Water – a vital nutrient
Summary

- Water is essential to most bodily functions.
- The body has no way to store water and needs fresh supplies every day.
- Dehydration is life threatening to a baby and requires urgent medical attention.
- Adult women should consume around two litres (eight cups) and adult men 2.6 litres (about 10 cups) of fluids a day to prevent dehydration.

The human body can last weeks without food, but only days without water. The body is made up of 50 to 75 per cent water. Water forms the basis of blood, digestive juices, urine and perspiration, and is contained in lean muscle, fat and bones.

As the body can’t store water, we need fresh supplies every day to make up for losses from the lungs, skin, urine and faeces (poop). The amount we need depends on our body size, metabolism, the weather, the food we eat and our activity levels.

Water in our bodies

Some facts about our internal water supply include:

- Body water content is higher in men than in women and falls in both with age.
- Most mature adults lose about 2.5 to 3 litres of water per day. Water loss may increase in hot weather and with prolonged exercise.
- Elderly people lose about two litres per day.
- An air traveller can lose approximately 1.5 litres of water during a three-hour flight.
- Water loss needs to be replaced.

Importance of water

Water is needed for most body functions, including to:

- maintain the health and integrity of every cell in the body
- keep the bloodstream liquid enough to flow through blood vessels
- help eliminate the byproducts of the body’s metabolism, excess electrolytes (for example, sodium and potassium), and urea, which is a waste product formed through the processing of dietary protein
- regulate body temperature through sweating
- moisten mucous membranes such as those of the lungs and mouth
- lubricate and cushion joints
- reduce the risk of cystitis by keeping the bladder clear of bacteria
- aid digestion and prevent constipation
- moisturise the skin to maintain its texture and appearance
- carry nutrients and oxygen to cells
- serve as a shock absorber inside the eyes, spinal cord and in the amniotic sac surrounding the fetus in pregnancy.

Water content in food

Most foods, even those that look hard and dry, contain water. The body can get approximately 20 per cent of its total water requirements from solid foods alone.

The digestion process also produces water as a byproduct and can provide around 10 per cent of the body’s water requirements. The rest must come from liquids.

Recommended daily fluid intake

Approximate adequate daily intakes of fluids (including plain water, milk and other drinks) in litres per day include:

- infants 0–6 months – 0.7 l (from breastmilk or formula)
- infants 7–12 months – 0.9 l (from breastmilk, formula and other foods and drinks)
- children 1–3 years – 1.0 l (about 4 cups)
- children 4–8 years – 1.2 l (about 5 cups)
- girls 9–13 years – 1.4 l (about 5-6 cups)
- boys 9–13 years – 1.6 l (about 6 cups)
- girls 14–18 years – 1.6 l (about 6 cups)
- boys 14–18 years – 1.9 l (about 7-8 cups)
- women – 2.1 l (about 8 cups)
- men – 2.6 l (about 10 cups).

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
These adequate intakes include all fluids, but it is preferable that the majority of intake is from plain water (except for infants where fluid intake is met by breastmilk or infant formula).

Sedentary people, people in cold environments, or people who eat a lot of high-water content foods (such as fruits and vegetables) may need less water.

Some people need higher fluid intake

People need to increase their fluid intake when they are:

- on a high-protein diet
- on a high-fibre diet, as fluids help prevent constipation
- pregnant or breastfeeding (the fluid need is 750-1,000 ml a day above basic needs)
- vomiting or have diarrhoea
- physically active
- exposed to warm or hot conditions.

Risks of inadequate fluid intake

Not drinking enough water can increase the risk of kidney stones and, in women, urinary tract infections. It can also lower your physical and mental performance, and salivary gland function, and lead to dehydration.

Dehydration

Dehydration occurs when the water content of the body is too low. This is easily fixed by increasing fluid intake.

Symptoms of dehydration

- thirst
- headaches
- lethargy
- mood changes and slow responses
- dry nasal passages
- dry or cracked lips
- dark-coloured urine
- weakness
- tiredness
- confusion and hallucinations.

If dehydration is not corrected by fluid intake, eventually urination stops, the kidneys fail and the body can’t remove toxic waste products. In extreme cases, dehydration may result in death.

Causes of dehydration

There are several factors that can cause dehydration including:

- not drinking enough water
- increased sweating due to hot weather, humidity, exercise or fever
- insufficient signalling mechanisms in the elderly – sometimes, they do not feel thirsty even though they may be dehydrated
- increased output of urine due to a hormone deficiency, diabetes, kidney disease or medications
- diarrhoea or vomiting
- recovering from burns.

Dehydration in the elderly

Elderly people are often at risk of dehydration due to:

- changes to kidney function, which declines with age
- hormonal changes
- not feeling thirsty (because the mechanisms in the body that trigger thirst do not work as well as we age)
- medication (for example, diuretics and laxatives)
- chronic illness
- limited mobility.

Dehydration in babies and children

Children are susceptible to dehydration, particularly if they are ill. Vomiting, fever and diarrhoea can quickly dehydrate a baby.

Dehydration can be a life-threatening condition in children. If you suspect dehydration, take the child immediately to the nearest hospital emergency department.
Some of the symptoms of dehydration in a child include:

- cold skin
- lethargy
- dry mouth
- depressed fontanelle (the soft spot on top of a baby’s skull where the bones are yet to close)
- a blue tinge to the skin as the circulation slows.

**Risks of excessive water intake**

Drinking too much water can also damage the body and cause hyponatraemia (water intoxication). Hyponatraemia is rare in the general population.

