

Pre-event meal

The pre-event meal is an important part of the athlete’s pre-exercise preparation. A high-carbohydrate meal three to four hours before exercise is thought to have a positive effect on performance. A small snack one to two hours before exercise may also benefit performance.

Some people may experience a negative response to eating close to exercise. A meal high in fat or protein is likely to increase the risk of digestive discomfort. It is recommended that meals just before exercise should be high in carbohydrates and known not to cause gastrointestinal upset.

Examples of appropriate pre-exercise meals and snacks include cereal and low-fat milk, toast/muffins/crumpets, fruit salad and yoghurt, pasta with tomato-based sauce, a low-fat breakfast or muesli bar, or low-fat creamed rice.

Eating during exercise

During exercise lasting more than 60 minutes, an intake of carbohydrate is required to top up blood glucose levels and delay fatigue. Current recommendations suggest 30-60 g of carbohydrate is sufficient, and can be in the form of lollies, sports gels, low-fat muesli and sports bars or sandwiches with white bread.

It is important to start your intake early in exercise and to consume regular amounts throughout the exercise period. It is also important to consume regular fluid during prolonged exercise to avoid dehydration. Sports drinks, diluted fruit juice and water are suitable choices. For people exercising for more than four hours, up to 90 grams of carbohydrate per hour is recommended.

Eating after exercise

Rapid replacement of glycogen is important following exercise. Carbohydrate foods and fluids should be consumed after exercise, particularly in the first one to two hours after exercise. To top up glycogen stores after exercise, eat carbohydrates with a moderate to high GI in the first half hour or so after exercise. This should be continued until the normal meal pattern resumes.

Suitable choices to start refuelling include sports drinks, juices, cereal and low-fat milk, low-fat flavoured milk, sandwiches, pasta, muffin/crumpets, fruit and yoghurt.

Protein and sporting performance

Protein is an important part of a training diet and plays a key role in post-exercise recovery and repair. Protein needs are generally met by following a high-carbohydrate diet, because many foods, especially cereal-based foods, are a combination of carbohydrate and protein.

The amount of protein recommended for sporting people is only slightly higher than that recommended for the general public. For example:

- General public and active people – the daily recommended amount of protein is 0.8–1.0 g/kg of body weight (a 60 kg person should eat around 45–60 g of protein daily).
- Sports people involved in non-endurance events – people who exercise daily for 45–60 minutes should consume between 1.0–1.2 g/kg of body weight per day.
- Sports people involved in endurance events and strength events – people who exercise for longer periods (more than one hour) or who are involved in strength exercise, such as weight lifting, should consume between 1.2–1.7 g/kg of protein of body weight per day.

Dietary surveys have found that most athletic groups comfortably reach and often exceed their protein requirements by consuming a high-energy diet. Protein supplements are therefore unlikely to improve your sporting performance.

While more research is required, other concerns associated with very high-protein diets include:

- increased cost
- a potential negative impact on kidney function
- increased weight if protein choices are also high in fat
- a lack of other nutritious foods in the diet, such as bread, cereal, fruit and vegetables.

Using nutritional supplements to improve sporting performance

A well-planned diet will meet your vitamin and mineral needs. Supplements will only be of any benefit if your diet is inadequate or you have a diagnosed deficiency, such as an iron or calcium deficiency. There is no evidence that extra doses of vitamins improve sporting performance.

Nutritional supplements can be found in pill, tablet, capsule, powder or liquid form, and cover a broad range of products including:

- vitamins
- minerals
- herbs
- meal supplements

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• sports nutrition products
• natural food supplements.

Before using supplements, you should consider what else you can do to improve your sporting performance – diet, training and lifestyle changes are all more proven and cost effective ways to improve your performance.

Use of vitamin and mineral supplements is also potentially dangerous. Supplements should not be taken without the advice of a qualified health professional. It’s best if dietary imbalances are adjusted after analysing and altering your diet, instead of by using a supplement or pill.

It’s also important to remember that if you take supplements, you are at risk of committing an anti-doping rule violation no matter what level of sport you play.

**Water and sporting performance**

Dehydration can impair athletic performance and, in extreme cases, may lead to collapse and even death. Drinking plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise is very important. Don’t wait until you are thirsty. Fluid intake is particularly important for events lasting more than 60 minutes, of high intensity or in warm conditions.

Water is a suitable drink, but sports drinks may be required, especially in endurance events or warm climates. Sports drinks contain some sodium, which helps absorption. A sodium content of 30 mmol/L (millimoles per litre) appears suitable in sports nutrition.

Using salt tablets to combat muscle cramps is no longer advised. It is lack of water not sodium that affects the muscle tissue. Persistent muscle cramps might be due to zinc or magnesium deficiencies.

**Where to get help**

- Your doctor
- Dietitians Association of Australia Tel. 1800 812 942
- Sports Dietitians Australia Tel. (03) 9926 1336

**Things to remember**

- Good nutrition can enhance sporting performance.
- A well-planned, nutritious diet should meet most of an athlete’s vitamin and mineral needs, and provide enough protein to promote muscle growth and repair.
- Foods rich in unrefined carbohydrates, like wholegrain breads and cereals, should form the basis of the diet.
- Water is a great choice of fluid for athletes to help performance and prevent dehydration.

**References**

- Sports nutrition resources, Nutrition Australia. [More information here.]

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More information

Healthy eating

The following content is displayed as Tabs. Once you have activated a link navigate to the end of the list to view its associated content. The activated link is defined as Active Tab

- Healthy eating basics
- Food types
- Vitamins and supplements
- Health conditions and food
- Food science and technology
- Planning shopping and cooking
- Food safety and storage
- Dieting and diets
- Nutritional needs throughout life

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 (or...)

- 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 healthy.

- 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.

- 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.

- **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
  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...

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...

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 ... 10 tips for healthy shopping...

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 vegies.

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 energy 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.

Shopping at fresh food markets (video)
Victorian State Nutritionist, Veronica Graham talks about the benefits of shopping at fresh produce markets.

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.

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, as 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..

- Food – use-by and best-before dates
  Check the 'use-by' or 'best before' date when you buy food..

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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 (or...

• 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...

- 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...

- Childcare and healthy eating
  Childcare centres should provide healthy meals for your children...

- 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 (or...

- 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 veggies...

- 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

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
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...

- 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&...

Related Information

- Vegetarian and vegan eating

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

- Food for sport

Carbohydrate is the most important nutrient for athletes...

- Carbohydrates and the glycaemic index

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

- Protein

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

- Vegetarian diets and children

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

Related information on other websites

- Australian Institute of Sport.
- Dietitians Association of Australia.
- Sports Dietitians Australia.

Content Partner

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by: Deakin University - School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

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