



Food Literacy Program Manual





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Introduction

This manual has been designed for use by support workers, health staff and educators within the domains of family and child support services. It can be used to support the delivery of hands on food preparation activities in addition to being a source of easy to read recipes and fact sheets that can be distributed to clients.

Whilst this manual has been designed for families affected by gestational diabetes, practical components within this manual are applicable and easily transferable to any target group.

Why target families affected by gestational diabetes?

Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) is a form of diabetes that occurs during pregnancy and usually resolves after the baby is born.

In Australia, 1 in 7 women are affected by GDM which occurs more commonly among older women aged over 40 years of age. Women from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background and women born Asia, North Africa and the Middle East are also at greater risk of developing GDM.

Women who have been affected by GDM have a 50% chance of developing type 2 diabetes later in life. Children born from women with gestational diabetes have an increased risk of becoming obese and/or developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

Following a healthy lifestyle that includes being physically active, eating well and maintaining a healthy weight is essential for preventing type 2 diabetes.



Food literacy and its relationship to health

Food literacy can be defined as “a collection of inter-related knowledge, skills and behaviours required to plan, manage, select, prepare and eat food to meet needs.” (Dr. Helen Vidgen). Food literacy encompasses four main domains¹ as follows:



Planning and management of food

- Prioritising money and time for food.
- Planning for regular access of food irrespective of changes in circumstances or environment.
- Make feasible food decisions which balance food needs (nutrition, taste, hunger) with available resources (time, money, skill, equipment).



Selection of food

- Accessing food through multiple sources.
- Determining what is in a food product, where it came from and how to correctly store and use it.
- Judging the quality of the food.



Preparation of food

- Making a good tasting meal from whatever is available. This includes:
 - being able to prepare commonly available foods
 - using common pieces of kitchen equipment
 - adapting recipes and experimenting with food and ingredients
 - applying safe food hygiene and handling principles.



Eating of food

- Understanding impact of food on personal wellbeing.
- Self-awareness of balancing food intake. This includes:
 - knowing which foods to include for good health
 - suitable portion size and frequency of foods.
- The social aspect of eating – joining in and eating together.

¹ H.A. Vidgen, D. Gallegos / Appetite 76 (2014) 50–59

Food literacy involves the ability of the individual to:

- appropriately source food
- understand the nutritional benefits (or drawback) of various foods
- be adaptable with the foods available
- prepare and store food hygienically, and
- be able to maintain these skills throughout all of life's ups and downs.

When people have greater cooking skills and confidence in their skills and abilities, they are better able to prepare and cook foods at home.

Home cooking

With home cooked meals comes a greater reliance on fresh and healthy ingredients, and an ability to better moderate intake of excessive fat, salt and sugar often found in pre-prepared and convenience foods. This translates to a healthier diet, a healthier home atmosphere, transference of skills to other family members and a reduced likelihood of developing dietary/lifestyle related chronic diseases (e.g. type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, hypertension).



Barriers to healthy eating

Many things can prevent individuals from preparing healthy meals for themselves and/or their families. It is important to recognize these barriers when planning your food program.

Below is a list of common barriers and ways to address them.

Skills

For some people the thought of cooking from scratch may be overwhelming or intimidating. Providing opportunities to learn basic food preparation skills will build confidence in preparing meals.

Basic skills include:

- Using food preparation utensils such as knives, graters, peelers and measuring devices
- Using cooking equipment such as fry pans, microwave, stove top, oven
- Learning basic cooking techniques such as stir frying, boiling and sautéing
- When planning your cooking program, choose the first couple of recipes that require minimal skills.
- Note that some people will have great cooking skills which they can share with others.



Time

A perceived (or real) lack of time in the preparation of home-made meals. This can be due to a large variety of reasons – including working, studying, domestic and parental duties, ill health and more.

Ideas to overcome time constraints include:

- Set a menu for the week comprised of simple and achievable meals that can be prepared easily across the week. While taking the time to prepare a weekly menu can seem taxing at first, it saves time in the long run by allowing the person to:
 - decide in advance which meal will be prepared each day
 - compile a shopping list of all the ingredients needed for the week
 - visit the shops only once during the week to obtain all of the ingredients needed.



- Cook in bulk to minimize the number of cooking times during the week. The excess food can be:
 - frozen for use on another day
 - used as a component in other meals during the week.

This is especially useful with foundation recipes such as bolognaise that can be used with spaghetti, topped on potatoes or turned into a chilli con carne.

Cost

Planning a weekly menu, in conjunction with viewing the weekly supermarket specials helps to decide what to cook. Shopping for ingredients in advance also saves money as there are no last-minute trips to the store which can often be accompanied by impulse buying of unplanned items.

Choose meals that are based on simple and seasonal ingredients. Avoid recipes that call for novel, expensive or infrequently used ingredients.



Cooking Facilities

Keep a range of basic cooking equipment. All you really need is a good set of pans of various sizes, decent knives, chopping board, grater and a clear work bench space. Electric frypans are a great alternative to stove tops.



Delivering a food literacy program

To make your program accessible and enjoyable, consider the following:

- Is the location for the program accessible by public transport, or similar?
- Will you be willing, or able to provide transport to the location for delivery of the program? You may be able to pair with other community services in consideration of this aspect.
- Is the program delivered within a suitable timeslot to target participants? E.g. during school hours for stay at home mums of school aged children, or evenings for working groups.
- Have participants been involved with the development of the program or delivery outline? This tailors the content to participants and allows for greater engagement.

How can we learn about participants needs?

Every individual brings with them their own level of skills and knowledge. Cooking programs provide a great opportunity to both share and build on these skills so we can all learn from each other.

Learning about participants needs can be as simple as asking them what they think they need to know. This is often a very useful starting point, and other ideas and topics generally emerge from here.

Use these conversation starters to help get the discussion started:

- *My favourite meal to cook is...*
- *My favourite ingredient to use is...*
- *I cook most using the (oven, microwave, stove etc etc)...*
- *The most challenging meal of the day for me is because...*
- *I have difficulties in feeding my spouse/child/teen because of...*
- *I usually get my groceries from...*

As participants build rapport with you over the course of the program, they will become more comfortable with approaching you and asking you questions more specific to their needs.

Planning your program

Essential steps in the planning of your program include:

- Determine a suitable space for the delivery of your program.
- Decide if this space allows for an interactive participant cooking workshop, or a facilitator lead cooking demonstration (best for small spaces).
- Identify level of funding available to deliver this program.
- Review what the funding level will cover. Will it provide all the equipment necessary for a group cooking program (i.e. multiple pans, knives, hot plates etc) or do budgetary restraints suit a cooking demonstration program only?
- Complete a risk assessment tool.

Determining an ideal group

While you may be keen to have as many participants as possible, small groups result in greater participant outcomes.

A group size of 4-10 is best for hands-on participant cooking sessions, while up to 15 is suitable for cooking demonstrations. This ensures that each participant has adequate viewing room, or that there is enough equipment for all to be involved. When groups become bigger than this, participants can lose focus on the purpose of the session, become lost in personal conversations, or have trouble viewing the demonstration.



Tools and resources required for running cooking groups

Prior to starting your program, complete the following checklist to ensure you are well organized and the session will run smoothly.

Facilitator's checklist in preparation of the cooking sessions

- Prior to the session, familiarise yourself with the room and its location within the facility, taking particular note of evacuation procedures and ensure the room size is suitable for anticipated number of participants.
- Identify access to running water and soap for washing hands and suitable facilities for washing up.
- Ensure there are suitable food storage facilities available (e.g. fridge, freezer or cooler bag for keeping cold foods cold).
- Check waste management policies and make sure correct bins are available.
- Familiarise yourself with use of equipment such as ovens, blenders and frypans.
- Ensure all electrical equipment is well maintained and meets facility policy.
- Locate and familiarise yourself with emergency exits in the event of an evacuation.
- Locate and familiarise yourself with the use of the fire extinguisher in the event of a fire.
- Ensure there is a well-equipped first aid kit available at all times, and a certified first aid facilitator.
- Confirm any special dietary requirements and check suitability of foods by reading the food labels, refer to appendix for further information.

Where attendees are watching a cooking demonstration and not participating themselves, ensure there is adequate space for the demonstration and that attendees do not enter this space themselves as this places both attendees and demonstrator at risk of injury.

Risk assessment tool

Cooking can be a hazardous activity. Common hazards are associated with unsafe cooking equipment, unhygienic cooking environments, poor personal hygiene and poor food handling and storage. With careful planning and preparation, these hazards can be easily prevented.