Hyponatraemia occurs when sodium in the blood drops to a dangerously low level. Sodium is needed in muscle contraction and for sending nerve impulses.

If large amounts of plain water are consumed in a short period of time, the kidneys cannot excrete enough fluid. Hyponatraemia can lead to headaches, blurred vision, cramps (and eventually convulsions), swelling of the brain, coma and possibly death.

For water to reach toxic levels, you would have to consume many litres in a short period of time. Hyponatraemia is most common in people with particular diseases or mental illnesses (for example, in some cases of schizophrenia), endurance athletes and in infants who are fed infant formula that is too diluted.

**Water fluoridation**

Tap water in many cities also contains fluoride, which is good for teeth and bones. Bottled water does not usually have good levels of fluoride. An additional benefit of drinking reticulated ( mains) water in Victoria is that, in most areas, fluoride is added to the water and this provides dental health benefits for the community.

Water fluoridation helps prevent dental decay, and is a safe and effective way of allowing everybody access to the benefits of fluoride. [Find out if your area has water fluoridation.](#)

**Water and sports performance**

Fluid needs of athletes during training and competition vary greatly depending on many factors. For smaller athletes exercising in mild conditions, less fluid may be needed. Well-trained athletes competing at high intensities in warm conditions may need more fluid.

**Fluid retention**

Many people believe that drinking water causes fluid retention. In fact, the opposite is true. Drinking water helps the body rid itself of excess sodium, which results in less fluid retention.

The body will retain fluid if there is too little water in the cells. If the body receives enough water on a regular basis, there will be no need for it to conserve water and this will reduce fluid retention.

**Sources of fluid**

Fluids include fresh water and all other liquids like milk, coffee, tea, soup, juice and even soft drinks.

Fresh water is the best drink because it does not contain kilojoules and is best for hydrating the body.

Milk (particularly low-fat varieties) is an important fluid, especially for children, and is about 90 per cent water. Tea can be an important source of fluid. Tea can help you meet your daily fluid recommendations, and is a source of antioxidants and polyphenols, which appear to protect against heart disease and cancer.

Fresh fruit is preferable to fruit juice because it has more fibre and nutrients, and less sugar.

**Avoid sugary and artificially sweetened drinks**

The Australian Dietary Guidelines recommend that all Australians limit their intake of drinks containing added sugar, including sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials, fruit drinks, vitamin-style waters, flavoured mineral waters, energy and sports drinks.

Consumption of sugary drinks provides additional energy ( kilojoules) to the diet, but no other essential nutrients. There is strong evidence of the association between the consumption of sugary drinks and excess weight gain in both children and adults, as well as reduced bone strength and tooth decay.

Artificially sweetened drinks add very little energy ( kilojoules) to the diet and therefore do not contribute directly to weight gain. However, artificially sweetened drinks still maintain the ‘habit’ of drinking sweet drinks, may lead to decreased bone density (as people may drink less milk) and can contribute to tooth decay due to their acidity.

**Tips for increasing water intake**

- Add a squeeze of lemon or lime juice to plain water to add variety.

---

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Keep a bottle or glass of water handy on your desk or in your bag. Add ice cubes made from fresh fruit to a glass of water.

**Limit mineral water intake**

Commercially bottled mineral water contains salt, which can lead to fluid retention and swelling, and even increased blood pressure in susceptible people. Limit the amount of mineral water or choose low-sodium varieties (less than 30 mg sodium per 100 ml).

**Where to get help**

- In an emergency, call triple zero (000)
- The emergency department of the nearest hospital
- Your doctor
- Dietitians Association of Australia Tel. 1800 812 942

**References**

- Drinks, Dietitians Association of Australia. [More information here.](#)
- Water, National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Government. [More information here.](#)
- Water: How much should you drink every day? Mayo Clinic, USA. [More information here.](#)
- Thirsty – drink water instead, Kidney Health Australia. [More information here.](#)
**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

---

Water – a vital nutrient

---

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
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 (slideshow)**
  
  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 (slideshow)**
  
  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**

---

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Organic foods are farmed in a more environmentally sustainable way than conventional foods.

- Simple ways to cut down on fat (slideshow)
  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.

- 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)

- 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.

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 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 (slideshow)
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 Hildburgh 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 (slideshow)
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 (slideshow)
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 (slideshow)
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...

**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 (slideshow)

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 (slideshow)

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 (slideshow)

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

“Wellness 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...

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
• 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 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...

• 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, vouk...
Related Information

- **Nutrition Week**
  
  Nutrition Week...

- **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...

- **Nutrition - women's extra needs**
  
  Women's nutritional needs change during menstruation, pregnancy, breastfeeding and menopause...

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

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

Home

Related information on other websites

- **Dietitians Association of Australia – Drinks**
  
  Water – National Health and Medical Research Council.

Content Partner

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

Last updated: May 2014

Content on this website is provided for information purposes only. Information about a therapy, service, product or treatment does not in any way endorse or support such therapy, service, product or treatment and is not intended to replace advice from your doctor or other registered health professional. The information and materials contained on this website are not intended to constitute a comprehensive guide concerning all aspects of the therapy, product or treatment described on the website. All users are urged to always seek advice from a registered health care professional for diagnosis and answers to their medical questions and to ascertain whether the particular therapy, service, product or treatment described on the website is suitable in their circumstances. The State of Victoria and the Department of Health & Human Services shall not bear any liability for reliance by any user on the materials contained on this website.

**NURSE-ON-CALL**

Provides immediate, expert health advice from a registered nurse. Call 1300 60 60 24

**betterhealth.vic.gov.au**