



Eating Well

A guide for patients and their support people

Leukaemia
Foundation®

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About this booklet

This booklet provides helpful information on eating well for people living with blood cancer - leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma, myelodysplastic neoplasms (MDS), myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPN) or a related blood disorder.

This booklet has:

- Helpful hints and tips to help you eat well.
- Suggestions and tips to manage eating problems.
- Easy recipes for nutritious meals and snacks.

Always talk with your doctor or dietitian about nutrition concerns. They will be able to give you individualised suggestions.

Why is eating well important?

Good nutrition gives our bodies the fuel they need to stay healthy. Nutrition is very important for people with blood cancers. This is because the disease and its treatments put extra strain on the body. Staying nourished can improve how well your body handles and responds to treatment. Healthy eating when you are sick might look different to healthy eating when you are well.

Eating healthy foods can help with:

- Reducing weight and muscle loss.
- Treatment side effects.
- Keeping your energy up and reducing fatigue.
- Strengthening your immune system.
- Recovery after treatment.





The five food groups

To stay healthy, the Australian Dietary Guidelines say we should eat different foods from the five food groups every day - vegetables, fruit, grains, protein, and dairy.

If you are having treatment your needs from these food groups may change. If you are in hospital you may need more energy and protein than the dietary guidelines recommend. Some foods and drinks, like potato chips, cakes, pastries, processed meats, and soft drinks, don't fit into the five food groups. These are called discretionary choices because they aren't essential for a healthy diet and are best enjoyed occasionally and in small amounts. A dietitian can help guide individual dietary needs including when to have small amounts of discretionary food and/or drink.



**Information on
discretionary foods and
drinks can be found here**



The five food groups

For a nutritious diet, the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommend including a variety of foods from the five food groups every day: vegetables, fruit, grain foods, protein and dairy foods.¹

Use small amounts



Only sometimes and in small amounts



Grain (cereal foods, mostly wholegrain and / or high cereal fibre varieties)



Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes / beans



Vegetables and legumes / beans



Fruit



Milk, yoghurt, cheese and / or alternatives, mostly reduced fat



Food serves per day

Daily recommended needs

Bread, cereals, rice, pasta and noodles

3-6 serves a day



Examples:

1 slice bread, $\frac{2}{3}$ cup breakfast cereal,
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked rice, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked pasta.

Vegetables, legumes

5-6 serves a day



Examples:

1 medium potato, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked vegetables,
1 cup salad vegetables, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked legumes e.g.,
baked beans.

Food serves per day

Daily recommended needs

Fruit

2 serves a day



Examples:

1 medium piece of fruit (apple, orange, pear, banana),
1 cup canned fruit, ½ cup fruit juice, 30g dried fruit or
4 dried apricots.

Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives

3-4 serves a day



Examples:

250ml milk, 200g yoghurt, 2 slices or 40g of cheese or
125g ricotta or 100g cottage cheese, 1 cup soy, rice or
other cereal drink with at least 100mg of added calcium
per 100ml.

Food serves per day

Daily recommended needs

Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts

2-3 serves a day



Examples:

65g cooked lean meat (100g raw weight), ½ cup cooked lean mince, 2 chops, 2 slices roast meat, 85g cooked lean chicken, 100g cooked fish or a small can, 2 large eggs, or 1 cup beans/cooked or canned legumes or 170g tofu, or 30g nut or seed butters/paste.



Further information
and resources can
be downloaded from
Eat for Health



Nutrition at diagnosis

When you're first told you have cancer, it can be physically and emotionally hard. You might feel shocked, and that can make it hard to eat. If you have been losing weight and/or not eating well it is important to try and see a dietitian. Ask your nurses or doctors to help connect you.

Using food, vitamins and other supplements

There's no research that shows any one food, vitamin, or supplement can treat blood cancer. Eating a healthy diet can help your body cope with cancer and its treatment. There's a lot of false information online about food, nutrition, and cancer. Page 37 has trusted websites with facts based on research. The information can help you eat in a way that provides energy and nutrients to your body at all stages.