Potential Hazard	Who is at risk	Control Measures
Food poisoning	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide participants with an overview of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o safe food handling practices o following hygienic principles. - Limit use of high-risk foods. - Facilitators complete food safety training (I'M ALERT online food safety training).
Allergic reaction	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure all allergies and food intolerances are declared in the registration forms. - Provide safe alternatives to allergenic ingredients for participants with allergies. - Make ingredients for each session readily known for participants each week.
Injury during a cooking program	Participants and facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide training on safe use of knives and equipment at each session. - Minimise use of hot surfaces and electrical equipment. - Keep sharp utensils in closed container (e.g. knives in sheaths) and out of reach of children. - Facilitators have first aid training and carry first aid kit.
Facilitator is injured in preparation or delivery of session	Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow safe manual handling practices including use of ergonomic trolley. - Safe use of equipment. - Ensure all electrical equipment is tag and tested. - Facilitators have first aid training and carry first aid kit.
Response to emergency situations	Participants and facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be aware of facilities emergency response procedures. - Outline emergency evacuation procedures and meeting point at the start of each session for participants. - Ensure exits are clearly marked and unobstructed. - Ensure fire blanket and extinguisher are within close vicinity of the cooking demonstration area.
Low rates of participant attendance	Program organisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build rapport with participants so they feel comfortable and welcome. - Work with participants to identify and remove possible barriers that prevent regular attendance. - Ensure active support from program partners to help promote the program among the defined groups.

Essential cooking equipment

The below table is based on the assumption that participants work in pairs. For cooking demonstrations, you will only need enough equipment for the demonstrator.

Equipment	Number of Participants			
	4	6	8	10
Electric frypan	2	3	4	5
Sharp knife	4	6	8	10
Plastic chopping mat	4	6	8	10
Set of 3 mixing bowls	2	3	4	5
Egg flip	2	3	4	5
Mixing spoon	2	3	4	5
Whisk	2	3	4	5
Ladle	2	3	4	5
Vegetable peeler	2	3	4	5
Grater	2	3	4	5
Tongs	2	3	4	5
Colander	2	3	4	5
Set of measuring spoons	2	3	4	5
Set of measuring cups	2	3	4	5
Aprons	4	6	8	10
Tea towels	4	6	8	10
Microwave proof bowl (medium size)	2	3	4	5

Additional equipment required for program delivery



Paper towel



Sanitiser spray



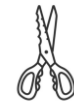
Rubbish bin and liners



Drinking cups



Cutlery



Scissors



Hand sanitiser



Dustpan



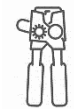
Washing up detergent and cloths



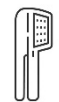
Food storage containers



cling wrap



Can opener



Garlic press



Kettle



Plates and bowls for serving



Serviettes

Be sure to perform a cost analysis for essential equipment to ensure your budget extends to cover all that you need. Shop around at various stores and ask for a discount if you are purchasing multiple of the same item.

Essential pantry staples

A well-stocked pantry of essentials items is a must have. Below is a list of basic essentials you will find useful to have on hand. Should you have participants with special dietary requirements, be sure to have suitable alternatives for these participants too.



Spray oil (olive or canola)



Extra virgin olive oil



Flour and corn flour



Honey



Soy sauce



Sweet chilli sauce



Oyster sauce



Pepper



Dried herbs and spices



Balsamic vinegar

Refer to the handy fact sheet '*Pantry, fridge & freezer essentials*' on page 64, for participants to use at home.

Food safety

Adhering to simple food hygiene and safety measures such as hand washing, keeping food at the right temperature and avoiding cross contamination, can reduce the likelihood of food poisoning. Ensure participants are familiar with the following basic food safety principles.

Before food preparation

- Wash hands with soap and dry thoroughly.
- Ensure all tables/bench tops and utensils are clean.
- Check use by dates and quality of all foods and drinks.
- Store perishable foods and drinks in the fridge.
- Wash all fruit and vegetables.

During food preparation

- Keep the environment clean.
- Minimise handling food with bare hands and use tongs where possible.
- Minimise risks of cross contamination by using separate chopping boards and utensils.
- Limit the time food and drinks spend out of the fridge.
- Prepare enough food for what you need to avoid having food wastage.
- Keep all ready-to-eat-food covered until the class is ready to eat it.

After food preparation

- Eat cooked food while it is still hot.
- Eat chilled foods within 2 hours after being out of the fridge.
- Discard any leftovers.
- If additional food is prepared to take home, store it in a closed container and refrigerate it as soon as it stops steaming.

I'M ALERT Food Safety is a free online training program available to food handlers and any other interested members of the public.

The I'M ALERT training contains interactive quizzes to test your knowledge of general food safety and you are issued with a certificate on completion. It takes approximately 2 hours to complete.

ACT Health offers free access to the I'M ALERT training via the following link:

<https://imalert.com.au/v6/?sub=health-act>

High risk foods

High risk food and drinks are prone to bacterial growth and must be kept either cool or heated to prevent levels of bacteria from growing.

High risk food and drinks include:

- raw meats, cooked meats and food containing meat
- dairy products and foods and drinks containing dairy products
- processed fruits and vegetables, such as cooked vegetables
- cooked rice and pasta.

The temperature danger zone

In high-risk food and drinks, bacteria can grow quickly to unsafe levels between 5°C and 60°C.

Cold food should be kept at 5° C or below.

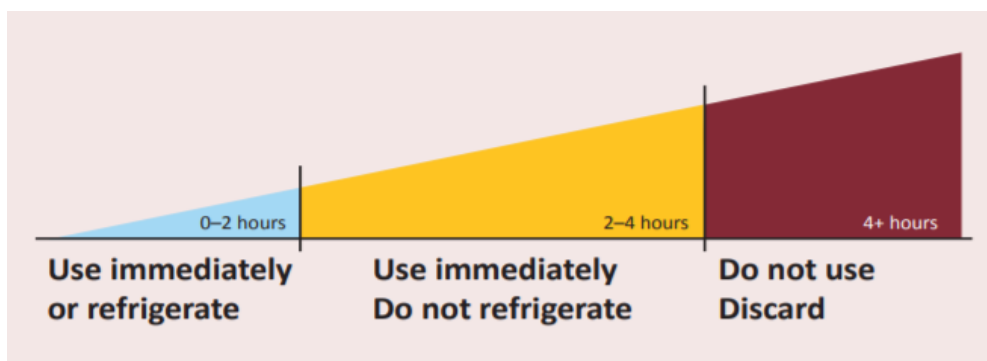
Hot food should be kept at 60° C or above.

The 2 hour / 4 hour rule

The length of time high risk food and drinks spend in the temperature danger zone from 5 °C to 60 °C must be minimised to keep food safe. If a refrigerated food or hot food has been in the temperature danger zone, apply the 2 hour/4 hour rule below.

Food that has been in the temperature danger zone for:

- up to 2 hours is safe to eat and put in the fridge for later use
- more than 2 hours but less than 4 hours is safe to eat but should not be put back in the fridge
- more than 4 hours is unsafe to eat and should be discarded.



Delivering your group cooking session

Below is an approximate guideline for how to deliver a group cooking session based on a 90 - minute timeframe. This allows ample time for discussion, enjoyment of the meal as a group and then thorough clean up and equipment return at the end.

Preparation - before the session

- Review recipe and confirm all steps.
- Ensure all ingredients available/purchased.
- Ensure all equipment is available with no items missing.

Talking - 10 minutes

- Introduce the workshop to participants and discuss the recipe that they will be preparing.
- Provide an overview of personal hygiene and food handling requirements. i.e. long hair tied back, enclosed shoes, hands washed, apron on.
- Identify and explain ingredients including where they can be purchased.
- Discuss the equipment needed for each step of the recipe.

Cooking - 45 minutes

- Prepare the recipe as per the method.
- Demonstrate steps intermittently throughout the session. Spread the demonstrated steps out across different participant stations (pausing the session and ensuring all participants are watching), or have your own station set up at the front.
- Ensure safe food handling and safety guidelines are followed throughout the session.

Eating - 20 minutes

- Once all pairs have completed the cooking component, encourage participants to serve and eat together around a central table.
- Ask participants for feedback on the workshop and if they would like to see or do anything differently in the following sessions.
- Encourage participants to make notes within their workbook and refer them to useful sections from their workbook (e.g. recipe swaps, pantry staples, food storage).
- This is a great opportunity for participants to reflect on the session and discuss what they may do differently in future (including the addition of other ingredients or substitutes).

