








FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS





Should I be eating at least five servings of fruit and five servings of vegetables each day?

The recommended number of fruit and vegetable servings per day is at least five. It's recommended that at least two fruit and three vegetable servings are consumed each day. Fresh, canned, dried and frozen fruit and vegetables all count towards your daily intake.

What's a serving of fruit?

-  1 apple, pear, banana or orange (130g)
-  2 small apricots or plums (100g)
-  ½ cup fruit salad (135g)
-  ½ cup stewed fruit (fresh, canned or frozen) (135g)
-  Dried fruit (25g)

What's a serving of vegetables?

-  1 medium potato or kumara (135g)
-  ½ cup cooked vegetables (50–80g)
-  ½ cup salad or mixed vegetables (60g)
-  1 tomato (80g)

Will eating carrots really help me see better in the dark?

Carrots are a valuable source of beta-carotene, which is a vitamin A precursor found in plant foods. Beta-carotene can be converted to retinal which is required in vision. So yes, in a round-about way, carrots do help you see in the dark.

Is breakfast really the most important meal of the day?

It's called break-fast for a reason – breakfast helps break the overnight fast you experience while sleeping which ensures your body is refuelled for the upcoming day. It also boosts your metabolic rate for the whole day, leaves you pumped with energy and will ensure you make more healthy food choices during the day and that you don't over-indulge at morning tea or lunch. For children breakfast helps them feel alert and will improve their concentration at school. All in all, yes breakfast is the most important meal of the day.

Is brown sugar better or white sugar better for me?

Brown sugar, raw sugar, caster sugar, icing sugar and organic sugar are all just that – sugar. Nutritionally, there's no difference between them all. Go easy on free sugar (sugar added to cereals, hot drinks and desserts) and high sugar foods because these can all contribute to weight gain and tooth decay





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When comparing nutrition information panels, do I use the 'per 100g' column or the 'per serving' column?

It's more valuable to compare the 'per 100g' columns rather than the 'per serving' columns; this way two products can be compared as serving sizes can differ between products and brands. All food labels must provide information on the number of servings per package and the serving size. Often what we perceive as a serving is not what the label states.

Are low Glycemic Index (GI) foods better for me than foods with a high GI?

Both low and high GI foods have their place. Low GI foods provide the body with continuous energy meaning hunger is kept at bay and you feel fuller for longer (they offer greater satiety). High GI foods are particularly useful when a quick burst of energy is required, such as prior to exercise or post-exercise when energy stores need to be replenished. Low GI foods include wholegrain breads and cereals, beans, lentils, basmati rice, milk, custard, yoghurt and baked beans. Examples of high GI foods are white bread, cornflakes, boiled potatoes, jellybeans, soft drinks and honey.

What's a bread and cereal serving, and how many should I have each day?

-  1 medium slice of bread
-  1 bread roll
-  1 muffin (80g)
-  1 cup cornflakes or rice bubbles
-  ½ cup muesli
-  ½ cup cooked porridge
-  2 Weet-bix
-  1 cup cooked pasta
-  1 cup cooked rice
-  1 cup cassava or tapioca
-  2 plain sweet biscuits



Life Stage	Recommendation
Adults	At least 6 servings per day
Preschoolers	At least 4 servings per day
Primary school children	At least 5 servings per day
Pregnant women	At least 6 servings per day
Breastfeeding women	At least 7 servings per day

Why is it a good idea to consume a vitamin C containing food or drink at the same time as iron containing foods?

Haem iron which is found in foods sourced from animals, such as red meat, chicken and seafood, is absorbed more efficiently than non-haem iron (found in plant-based foods like spinach, baked beans, breakfast cereals, wholegrain bread and dried apricots). Vitamin C enhances the absorption of non-haem iron so consuming foods rich in vitamin C (citrus fruits and juices, tomatoes, kiwifruit or red capsicum) with a non-haem iron food will promote iron absorption. Examples include adding kiwifruit or mandarins to your breakfast cereal and drinking a glass of orange juice while eating baked beans.



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Why do we need iron?

Iron is essential for carrying oxygen to every part of your body hence when iron stores are low, you feel tired and lacking in energy. Red meat is the best source of iron because it's rich in iron and the iron is well-absorbed by the body. Vegetables and legumes also provide iron (spinach being a good one) however it's not as well absorbed as that from red meat.