Before making any changes to your diet including starting vitamins, herbs, or protein drinks, talk to your treatment team including pharmacists. Some diets, herbal mixes and vitamins can interfere with your treatment. Dietitians and doctors are the best people to give you advice about food and nutrition.



Dietitian – a health professional that can help with nutrition

In Australia, dietitians and nutritionists are different. Dietitians are university trained and part of a regulated profession. They give expert advice about:

- Food and health.
- Help you learn how to eat better.
- Explain how food affects your body.
- Help you work around the symptoms from the cancer and/or treatment that may be stopping you from eating.
- Guide you to eat enough for your needs - during treatment, after treatment and survivorship.

A dietitian can give you individual nutrition advice to help your body cope with blood cancer, it's treatment and recovery. Dietitians can be found in hospitals, community health centres and in private practice settings.

Dietitians Australia has a list of dietitians you can access: Find a dietitian



Your partner, carer, relatives and friends can play an important role in helping you maintain a nutritious diet. Getting help with shopping, preparing meals, and sharing them can make it easier to eat well.



Mouth and dental care

When you are diagnosed with blood cancer and before you start treatment, it is a good idea to have a dental check-up. This is to make sure your teeth are in good condition. After treatment, your gums may be too sensitive for dental work. Your dentist and treatment team will advise on the best ways to care for your mouth and teeth.

Keeping your mouth as clean as possible during treatment helps prevent infections. Keep your mouth clean by:

- Using an alcohol-free mouthwash, salty water or sodium bicarbonate in water after every meal.
- Brushing with a soft toothbrush and mild toothpaste.



**For more information
go to dental and oral
care in blood cancer**



Planning ahead

Many people find that their normal eating patterns, appetite, and what they want to eat change during treatment. Tips to help ensure you always have suitable and nutritious food available:

- Bulk cook meals and freeze individual serves.
- Stock up on ready-made meals and snacks:
 - ❑ Canned soups.
 - ❑ Pre-prepared frozen or longer life meal options.
 - ❑ Instant pasta dishes.
 - ❑ Canned tuna/salmon.
 - ❑ Canned spaghetti and baked beans.
 - ❑ Long life custard or long life flavoured milk.
 - ❑ Snack pack fruits.
 - ❑ Dried fruit, nuts, muesli bars and breakfast cereals.
- Ask family and friends to help with shopping and cooking.
- Consider a regular online delivery from a local grocery store.
- Consider community meal services such as Meals on Wheels and delivered meal providers.

Maintaining body weight and muscle strength

During treatment, some people lose weight without meaning to. This can cause muscle loss and make you feel tired. You may find you don't have the energy to do your day to day activities. Losing too much weight or losing it fast can make it harder for your body to fight infections and heal.

- If you are losing weight without trying speak to a dietitian.
- Eat a variety of foods from the five food groups.
- Have small, healthy meals and snacks often if you cannot eat normal sized meals.
- Include protein-rich foods like milk, cheese, yoghurt, eggs, meat, chicken, fish, or legumes (like beans, lentils, chickpeas) in each meal and some snacks.
- Add energy to meals like honey on porridge, olive oil on vegetables, cheese in a sandwich.
- Try to do gentle exercise, like walking.
- Use light weights to build muscle strength. Seek help from an Exercise Physiologist.
- Drink enough fluids to stay hydrated. Drink juice, flavoured milk or sports drinks if your energy and appetite are low.
- Discuss nutrition supplements with your dietitian.
- Get lots of rest and good sleep.



For support managing your fatigue and energy levels try using the Energy Coach in the Leukaemia Foundation's Online Blood Cancer Support Service



Case study

“As a bit of a foodie and a caterer, good nutrition came easy for me. But when I found out that I could lose weight during the transplant, after already losing 10kg during my other treatment, I decided to build myself up in the three months prior.