Cleaning - 15 minutes

- Wash and return equipment to storage, wipe down benches and return all pantry items.
- If a compost service is available within your facility, collect any unwanted leftovers or food scraps for composting.
- Remove rubbish and recycling.

Evaluating your program

It is important to evaluate your program to learn about what areas you are doing well in, and what areas you could improve on. It is useful for gathering measurable information, which can then be used to report on the success of the program. This information is invaluable in seeking future funding.

When evaluating your program consider the following types of evaluation.

Formal evaluation

Pre and post questionnaires are ideal to measure changes in participants level of food literacy, knowledge and confidence after attending the cooking program.

Ask participants to complete the pre-questionnaire prior to commencing the program. Ideally this would take place a few days before the cooking program so you can get an idea of your participants level of food literacy.

Similarly, the post questionnaire should be completed a few days after the cooking program to measure any improvements after completing the program. If this is not possible then ask participants to complete the questionnaire at the end of the final cooking session.

Informal evaluation

Informal observation and discussions can be a useful way of gathering information for your evaluation. Feedback in these moments can be more candid than on formal surveys and may allow for program adjustments to be implemented more swiftly than a formal written survey.

Eating time is a great opportunity to ask informal questions and generate discussion about the meals prepared. To help initiate discussion ask the following questions:

- *How easy it would be for you to recreate the dish again at home?*
- *Would you change any part of the recipe next time you make it?*
- *Are there any new skills and knowledge you have gained from the workshop?*

Facilitator reflection

Gather feedback from facilitators for a well-rounded review. Suggested points of reflection/feedback from facilitators include:

- perceived (or quantified) overall effectiveness of the program
- barriers to effective delivery
- areas for improvement
- additional training opportunities.



Pre-program participant survey

Please tick answers appropriate to you

1. How many nights per week do you cook dinner at home?

- 0 - 1 night 2 - 3 nights 4 - 5 nights 6 - 7 nights

2. How many nights per week do you have take-away for dinner?

- 0 - 1 night 2-3 nights 4 - 5 nights 6 - 7 nights

3. I find cooking at home to be too time consuming:

- True False Unsure

4. I find cooking healthy meals to be too costly:

- True False Unsure

5. How often do you include vegetables with your family meals?

- Never Sometimes Most of the time Every time

6. How confident do you feel at cooking?

- Not at all somewhat confident very confident

7. How do you decide what you are going to cook? Tick as many as are relevant

- Recipe uses few ingredients
 Recipe is easy to follow
 Ingredients are easily available
 Leftover ingredients can be used in other dishes
 It tastes good
 It is healthy for me
 Cost

Post-program participant survey

Please tick answers appropriate to you

1. Have you cooked any of the recipes or variations of the recipes?

- Yes No

2. If yes, please tick which ones

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

8. How many nights per week do you cook dinner at home?

- 0 - 1 night 2 - 3 nights 4 - 5 nights 6 - 7 nights

9. How many nights per week do you have take-away for dinner?

- 0 - 1 night 2-3 nights 4 - 5 nights 6 - 7 nights

10. I find cooking at home to be too time consuming

- True False Unsure

11. I find cooking healthy meals to be too costly

- True False Unsure

12. How often do you include vegetables with your family meals?

- Never Sometimes Most of the time Every time

13. How confident do you feel at cooking?

- Not at all somewhat confident very confident

Child friendly food engagement



Engaging children with cooking

Engaging children with cooking and preparing food builds an interest in food, healthy eating and skills for life. Cooking together is a great way for parents and carers to spend quality time with their child and create happy memories in the kitchen. Furthermore, children are more invested and likely to eat the food they have helped to prepare.

Cooking with children provides rich sensory experiences and can help build their interest in trying different foods. Allowing children to taste and smell the food while cooking gets them used to new foods without the pressure of eating a full meal. Even just smelling the food first may provide a bridge to tasting in the future.

Cooking with children helps them to:

- ✓ learn about how different foods look and where they come from
- ✓ develop healthy eating habits because they are more likely to try healthy food that they have helped to cook
- ✓ learn about family traditions, recipes and foods - building daily and seasonal traditions around cooking together helps strengthen a family's commitment to a healthy lifestyle
- ✓ build math skills like counting, fractions and measuring
- ✓ build vocabulary around how food, looks, feels and tastes
- ✓ build skills for planning and completing projects – e.g. reading and following a recipe from start to finish.



Child safety in the kitchen

Kitchens can be dangerous places for kids of all ages. Knives, electrical appliances and hot stoves are all hazards. Some safety ground rules that are appropriate for your child's skills and understanding will help to make your kitchen safe.

Keep children safe in the kitchen by:

- showing them how to hold kitchen tools safely, how to use oven mitts to protect hands from heat, and how to turn appliances on and off safely
- supervising them at all times
- delegating safe and age-appropriate tasks.

Hygiene and food safety

Cooking with children provides the opportunity to teach them good hygiene and food safety principles. To minimize food safety risks, parents and carers should teach children to:

- wash hands before preparing food and after touching raw meat, fish and eggs
- tie back long hair
- keep surfaces clean
- keep any pets away from food or surfaces where food is prepared
- use separate chopping boards for meat and vegetables
- keep raw meats covered and away from other foods in the fridge
- thoroughly wash fruit and vegetables
- cook all food thoroughly.



Age appropriate kitchen activities

Toddlers

Choose short and simple cooking tasks that match a toddler's skill and attention span. Toddlers are likely to easily lose interest or get tired of cooking. When this happens let them stop and give them lots of praise and thanks for helping.

Toddlers can:

- rinse fruit and vegetables
- hand over utensils
- stir ingredients
- toss salads.



Simple recipes that are easy to prepare, are quick to make and involve lots of interesting colours and textures include pita bread pizza, fruit salad and green salad.

Preschoolers

Preschoolers can get involved in shopping for healthy food, choosing healthy snacks and preparing simple foods. Preschoolers are old enough to help with things like setting the table, serving food and cleaning up after meals.

Preschoolers can:

- wash fruit and vegetables
- stir/mix ingredients (make sure they aren't hot!)
- mash foods with a masher or fork
- brush foods with a pastry brush
- tear lettuce for salads
- knead dough
- cut soft ingredients – soft fruits and vegetables with an age appropriate knife
- shake/tap a sieve
- spoon or pour ingredients into a bowl
- measure with measuring cups/spoons.



This is also a good age to introduce recipes that involve 'building'. This could include layering toppings on a sandwich for lunch or spooning yoghurt, cereal and fruit into a glass to make a tasty and healthy dessert.

Children can try making some of the following:

- homemade dips like tzatziki and hummus
- fruit salad with yoghurt
- healthy muffins – let your child add raisins, chopped fruit, mashed banana, cooked pumpkin or grated carrot and mix it all together
- mashed potatoes – let your child have a go with the masher and mix the potatoes with yoghurt and herbs or another vegetable like carrots.



School-age children

School-age children love helping in the kitchen. This is a good age to involve children in making menu suggestions and choosing healthy ingredients for meals.

School-age children can:

- use a vegetable peeler for items such as potatoes, carrots, apples
- break eggs into a bowl
- deseed a capsicum/scoop an avocado
- use herb or children's scissors to snip herbs
- grate ingredients
- drain and rinse canned vegetables
- measure ingredients
- set/clean the table and help do the dishes
- read recipe steps out loud
- help to choose and pack their own healthy lunch box.



School age children can try more complex recipes like:

- fried rice
- soup
- gnocchi and pasta
- pancakes or pikelets.

Parents and carers still need to help children with any tasks that involve the oven, hotplates or hot liquids, and supervise carefully if they are using sharp knives or other utensils.

Recipes





Basic soup

Ingredient	Demonstration/ taste test only	Number of participants			
		4	6	8	10
Carrots	3	6	9	12	15
Celery stalks	4	8	12	16	20
Brown onion	1	2	3	4	5
Garlic cloves	1	2	3	4	5
Salt reduced stock	1 L	2 L	3 L	4 L	5 L
Olive oil*	1 bottle				

Optional:

Pasta, rice or barley	½ cup	1 cup	1.5 cups	2 cups	2.5 cups
Quick cooking mixed vegetables (e.g. broccoli, spinach, zucchini)	150g	300g	450g	600g	750g
Lean meat	200g	400g	500g	600g	800g
Herbs*	Assorted from pantry staples				

*To be purchased if not already in pantry staples

Equipment required

Medium mixing bowl	Measuring cups
Medium sized oven proof dish	Grater
Knife	Egg flip/spatula
Chopping board/mat	Serving plates
Whisk	Cutlery

Note: Amount of ingredients are based on one recipe quantity per pair of participants.

