



# Eating Your Way to Better Health

## Nutrition and cancer

Did you know that dietary factors can influence your risk of developing some cancers? There is compelling evidence that measures such as maintaining an appropriate body weight, avoiding fatty foods and eating more fruit and vegetables contribute to preventing certain types of cancer. For example, eating plenty of vegetables probably reduces the risk of cancers of the oesophagus, colon and rectum. Higher fruit consumption probably lowers the risk of oesophagus, stomach and lung cancer.

## How do fruit and vegetables protect us from cancer?

Diets containing adequate amounts and varied types of fruits and vegetables may prevent 20% or more of all cases of cancer. Fruit and vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals and fibre, as well as a variety of naturally occurring nutrients called phytochemicals such as carotenoids. Experts believe the large numbers of nutrients in fruit and vegetables work together in complex ways to help reduce the risk of developing a number of cancers. This means we cannot expect to reap the same benefits by simply taking vitamin pills. Different combinations of nutrients are found in each type of vegetable or fruit so it is important to eat a variety of these foods.

THE RECOMMENDED DAILY INTAKE FOR AUSTRALIAN ADULTS IS AT LEAST TWO SERVES OF FRUIT AND FIVE SERVES OF VEGETABLES EACH DAY.

Unfortunately, many Australian adults are not reaching this target. Tables 1 and 2 outline the recommended minimum daily serves of fruit and vegetables to eat. Pregnant and breastfeeding women are advised to increase their servings of fruit and vegetables to meet their increased dietary requirements.

Table 1: Recommended minimum daily intake of fruit and vegetables for adults

ADULT	FRUIT (serves)	VEGETABLES (serves)
Men & Women	2	5
Pregnant Women	4	5-6
Breastfeeding	5	7

Source: The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

Table 2: Recommended minimum daily intake of fruit and vegetables for children and adolescents

AGE OF CHILD (years)	FRUIT (serves)	VEGETABLES (serves)
4-7	1-2	2-4
8-11	1-2	3-5
12-18	3-4	4-9

Source: The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating





Eating Your Way to Better Health continued

## What is a serve?

ONE SERVE OF VEGETABLES IS 75 GRAMS OR:

- ½ cup cooked vegetables
- ½ cup cooked dried beans, peas, legumes
- 1 medium potato
- 1 cup salad vegetables

ONE SERVE OF FRUIT IS 150 GRAMS OF FRESH FRUIT OR:

- 1 medium-sized piece (eg. apple)
- 2 smaller pieces (eg. apricots, kiwi fruit)
- 1 cup chopped or canned fruit
- ½ cup (125mL) 100% fruit juice
- 1½ tablespoon dried fruit  
(eg. sultanas or 4 dried apricot halves)

## Body weight and cancer risk

Maintaining a healthy body weight can reduce your cancer risk, while being overweight or obese can increase your risk of some cancers. This is why it is important to have regular physical activity and eat in a healthy way, with particular attention to including lots of fruit and vegetables. These foods are filling without adding excessive kilojoules.

Fruit and vegetables are an important part of the Cancer Institute NSW seven simple guidelines for cancer prevention:

- 1 Choose a diet rich in a variety of plant-based foods
- 2 Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits
- 3 Maintain a healthy weight and be physically active
- 4 Drink alcohol only in moderation, if at all
- 5 Be aware of what you eat
- 6 Do not smoke or use tobacco in any form
- 7 Protect your skin from the sun

## Fit a variety of fruit and vegetables into your day

It is recommended to eat a variety of fruit and vegetables every day. This is because different types of fruits and vegetables contain a variety of nutrients that the body needs and that may provide protection against certain cancers. Five serves of vegetables does not mean five serves of potato!

EXAMPLES OF VEGETABLES INCLUDE:

- Cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts.
- Allium vegetables, such as onions, leek, chives and garlic.
- Dark green vegetables, such as kale, silverbeet, spinach, Chinese greens (eg. bok choy) and dark green lettuce.
- Yellow/orange vegetables, such as sweet potato, pumpkin and carrots.
- Red vegetables, such as red capsicum and beetroot.

EXAMPLES OF FRUITS INCLUDE:

- Citrus fruit, such as oranges, tangerines and mandarins.
- Berries, such as raspberries, blackberries, blueberries and strawberries.
- Yellow/orange fruits, such as rockmelon, mango, apricots, peaches and paw paw.
- Red fruits, such as red apples, cherries, blood oranges and tomatoes.
- Tropical fruit, such as bananas, guava and pineapple.

## Further information

For more information on healthy eating and physical activity for you and your family, go to:

[www.gofor2and5.com.au](http://www.gofor2and5.com.au)

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