After seeking medical approval, I did some exercise each day and tried to choose healthy and nutritious food like lean meat, fresh fruit and vegetables, rice, pasta, whole grains and lentils. By transplant day I had gained 13 kilos, which put me in my healthy weight range and I was ready to take on the treatment, felt strong, energised and was in a good food and exercise routine which I continued after the transplant”

- John



Managing nutrition with blood cancer

Blood cancer and treatment (like chemotherapy, radiation, or immunotherapy) make your body need more energy and nutrients. Treatment can also cause side effects that make it harder to eat. You might not feel like eating as much, or you may not enjoy certain foods.

Side effects and how bad they are vary from person to person depending on the type of disease, the treatment and how each person responds.

Although side effects can be uncomfortable, most of them are temporary. Tell your treatment team about any side effects you have. They can usually be managed to help you feel better. Some foods may lessen or prevent side effects.

Side-effects that can impact your eating include:

- Nausea (feeling sick) and vomiting.
- Feelings of reflux (heartburn) and feeling full quickly.
- Dry/sore mouth and throat.
- Loss of appetite.
- Changes in taste and smell.
- Changes in how food feels in your mouth.
- Weight loss.
- Weight gain.
- Diarrhoea and/or constipation.
- Fatigue.

Your dietitian can talk to you about high-protein and high-energy drinks and snacks or other options if you can't eat well or enough.



Side effects

Loss of appetite

Loss of appetite is when you do not want to eat or do not feel like eating very much.

Many things can affect your appetite, like the physical and emotional effects of treatment.

Many people find that although their appetite improves after treatment, it can be some time before it returns to normal.



Helpful tips

- Eat small, healthy meals and snacks.
- Include protein-rich foods with meals (see page 9).
- Drink protein-rich fluids like milkshakes, smoothies, protein soups, or special high-energy drinks.

How food looks and smells influences appetite:

- Choose colourful fruits and vegetables, and try to make food look and smell good.
- Keep meals fun and tasty.

Losing weight

May occur before diagnosis or due to treatment side effects when the body needs extra energy.



Helpful tips

To gain or keep on the weight your body needs, try to eat more foods that are high in energy.

- Don't fill up on things with little nutrition like broths, tea, coffee, sugar-free drinks, or low-fat foods.
- Eat nutritious small, frequent meals.
- Choose full fat milk, yoghurt and other dairy products.

Tips for extra protein:

- Add protein or milk powder to soups, casseroles, cereal, or puddings (ask your dietitian).
- Add grated cheese to soups, pasta, eggs and vegetables.
- Always include a protein food at mealtimes, like meat, chicken, fish, eggs, dairy.

Tips for extra energy:

- Olive oil or grated cheese on cooked vegetables or salads.
- Dipping bread in olive oil.
- Spreading margarine thickly on both slices of bread.
- Adding sour cream or cream to soups, cooked vegetables or desserts.

Your dietitian might recommend high-protein, high-energy drinks.

Too much weight gain

Weight gain can be caused by some treatments and medicines. Steroid medications may cause you to gain weight.

Some treatments make you feel hungrier, so you might eat more calories than your body needs.

Being less active can also cause weight gain.



Helpful tips

When you're hungry, try to choose healthy foods. A dietitian can help you figure out which foods are best for you.

- Eat smaller portions.
- Try to exercise every day.
- Drink enough fluids, mainly water.
- Try to limit discretionary foods that are high in sugar and fat, like chips, lollies, and pastries.
- Talk to your doctor if you notice you're gaining weight.

Nausea and vomiting

Feeling queasy or sick in your stomach is called nausea.

Vomiting is another word for 'throwing up'.

These are common side effects of cancer treatment, but they can usually be managed well with anti nausea medicine.



Helpful tips

Don't go for long periods without eating, as this may make your nausea worse.