Allergen advice: The base soup contains no known allergens. The addition of pasta should be omitted if a participant has a wheat allergy or gluten intolerance. Stock should be checked to ensure that it is gluten/wheat free.



**PARTICIPANT
RECIPE**

Foundation
recipe

Basic soup

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 4 stalks of celery, chopped
- 3 carrots, chopped
- 1 litre of reduced salt stock



Method



1. Heat oil in a large saucepan and add onion and garlic. Cook until onion has softened.



2. Add remaining vegetables and stock. Stir through and continue heating.



3. When the soup reaches a boil turn down the heat and allow to simmer for 10-15 minutes or until vegetables have softened.

Use this recipe as your base soup to turn into four other soups.

Chicken noodle soup

Extra items you will need:

- 300g chicken thigh or breast fillet, thinly sliced
- 50g uncooked spaghetti or noodles
- Chopped parsley to serve (optional)

Steps:

1. Add the sliced chicken and noodles to the foundation soup base.
2. Stir and cook through.
3. Divide into bowls, top with parsley and serve with bread if desired.



Pumpkin and lentil soup

Extra items you will need:

- One cup of dried lentils, washed
- 450g peeled and diced pumpkin
- Mild curry paste (optional)

Steps:

1. Add the lentils and pumpkin to the foundation soup recipe.
2. Once cooked and softened, blend the soup to your desired consistency.
3. Divide into bowls.

Tip: Add 2 tablespoons of mild curry paste prior to blending if you want a little more spice.



Minestrone soup

Extra items you will need:

- 425g can of reduced salt kidney beans
- 425g can of reduced salt tomatoes
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup uncooked noodles
- 1 cup shredded cabbage
- Grated parmesan soup (to serve)

Steps:

1. To the foundation soup, add the kidney beans, tomato, noodles or potato.
2. Simmer until cooked through.
3. Add the cabbage simmer until softened.
4. Divide the soup into bowls and serve with bread if desired.



Lamb and barley soup

Extra items you will need:

- 3 lean lamb shanks
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pearl barley
- Parsley and rosemary (optional, to serve)

Steps:

1. Add the lamb and pearl barley to foundation soup recipe.
2. Cook through until meat is tender.
3. Remove bones.
4. Divide into bowls and serve with herbs if desired.





Basic frittata

Ingredient	Demonstration/ taste test only	Number of participants			
		4	6	8	10
Eggs	4	8	12	16	20
Milk (reduced fat)	1 Litre				
Spring onions	4	8	12	16	20
Reduced fat grated cheese	75g	150g	225g	300g	375g
Self-raising flour	1 kg				

Optional:

Lean ham, turkey or chicken	150g	300g	450g	700g	850g
Small zucchini	1	2	3	4	5
Small carrot	1	2	3	4	5
Sweet potato	150g	300g	450g	600g	750g
Reduced fat feta cheese	100g	200g	300g	400g	500g

To Serve:

Crusty wholegrain roll	0	4	6	8	10
Salad	e.g. Large salad for group with greens, tomato, cucumber, olive oil, any remaining crumbled feta				

Equipment required

Medium sized oven proof dish	Grater
Medium sized mixing bowl	Egg flip/spatula for serving
Knife	Serving plates
Chopping board/mat	Cutlery
Whisk	Serviettes
Measuring cup	

Note: Amount of ingredients are based on one recipe quantity per pair of participants.

Allergen advice: Recipe is not suitable for persons with **egg, milk, dairy** or **wheat/gluten** allergens due to eggs, milk, feta and flour.

Recipe can be modified for wheat allergen by the following:

- Replace self-raising flour with corn flour.
- Serve with a gluten/wheat free bread roll.



**PARTICIPANT
RECIPE**

Foundation
recipe

Basic frittata

Ingredients (serves 4)

4 eggs

½ cup reduced fat milk

4 spring onions, chopped

½ cup reduced fat cheese, grated

¼ cup self raising flour



Method



1. Preheat oven to 180°C
2. In a medium bowl lightly whisk the eggs and the milk until combined.



3. Add the spring onions, cheese and flour and mix until all ingredients are well combined.



4. Spray a baking dish with spray oil and evenly pour the mixture into the dish.
5. Bake for 40 minutes.

Serve with salad and crusty wholegrain bread.

Use this recipe as your base frittata to turn into four other frittatas.

Tuna and pea frittata

Extra items you will need:

- 425g can of tuna in springwater, drained
- 2 cups of frozen peas
- Salad greens or mixed vegetables to serve

Steps:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Add the drained tuna and frozen peas to the foundation frittata recipe.
3. Bake until frittata is set and browned.
4. Serve with salad greens or mixed vegetables.



Spinach and feta frittata

Extra items you will need:

- 2 cups of fresh baby spinach OR 1 packed of frozen spinach
- 150g reduced fat feta cheese
- Salad greens or mixed vegetables to serve

Steps:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Crumble the feta.
3. Add feta and spinach to foundation frittata recipe.
4. Bake until set and lightly golden on top.
5. Serve with salad greens or mixed vegetables.



Ham and potato frittata

Extra items you will need:

- 2 cups of chopped, cooked potato
- 100g lean ham, shredded
- Salad greens or mixed vegetables to serve
- Fresh herbs to serve (optional)

Steps:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Add potato and ham to foundation recipe.
3. Bake until set and lightly golden on top.
4. Serve with salad greens or mixed vegetables.



Pumpkin and ricotta frittata

Extra items you will need:

- 2 cups of pumpkin, peeled and cut into cubes
- ½ cup reduced fat ricotta
- Baby spinach leaves (to serve)

Steps:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Cover a baking tray with baking paper. Cover with the chopped pumpkin and lightly spray with cooking oil. Cook for 20 minutes, or until soft.
3. Add cooked pumpkin and ricotta to foundation frittata recipe. Mix well.
4. Bake until set and lightly golden on top.
5. Serve with baby spinach leaves.





Basic stir fry

Ingredient	Demonstration/ taste test only	Number of participants			
		4	6	8	10
Chicken thigh fillets	300g	600g	900g	1.2kg	1.5kg
Brown onion	1	2	3	4	5
Celery sticks	2	4	6	8	10
Broccoli florets	150g	300g	450g	600g	750g
Capsicum	1	2	3	4	5
Garlic clove	1	2	3	4	5
3cm piece ginger	1	2	3	4	5
Cornflour*		1 packet			
Honey*		1 bottle			
Soy sauce* (salt reduced)		1 bottle			
Oyster sauce*		1 bottle			
Sesame oil*		1 bottle			

To Serve:

500g hokkien noodles	1 packet	2 packets	3 packets	4 packets	5 packets
OR Dried rice	1 cup	2 cups	3 cups	4 cups	5 cups

*To be purchased if not already in pantry staples

Equipment required

Measuring cups	Colander (for noodles)
Measuring spoons	Saucepan with lid (if cooking rice in place of noodles)
Small mixing bowl (for marinate)	Egg flip/spatula
Medium mixing bowl (for cooked tofu/meat)	Tongs/serving spoon
Large heat proof bowl (for noodles)	Serving spoons x 2
Marinating or leak proof container	Serving bowls
Work or fry pan	Cutlery
Knife x 2 (for vegetables and meat)	Serviettes
Chopping board/mat x 2 (for vegetables and meat)	

Note: Amount of ingredients are based on one recipe quantity per pair of participants.

Allergen advice: Recipe is not suitable for persons with **sesame**, **shellfish** or **wheat** allergens due to sesame oil, oyster sauce and hokkien noodles.

Recipe can be modified for allergens by the following:

- Replace hokkien noodles with rice.
- Replace sesame oil with olive oil.
- Remove oyster sauce



**PARTICIPANT
RECIPE**

Foundation
recipe

Basic stir fry

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 2 tablespoons salt reduced soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon oyster sauce
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 3cm piece of fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated or minced
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 onion, cut into thin wedges
- 300g chicken thigh fillets, thinly sliced
- 2 sticks of celery, sliced diagonally
- 1 large carrot, cut into strips
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1 capsicum, sliced
- ½ cup water
- 1 tablespoon corn flour



Method



1. Combine soy sauce, oyster sauce, ginger, garlic and honey in a bowl. Add the meat or tofu and mix well. Cover and refrigerate whilst preparing other ingredients.