Is it true that trim milk has more calcium than whole milk?

Yes, trim milk contains more calcium than whole milk, which is another good reason to choose trim over whole milk (the fat content in trim milk is significantly less than that in whole milk).

Is carob healthier than chocolate?

Carob has similar fat and energy levels to milk and dark chocolate suggesting it's not a healthier choice. Carob offers slightly more calcium (377mg/100g) than milk and dark chocolate (250mg/100g and 52mg/100g respectively) and contains no caffeine.

Do 'lite' products have less energy and fat?

Be careful because the term 'lite' can often refer to the colour or flavour and is not necessarily referring to the fat or energy content, for example 'light' olive oil and 'lite' tomato sauce.

What's the difference between toasted and natural muesli?

Toasted muesli is toasted in oil so fat and energy levels are generally higher than those in natural muesli – read the nutrition information panel to be sure.

Are fresh fruits and vegetables better for you than frozen fruits and vegetables?

Most frozen vegetables are snapped frozen within a few hours of being picked so the nutritional value is retained and is very similar to that found in fresh fruits and vegetables.

What's the nutritional difference between canned fruit in juice and canned fruit in syrup?

The syrup found in canned fruit is a combination of fruit juice and sugar so the sugar content is greater than that found in juice which contains natural sugar only. Where possible choose canned fruits in juice rather than syrup.

What foods are good sources of omega three fatty acids?

Omega three fatty acids are found in canola oil, walnuts, linseeds and oily fish (such as salmon, sardines, kahawai, tuna and mackerel).

Are omega three fatty acids good for you?

Omega three fatty acids offer heart protective benefits and are also believed to reduce blood pressure. Some research suggests omega three fatty acids can offer help to people suffering from arthritis and asthma and they may also improve brain function.





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What nutrients do I have to consider if I'm a vegetarian or vegan?

If you choose to adopt a vegetarian or vegan diet you need to consider getting the following nutrients from alternative sources – vitamin B12, iron, calcium, zinc and protein.

What's the difference between herbal tea and black tea?

Unlike black teas, herbal teas are free from caffeine. Although there is no conclusive evidence on their therapeutic properties, some teas provide vitamins and antioxidants. You may be aware of the following claims:

- Peppermint tea Aids digestion
- Ginger Settles stomach problems
- Chamomile Offers soothing properties including sleep

Why are people described as 'apples' or 'pears'?

People who carry fat mainly around their stomach are known to have an 'apple' shape whereas those that carry fat around their hips and thighs are known as 'pear' shaped. 'Apple' shaped people have an increased risk of health problems, such as diabetes and heart disease.

Are avocados high in fat?

Avocados are high in monounsaturated fat which has a positive effect on heart health by maintaining optimal cholesterol levels. Monounsaturated fats are typically referred to as the 'good' fats.

What are probiotics?

They are live micro-organisms that have a positive effect on bacteria found naturally in the digestive system. To be classified as a probiotic, the micro-organism must not be digested prior to reaching the intestine. Probiotics work by creating a balance with 'bad' bacteria in the digestive system. By outnumbering these 'bad' bacteria, the risk of ill-health is reduced. Examples include bifidobacteria and lactobacilli. Yoghurt is currently the most effective medium for delivery of probiotics.

What's the difference between a 'use by date' and a 'best before' date?

A 'use by date' tells you how long your food will keep safely if you follow storage instructions carefully. You shouldn't buy or eat foods that have passed the 'use by date'. Examples of foods with 'use by dates' are meat, dairy products and ready-to-eat foods. The 'best before' date indicates when the quality of the food may begin to deteriorate. Once the 'best before' date has passed, it doesn't necessarily mean the food is unsafe to eat. Foods with 'best before' dates include packet soups, muesli bars and breakfast cereals.

What foods are sources of wholegrains?

You'll find wholegrains in popcorn, brown rice, wholemeal pasta, wholemeal bread, wholegrain breakfast cereals (Weet-Bix, muesli, All Bran, San Bran, Sultana Bran, bran flakes etc), buckwheat, barley, oats and rye.