2. Heat oil frypan and add the marinated chicken making sure not to add all of the marinade. Stir fry for 2-3 minutes or until browned. Transfer to a bowl and cover to keep warm.



3. Add onion to pan and stir fry for 1 minute or until onion has softened.



4. Add celery and carrot. Stir fry for 2-3 minutes. Add capsicum and broccoli and stir fry for a further 2 minutes until vegetables are tender.



5. Add remaining marinade and stir through. Return chicken to wok and stir through.



6. Blend cornflour with water and add to the pan with the noodles. Stir fry for 1 minute until heated through.

Beef and sesame

Extra items you will need:

- 300g topside beef, thinly sliced (replaces the chicken in foundation recipe)
- 100g snow peas, washed and sliced
- 1 tablespoon of sesame seeds (optional, for serving)

Steps:

1. Follow the foundation recipe instructions.
2. Replace the chicken with the beef.
3. Just prior to serving, add 100g snow peas and one tablespoon of sesame seeds.
4. Serve with rice or noodles as desired.



Stir fried tofu with broccoli and cashews

Extra items you will need:

- 400g firm tofu, cut into cubes or strips (replaces the chicken in foundation recipe)
- 1/3 cup unsalted roasted cashews, roughly chopped
- Rice, to serve

Steps:

1. Marinate the tofu as per the foundation recipe.
2. Stir-fry the tofu until lightly browned. Remove from pan and set aside.
3. Return to step 3 of the foundation recipe and add all the vegetables to pan and stir fry until just cooked.
4. Return tofu and any remaining marinade to the pan. Heat until sauce begins to thicken.
5. Portion out rice and curry into bowls. Top with cashews to serve.



Prawn stir fry with Asian greens

Extra items you will need:

- 500g peeled green prawns (replaces the chicken)
- 120g green beans, trimmed and sliced (replaces carrot and broccoli)
- ½ bunch washed and sliced bok choy
- ½ cup snow peas
- ¼ cup chopped coriander (to serve)
- Rice noodles (to serve)

Steps:

1. Marinate prawns in the foundation stir fry marinade and refrigerate.
2. Cook the rice noodles per packet instructions.
3. Follow the foundation recipe. Add trimmed green beans, bok choy and omit carrot and broccoli.
4. Plate up noodles, topped with stir fry, snow peas and coriander.



Mushroom and pork

Extra items you will need:

- 350g pork strips (replaces chicken)
- 400g mushrooms, trimmed and sliced
- Rice (to serve)
- Coriander leaves, chopped (optional, to serve)

Steps:

1. Marinate the pork in the foundation recipe marinade. Refrigerate.
2. Cook rice per packet instructions.
3. Add the mushrooms to step 3 of the foundation recipe.
4. Serve stir fry on a bed of rice, topped with coriander leaves to garnish.





Basic curry

Ingredient	Demonstration/ taste test only	Number of participants			
		4	6	8	10
Potatoes	2	4	6	8	10
Butternut pumpkin	250g	500g	750g	1kg	1.25kg
Red lentils	¼ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	1 ¼ cup
Diced tomatoes	1 can	2 cans	3 cans	4 cans	5 cans
Reduced fat evaporated milk	1 can	2 cans	3 cans	4 cans	5 cans
Frozen mixed vegetables	150g	300g	450g	600g	750g
Large brown onion	1	2	3	4	5
Garlic cloves	2	4	6	8	10
2cm piece of ginger	1	2	3	4	5
Curry paste	1 jar				
Olive oil*	1 bottle				

To Serve:

Basmati rice (dried)	1 cup	2 cups	3 cups	4 cups	5 cups
Natural yoghurt	1 small tub				

*To be purchased if not already in pantry staples

Equipment required

Large saucepan or frypan with lid	Serving spoon/ladle (for curry)
Measuring cups	Serving spoon for rice and yoghurt (if using)
Measuring spoons	Serving bowls
Knife	Cutlery
Chopping board/mat	Serviettes
Vegetable peeler	Can opener (in case cans aren't pull ring)
Egg flip/spatula	Garlic Press

Note: Amount of ingredients are based on one recipe quantity per pair of participants.

Allergen advice:

Curry paste ingredients can vary – check label for allergens known to the group (including **soy** and **shellfish**). Select a paste that contains no known allergens to group participants.

The evaporated milk (for serving) contains **milk/dairy**.

Recipe can be modified for allergens by the following:

- replace the evaporated milk with reduced-fat coconut milk.



**PARTICIPANT
RECIPE**

Foundation
recipe

Basic curry

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 small piece ginger (2cm cubed), peeled and chopped or minced
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2-3 teaspoons curry paste
- 2 potatoes, peeled and diced
- ½ butternut pumpkin, peeled and diced
- ¼ cup red lentils
- 400g can diced tomatoes
- 375ml can reduced fat evaporated milk
- 1 cup mixed frozen vegetables



Method



1. Heat oil in a large saucepan or frypan. Add onion, garlic and ginger. Cook until onion has softened.



2. Stir in the curry paste.



3. Add potato, pumpkin, tomatoes and lentils. Stir through and allow to simmer for 20 minutes.



4. Add evaporated milk and the frozen vegetables. Stir through.



5. Simmer for a further 5 minutes. Serve with rice.

Lamb or chicken curry

Extra items you will need:

- 300g diced lamb or chicken
- Rice (to serve)
- Fruit chutney (optional, to serve)
- Reduced fat natural yoghurt (optional, to serve)

Steps:

1. In step 2 of the foundation recipe (stir in the curry paste), add the diced meat.
2. Continue to follow recipe per the steps in the foundation curry recipe.
3. Serve with cooked rice, reduced fat yoghurt and fruit chutney.



Fish curry

Extra items you will need:

- 1 white fish fillet per person
- Lemon juice
- Reduced fat natural yoghurt with diced cucumber

Steps:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Spoon the foundation curry into a shallow pan or oven proof dish.
3. Place white fish fillets on the top of the curry, and season with lemon juice.
4. Cover with baking paper or foil and bake in oven for 15 minutes or until fish is cooked through.
5. Serve with reduced fat yoghurt and diced cucumber.



Curry pot pie

Extra items you will need:

- 1 sheet of reduced fat puff pastry

Steps:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C.
2. Place the foundation curry in an oven proof dish.
3. Cover with pastry and brush with milk.
4. Prick the pastry with a fork.
5. Back in oven for 30 minutes or until pastry is golden.



Curried egg

Extra items you will need:

- 2 eggs per person
- Rice and sultanas (to serve)

Steps:

6. Prepare the rice per packed instructions.
7. Boil the eggs. Then cool, peel and cut in half.
8. Serve rice with foundation curry, eggs and sultanas.





Foundation
recipe

Basic bolognaise

Ingredient	Demonstration/ taste test only	Number of participants			
		4	6	8	10
500g lean beef mince	1	2	3	4	5
400g can diced tomatoes	2	4	6	8	10
tomato paste	50g	100g	150g	200g	250g
Garlic cloves	2	4	6	8	10
Brown onion	1	2	3	4	5
Large carrot	1	2	3	4	5
Zucchini	1	2	3	4	5
Olive oil*	1 bottle				

To Serve:

Spaghetti pasta (dried)	250g	500g	750g	1kg	1.25kg
Parmesan cheese (Optional)	1 small packet for sprinkling on top. To be shared amongst group				

*To be purchased if not already in basic pantry staples.

Equipment required

Large saucepan or electric fry pan	Serving spoons/ladle
Grater	Can opener (if not using pull ring cans)
Measuring spoon	Colander (for pasta if using)
Knife	Serving bowls
Chopping board/mat	Cutlery for eating
Spatula/egg flip	Serviettes

Note: Amount of ingredients are based on one recipe quantity per pair of participants.

Allergen advice:

The pasta contains **wheat** and **gluten** and the parmesan (if used) contains **dairy**.

Recipe can be modified for allergens by the following:

- Replace wheat-based noodles with gluten free alternative.
- Avoid adding parmesan if a dairy allergy/intolerance exists.



**PARTICIPANT
RECIPE**

Foundation
recipe

Basic bolognaise

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 onion, diced
- 500g lean beef mince
- 2 x 400g cans of diced tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons of tomato paste
- 1 large carrot, grated
- 1 zucchini, grated



Method



1. Heat oil in a frypan. Add onion and garlic and cook until onion has softened.



2. Add the mince beef to the pan and stir through. Cook until browned.



3. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste and grated zucchini and carrot. Mix through and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes.

Use this recipe as your base to turn into five other mince dishes.

Spaghetti bolognaise

Extra items you will need:

- 250g packet of spaghetti
- Your choice of mixed herbs such as basil, oregano and parsley.
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese



Steps:

1. Add herbs to completed Bolognaise dish.
2. Place pasta in a microwave proof dish. Fill with water until pasta is submerged. Place in microwave and cook for 12mins, stirring occasionally.
3. Plate spaghetti and top with Bolognaise and grated cheese.

Shepherd's pie

Extra items you will need:

- 4 medium potatoes
- ½ cup reduced fat grated cheese

Steps:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Cooked and mash the potatoes.
3. Pour the completed basic bolognaise into a casserole dish.
4. Spread the mashed potato over the bolognaise.
5. Sprinkle with reduced fat grated cheese.
6. Bake in the oven for 20 mins, or until heated through and golden brown on top.



Jacket potato

Extra items you will need:

- 4 medium potatoes
- Reduce fat grated cheese (to serve)

Steps:

1. Wash potatoes. Prick with a fork and bake in oven at 180°C for 40 minutes or microwave for 7 minutes.
2. Spoon in hot bolognaise beef mixture.
3. Top with a sprinkle of grated cheese to serve.



Pasta bake

Extra items you will need:

- Two cups frozen mixed vegetables
- Four cups cooked pasta of your choice
- ½ cup reduced fat grated cheese

Steps:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Mix the cooked pasta and frozen vegetables into the prepared bolognese.
3. Spoon the mixture into a pie or casserole dish.
4. Top with the grated cheese.
5. Bake in the oven for 10-15 mins until cheese is melted and browned.



Mexican beef

Extra items you will need:

- 1 can of kidney beans
- 1 cup of corn kernels
- Mexican spices (flavour to your preference)
- Tacos, burritos or rice to serve

Steps:

1. Add the corn, kidney bean and spices through the bolognese mix.
2. Cook for a further 5-7mins until beans and corn are heated through.
3. Serve with tacos, burritos or rice.





Fruit face

Ingredient	Number of participants				
	2	4	6	8	10
Vanilla yoghurt	100g	150g	200g	250g	300g
Kiwi fruit	1	2	3	4	5
Mandarin	1	1	2	3	4
Banana	1	2	3	4	5
Strawberry	2	4	6	8	10
Sultanas	1 small packet	1 small packet	1 small packet	1 small packet	1 small packet

Equipment required

Measuring spoons	Serving spoons for yoghurt
Knife x 1	Serving plates
Chopping board/mat x 2 (for vegetables and meat)	Cutlery
5 x tongs	Serviettes
	6 x bowls for serving



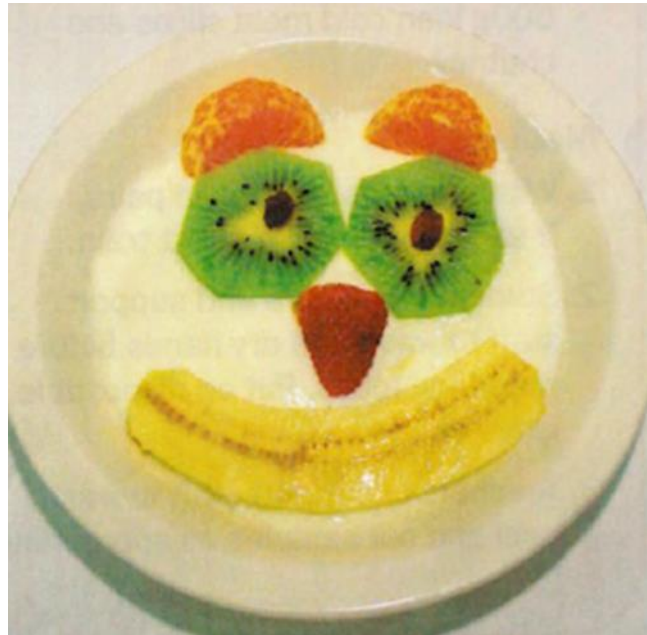
**PARTICIPANT
RECIPE**

Fruit face

Serves 1

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons vanilla yogurt
- 2 slices kiwi fruit
- 2 segments of mandarin
- Half banana (halved lengthways)
- 1 strawberry
- 2 sultanas



Method

1. Cut up the fruit.
2. Spread the yogurt over the base of the plate.
3. Arrange selection of fruit on the plate to resemble a face.



Bread sushi

Ingredient	Number of participants				
	2	4	6	8	10
Wholemeal bread	1 loaf	1 loaf	1 loaf	1 loaf	1 loaf
Pumpkin	¼ pumpkin	¼ pumpkin	¼ pumpkin	¼ pumpkin	¼ pumpkin
Avocado	1	1	2	3	4
Cream cheese	1 tub	1 tub	1 tub	1 tub	2 tubs
Cucumber	1	1	2	3	3
Cheese	1 small block	1 small block	1 small block	1 small block	1 small block
Carrot	1	1	1	2	2

Equipment required

Measuring spoons	Serving spoons x 2
Knife x 2 (for vegetables and meat)	Serving plates
Chopping board/mat	Cutlery
Grater	Serviettes
Rolling pin	Microwave steamer (for pumpkin)
Plastic knives	Plastic spoons



**PARTICIPANT
RECIPE**

Bread sushi

Serves 3

Ingredients

3 slices of wholemeal bread (crusts removed)

Spreads to try

- Mashed pumpkin
- Mashed avocado
- Cream cheese

Fillings to try

- Cucumber sticks
- Cheese sticks
- Grated carrot



Method

1. Flatten bread with hand or a rolling pin.
2. Spread pumpkin, avocado or cream cheese over each slice of bread.
3. Place a piece of cucumber, cheese or sprinkling of grated carrot on one end of the bread.
4. Roll up firmly to enclose filling.
5. Cut each sandwich into 3 rounds.



No bake apple crumble

Ingredient	Number of participants				
	2	4	6	8	10
Pie apple can 410g	1	1	2	3	4
Cinnamon	1 bottle				
Sultanas	1 small packet				
Custard 600g	1 tub				
Natural yoghurt 200g	1	1	2	3	4
Crunchy Granola Cereal	1 small box				

Equipment required

Measuring spoons	Mixing spoons x 2
Chopping board/mat x 2 (for vegetables and meat)	Plastic serving plates
Mixing bowl x 2	Serviettes
Can opener	Plastic cups for serving
Measuring cups	Plastic knives
Whisk	Plastic spoons



No bake apple crumble

Serves 2

Ingredients

- ½ x 410g can pie apple
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon sultanas
- 100g custard
- 100g natural yogurt
- ¼ cup crunchy granola cereal



Method

1. In a mixing bowl, mix the pie apple with cinnamon and sultanas.
2. In a separate bowl whisk together custard and yoghurt, using a fork or a whisk.
3. Using ramekins or short drinking glasses, layer the yoghurt mixture and apples, alternating as you go.
4. Finish the top layer with yoghurt and add a sprinkling of granola.

Tip: Try swapping the apples with other stewed fruits such as peaches, apricots or rhubarb. You can also swap the sultanas with raspberries or blueberries.



Mini wraps

Ingredient	Number of participants				
	2	4	6	8	10
Mini tortillas	1 packet of 10				
Cream cheese	1 tub (250g)				
Cucumber	1	1	1	2	3
Carrot	1	1	1	2	3
Cos lettuce	1	1	1	2	3
Red capsicum	1	1	1	1	2

Equipment required

1 x knife	Mixing spoons x 2
Chopping board x 2	Plastic serving plates
Mixing bowl x 1	Serviettes
Measuring spoons	Plastic knives
Measuring cups	Plastic spoons



PARTICIPANT RECIPE

Mini wraps

Serves 2

Ingredients

- 2 mini tortillas
- 2 tablespoons cream cheese
- 1 cucumber
- 1 small carrot
- 4 cos lettuce leaves
- ¼ red capsicum



Method

1. Grate carrot and finely chop remaining salad vegetables (cucumber, capsicum, lettuce).
2. Put all the vegetables into the bowl with the cream cheese and mix until well combined.
3. Place flat bread on a chopping board and spoon vegetable mixture evenly over the bread.
4. Carefully roll the bread and cut in half before serving.

Participant fact sheets



Family mealtimes

Family mealtimes play a key role in promoting healthy eating habits in young children.

Tips for positive family mealtimes

- **Eat together** - family mealtimes encourage children to try different food types and textures especially when they see their family enjoying them.
- **Make mealtimes enjoyable** – keep calm and remember the division of responsibility 'Parents provide the food and children decide how much and whether they eat at all'.
- **Encourage independent eating** – serving food in ways let children help themselves and decide how much they will eat and helps them to develop coordination, as well as pouring serving and passing skills. E.g. Making serving platters or using a rotating tray (Lazy Susan).
- **Set the scene for a positive mealtime** – encourage children sit down to eat at meal and snack times, to help pack away play materials and set the table. Letting children be “in charge” of details like how to set the table will help them feel invested in the mealtime. Using tablecloths or placemats can also make mealtimes more special.
- **Minimise distractions** – turn off the TV and put devices like phones and tablets away - mealtimes are an ideal opportunity for interacting with children and making conversation.
- **Include babies in meals with others as soon as they start eating solid foods** – this encourages eating similar foods to those enjoyed by others at the table, to hold finger foods and spoons and to try and feed themselves.
- **Expect a little mess!** - this allows children’s exploration of food. Young children should be allowed to eat with their fingers, especially if they are still learning to use utensils.



Building healthy habits for children

Children need many joyful experiences with food in order to become great eaters. Parents and carers can help establish healthy eating habits for their children in many ways.

Encourage eating to appetite

- Children's appetites change dramatically from day to day - children have the inborn ability to know when they are hungry or full. Allow them to stop eating when they feel full.
- Follow the division of responsibility - adults provide, child decides. It is up to the child to decide how much to eat – or whether to eat at all.
- A healthy child will not starve themselves - if they are not hungry at one meal they will make up for it at the next meal or even the next day.

Don't make a fuss

- Encourage children to taste all foods offered.
- Let children choose what and how much they eat from what is available.
- Allow children to serve themselves.
- Set the scene for a positive mealtime. Using tablecloths, placemats or lighting a candle can make mealtimes more special.



Be a good role model

- Set a good example by eating and enjoying a range of healthy foods in front of children.
- Sit with children during meal and snack times.
- Eat the same food as the children - children see adults eating the same food are more likely to eat it.
- Talk positively about food - avoiding discussing personal food likes or dislikes.

Research shows that children who share family meals 3 or more times per week are more likely to be in a normal weight range and have healthier eating patterns than those who share fewer than 3 family meals together.

Hammons A.J, Pediatrics 2011

Healthy dinners are as easy as 1-2-3

Enjoying healthy home cooked dinners is one of the best things you can do for yourself and your family.

When planning your dinner, follow this simple **1-2-3** plan to help create a nutritionally balanced meal.

Step 1 – Choose your carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the body's main fuel, providing most of our energy for muscle and brain function.

Choose from:

- breads and cereals
- rice, pasta, noodles, cous cous, barley, buckwheat, semolina, polenta, bulgur or quinoa
- starchy vegetables such as potato, sweet potato, corn, taro and cassava



1/4 of your dinner should come from carbohydrate

Step 2 – Pick your protein

Protein is essential for growth and healing of body tissues such as muscle, skin, hair and nails.

Meat or meat alternatives

Choose from

- red meat: beef, lamb, veal, pork, goat, kangaroo
- fish
- eggs
- legumes, such as lentils, chickpeas, split peas, kidney beans
- tofu
- nuts, seeds and nut/seed pastes such as peanut butter and tahini



Dairy and alternatives

As well as providing protein, these foods are excellent sources of calcium for bone health.

Choose from:

- milk - fresh, long life and evaporated
- yoghurt
- cheese
- soy, rice and other cereal drinks with added calcium



1/4 of your dinner should come from protein foods

Step 3 – Load with vegetables

Vegetables are a good source of vitamins, minerals and fibre.




- Buy fresh vegetables that are in season as this will give you better value for your money.
- Frozen and canned vegetables are great alternatives to fresh.
- Enjoy a variety of different coloured vegetables including purple, orange, green, red and white vegetables!

1/2 of your dinner should come from vegetables



Your 1-2-3 meal planner

Using the 1-2-3 healthy meals concept, create your own meal for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Meal occasion	Step 1 Choose your carb	Step 2 Pick your protein	Step 3 Load with veg
			
Breakfast	<i>E.g. Toast</i>	<i>Boiled egg</i>	<i>Grilled tomato and mushroom</i>
Lunch	<i>E.g. Cous Cous</i>	<i>Can of tuna</i>	<i>Salad vegetables with olive oil and balsamic vinegar</i>
Dinner	<i>E.g. Spaghetti</i>	<i>Bolognese mince</i>	<i>Zucchini, carrot, peas, tomato, onion</i>

Healthy swaps

With simple meal swaps you can make your favourite recipes healthier, without changing the taste! Use the following tips to help you get started.

Boost the fibre

If the recipe says...

White bread	→
Flour	→
Rice	→
Pasta	→

Swap it for this...

Wholegrain bread
Wholemeal flour, or half and half
Brown rice
Wholemeal pasta, or half and half



Reduce the saturated fat

If the recipe says...

Full cream milk or yoghurt	→
Cheese	→
Cream	→
Sour cream	→
Butter	→
Blended vegetable oil	→
Coconut milk	→
Puff pastry	→

Swap it for this...

Reduced fat milk or yoghurt
Reduced fat cheese
Reduced fat evaporated milk
Reduced fat natural yoghurt
Margarine, olive or canola oil
Olive, sunflower or canola oil
Reduced fat evaporated milk
Filo pastry



Tips for using less sugar

- Add cinnamon or ground cloves for extra flavour.
- Add dried and fresh fruits to muffins, cakes, pikelets for added sweetness and flavour.
- If using canned fruit choose fruit in natural juice and drain if off.



Raw sugar, brown sugar, honey and golden syrup are not healthier alternatives for sugar. Whichever you choose, limit the amount.

Tips for using less salt

- Avoid adding salt during cooking or at the table.
- Add a variety of herbs, spices, lime or lemon juice, fresh mustard, and garlic to recipes.
- Use “reduced salt” or “no added salt” canned foods.
- Limit commercial sauces and condiments such as soy sauce and tomato sauce. Read the labels to choose the one with the least amount of salt.
- Limit intake of processed meats, salamis, sausages and takeaways.



Healthy cooking methods

- Stir frying
- Roasting/baking
- Steaming
- Grilling
- Microwaving



Pantry, fridge & freezer essentials

Use this list to ensure you have basic ingredients on hand to make healthy meals.

Pantry essentials

Most foods from the pantry have a long shelf life if you store them properly. Canned foods and jars of curry or tomato pastes need to be refrigerated after opening. Always check the storage recommendations on the label after opening these foods.

Canned foods

Canned foods are budget friendly, long lasting items that can be used in a range of recipes. Always choose low salt varieties. Avoid canned foods that are high in fat such as coconut milk. Choose canned fruits in natural juice instead of syrup.

Vegetables	Fruit	Meat and alternatives	Dairy
<input type="checkbox"/> Tomatoes <input type="checkbox"/> Corn <input type="checkbox"/> Creamed corn <input type="checkbox"/> Beetroot	<input type="checkbox"/> Peaches <input type="checkbox"/> Apricot <input type="checkbox"/> Apple <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit salad <input type="checkbox"/> Pineapple	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuna in spring water <input type="checkbox"/> Salmon in spring water <input type="checkbox"/> Sardines <input type="checkbox"/> Canned bean mix <input type="checkbox"/> Lentils <input type="checkbox"/> Baked beans	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduced fat evaporated milk



Herbs, spices, sauces and dressings

Herbs, spices, sauces and dressings are flavour essentials. Basic recipes can easily be turned into delicious dishes by adding different flavour combinations.

Sauces and flavourings	Herbs and spices	Oils and dressings
<input type="checkbox"/> Tomato paste, salt reduced <input type="checkbox"/> Curry paste <input type="checkbox"/> Soy sauce, salt reduced <input type="checkbox"/> Oyster sauce <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet chilli sauce <input type="checkbox"/> Worcestershire sauce <input type="checkbox"/> Stock, salt reduced – vegetable, chicken, beef <input type="checkbox"/> Mustard	<input type="checkbox"/> Basil <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed herbs <input type="checkbox"/> Parsley <input type="checkbox"/> Rosemary <input type="checkbox"/> Coriander <input type="checkbox"/> Ginger <input type="checkbox"/> Cinnamon <input type="checkbox"/> Chilli <input type="checkbox"/> Black pepper	<input type="checkbox"/> Olive or canola oil <input type="checkbox"/> Spray oil <input type="checkbox"/> Balsamic vinegar <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced fat mayonnaise <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced fat salad dressings

Other essential pantry items

Grains	Dried fruit/nuts	Vegetables	Dairy
<input type="checkbox"/> Flour <input type="checkbox"/> Pasta <input type="checkbox"/> Rolled oats <input type="checkbox"/> Cous cous <input type="checkbox"/> Rice	<input type="checkbox"/> Sultanas <input type="checkbox"/> Dried apricot <input type="checkbox"/> Dates <input type="checkbox"/> Shredded coconut	<input type="checkbox"/> Potatoes <input type="checkbox"/> Onions <input type="checkbox"/> Garlic	<input type="checkbox"/> Long life (UHT) milk <input type="checkbox"/> Skim milk powder

Potatoes – store them in baskets or hessian bags to allow good air circulation and place them in the darkest part of the pantry.

Onions and garlic – store them like you would for potatoes BUT don't put them in the same basket as the potatoes or they will spoil quicker.

Fridge and freezer essentials

A great way to keep foods for longer is to keep essentials in the freezer. A well-stocked freezer will help to get a quick and effortless dinner on the table fast.

Aim to have some of these at home at all times to help prepare quick and healthy dinners.

Vegetables and fruit	Dairy	Meat alternatives
<input type="checkbox"/> Carrots	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduced fat milk or soy milk	<input type="checkbox"/> Eggs
<input type="checkbox"/> Broccoli	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural yoghurt	<input type="checkbox"/> Tofu
<input type="checkbox"/> Zucchini	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduced fat cheese	<input type="checkbox"/> Hommus
<input type="checkbox"/> Spinach (fresh or frozen)	<input type="checkbox"/> Canola or olive based margarine	<input type="checkbox"/> Frozen fish fillets (not crumbed)
<input type="checkbox"/> Frozen vegetables mix		<input type="checkbox"/> Lean beef, lamb, pork fillets, steaks or mince
<input type="checkbox"/> Frozen berries		<input type="checkbox"/> Chicken – breast, thigh

Tip:

- When buying meat, save money by buying in bulk. Split and freeze the bulk meat into portions for dinners. Transfer the frozen meat into your fridge to defrost the night before you want to use it.

Did you know?

Because they are frozen within hours of being picked, frozen vegetables can be even more nutritious than fresh!



Reading food labels

Most food packages have a Nutrition Information Panel (NIP) which tells you the quantity of various nutrients a food contains per serve, as well as per 100g or 100 ml.

When reading the NIP:

- always read the per 100g column to compare similar products, because the serve sizes differ between brands
- always compare similar products, for example compare one brand of yoghurt with another brand of yoghurt.

NUTRITION INFORMATION		
Servings per package: 3		
Serving size: 150g		
	Quantity per Serving	Quantity per 100 g
Energy	608 kJ	405 kJ
Protein	4.2 g	2.8 g
Fat, total	7.4 g	4.9 g
– saturated	4.5 g	3.0 g
Carbohydrate, total	18.6 g	12.4 g
– sugars	18.6 g	12.4 g
Sodium	90 mg	60 mg
Calcium	300 mg (38%)*	200 mg

* Percentage of recommended dietary intake

What to look for when reading food labels (per 100g)



- Bread**
- More than 5g fibre
 - Less than 600mg sodium



- Meat and alternatives**
- Less than 10g total fat
 - Less than 3g saturated fat
 - Less than 750mg sodium



- Breakfast cereal**
- More than 6g fibre
 - Less than 300mg sodium
 - Less than 15g sugar (without dried fruit)



- Savoury crackers, crispbreads and crisps**
- Less than 10g total fat
 - Less than 3g saturated fat
 - More than 3g fibre
 - Less than 600mg sodium



- Milk and yoghurt**
- Less than 2g total fat
 - Less than 1.5g saturated fat
 - Less than 15g sugar
 - More than 150mg calcium



- Sweet snack bars and biscuits**
- Less than 10g total fat
 - Less than 3g saturated fat
 - Less than 15g sugar
 - More than 3g fibre
 - Less than 400mg sodium



- Cheese**
- Compare products and choose the one with the lowest total fat, saturated fat and sodium levels.
 - Even reduced fat cheese will contain approximately 25% fat



























- Fats and oils**
- Choose monounsaturated and polyunsaturated margarines and oils instead of butter
 - 'Lite' oils are not necessarily lower in fat
 - 'Vegetable blend' oils can still be high in saturated fat

Guide to the Health Star Rating

The Health Star Rating is a front of pack labelling scheme which can be used to make healthier food choices at a glance. The range is from ½ - 5 stars and the more stars, the healthier the choice.












Recommended minimum star rating within food categories

<p>Breakfast cereals</p>  	<p>Sweet snack foods e.g. muesli bars, biscuits</p>  	<p>Crumbed and battered meats e.g. chicken nuggets, fish fingers</p>  
<p>Liquid breakfast drinks</p>  	<p>Savoury snack foods e.g. crackers, pretzels, crispbread</p>  	<p>Dips e.g. hommus, tzatziki, salsa</p>  
<p>Yogurt</p>  	<p>Savoury pastries e.g. meat pies, sausage rolls, spring rolls</p>  	<p>Chilled or frozen ready to eat meals</p>  
<p>Canned, chilled soups and dehydrated soups</p>  	<p>Ice-creams, frozen yogurt, custard</p>  	<p>Fruit and vegetable juices</p>  

Remember to compare products in the same category

Making the most of packaged foods

Packaged foods are convenient and can make healthy eating more affordable. The packaged foods below are some of our staples and can be whipped into a quick, tasty and nutritious meal.

Canned tuna or salmon		Canned fish has a long shelf life and is an easy addition to many recipes. Choose varieties canned in spring water.
Frozen vegetables		Just as nutritious as fresh, frozen vegetables are an easy addition to stir fries, curries and soups.
Canned beans/legumes		Canned beans are inexpensive and a good source of protein and fibre. Add canned lentils to spaghetti bolognese, chickpeas to curry or 4 bean mix to salads.
Yoghurt		Enjoy as a snack or add some to your muesli or fruit salad.
Canned fruit		Canned fruit is an easy option when fresh varieties are out of season. Look for varieties canned in juice rather than syrup.
Canned tomatoes		Canned tomatoes can form the base for many easy recipes. Choose salt reduced varieties.
Pre-cooked rice		A convenient alternative to cooking rice on the stovetop when you're short on time. Look for plain varieties without added flavourings.
Long-life milk		Never run out of milk again! UHT milk is just as good for you as fresh milk.
Evaporated milk		Evaporated milk is a great alternative to cream and coconut milk and works well in pasta, risotto and curries.
Baked beans		Enjoy them on toast or add to a baked potato to create an easy meal. Look for salt reduced varieties.
Rolled oats		Add to smoothies and muffins or enjoy as porridge for breakfast. Choose traditional over quick or instant varieties.

Keeping food safe

Once you buy the food, it's up to you to make sure that it stays safe! There are times when food can become unsafe to eat if not transported or stored properly.

Safe food shopping

- Buy your hot and cold foods last. Keep the hot and cold food separate.
- Keep raw meats separate from other foods as they may leak.
- Check use by dates.
- Check for damaged food packaging such as:
 - swelling and/or leakage
 - rust and scratches
 - broken tamper seals
 - dented or damaged containers
 - damaged seams, abrasions, blisters or wrinkles (if the food is in sealed pouches).
- At the check-out, make sure the sales assistant keeps cold with cold and hot with hot foods.



Safe food transportation

It is important that you get your food home and safely stored as soon as possible. When transporting food home always:

- make sure the cold foods are kept out of direct sunlight
- take an esky or insulated bag to store cold foods. This is important if you are travelling more than 30 minutes from the shops, or on hot days.
- place chilled or frozen foods in the fridge or freezer as soon as you get home.

The temperature danger zone is between 5°C and 60°C, when it is easiest for harmful bacteria to grow in food.

Menu planning tool

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Morning tea							
Lunch							
Afternoon tea							
Dinner							



Further sources of information

ACT Nutrition Support Service

<https://actnss.org>

Nutrition Australia

<https://nutritionaustralia.org>

Eat for Health

<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au>

Capital Chicks Canberra

<https://capitalchickscanberra.com.au>

Diabetes Australia

<https://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au>

I'M ALERT Food Safety Training

<https://imalert.com.au/v6/?sub=health-act>