- Take anti-nausea medication as instructed by your treatment team.
- Tell your doctors or nurses if you're not able to eat or drink much. They can help with managing your nausea.
- Eat small frequent meals and snacks.
- The smell of hot food can make nausea worse, so try to stay out of the kitchen while meals are being cooked.
- Try cold foods if you feel sick, they often smell less and are easier to eat when you're feeling unwell.
- Try eating with a fan or open window, as the fresh air may help with your nausea.
- Try dry salty foods such as crackers or toast.
- Food and fluids with ginger in them may help, like ginger ale, ginger biscuits, candied ginger.
- Sip on cold clear fluids, like cordial, lemonade, apple juice.
- Try to limit fatty and fried foods because they take longer to digest, which can make nausea worse.

Dehydration

Dehydration can happen because of treatment related side effects. These include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, sweating and loss of appetite.

These side effects can make you lose fluids and salts (electrolytes) from your body, which can lead to dehydration.



Helpful tips

Drinking different types of fluids helps you get a variety of nutrients throughout the day.

- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated and help your kidneys work properly.
- Take a water bottle with you when you go out.
- Ice blocks/cubes – made with water or fruit juice count as fluid.
- Soups or high-protein high-energy drinks can make good substitutes for solid foods. They contain important nutrients like protein, vitamins and minerals.

'Healthy' fluids include:

- Soups.
- Milkshakes and smoothies (made with cow or soy milk).
- Fresh fruit that is juicy.
- Fruit juices.

Taste and smell changes

After treatment, some people notice that food tastes or smells different. It might take a while for things to go back to normal.



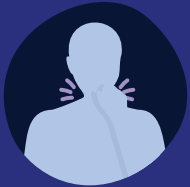
Helpful tips

To improve your sense of taste and smell:

- Keep your mouth clean and fresh.
- Rinse your mouth with water before meals.
- Make your food tastier by adding sauces, herbs, and spices.
- Avoid smells you find unpleasant.
- Use soft moist or wet food options if you feel like your mouth is dry or sore.
- Cold foods like sandwiches, salads, or yoghurt might be easier to eat than hot foods.
- Try using plastic utensils if some foods taste metallic.
- Try lemon drops or mints if you have a metallic taste in your mouth.
- Try citrus fruits.

Sore mouth or throat (mucositis)

Some treatments can cause mouth sores (ulcers) and sore gums. This makes eating and drinking painful and hard to do.



Helpful tips

This is a common and uncomfortable side-effect of some cancer treatments.

It can start about a week after treatment and usually goes away after a couple of weeks.

- Talk with your treatment team about pain medication including gels that can numb the sore spots before mealtimes.
- Remove poor fitting dentures when you feel your mouth becoming sensitive.
- Avoid foods that might sting your mouth such as citrus fruits, spicy, salty or dry crunchy food and alcohol.
- Choose soft, moist foods that are easier to chew and swallow.

Dry mouth

Some cancer treatments affect the production of saliva, which can cause a dry mouth.



Helpful tips

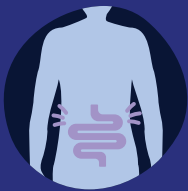
Increase the amount of fluids you drink each day to help moisten your mouth.

- Avoid dry foods – try adding extra sauce or gravy to dishes.
- Rinse out your mouth an alcohol-free mouthwash, salty water or sodium bicarbonate in water after meals.
- Try sucking on lollies or soft jellies if your mouth is sore.
- Chewing gum can help make more saliva.

Diarrhoea

Some cancer treatments can cause cramping, gas, bloating, and diarrhoea (loose stools).

Make sure to tell your nurse or doctor if you have any of these symptoms, or if you notice blood in your stool.



Helpful tips

If you have diarrhoea you must seek medical advice. It is important to make sure you drink plenty of fluids to replace fluids and electrolytes lost from your body.

- Stay hydrated with water, diluted juices, weak tea, clear soups, or oral rehydration drinks from the pharmacy.
- Watch for signs of dehydration such as dry mouth, thirst, or dark urine, and seek medical advice if these occur.
- Only take anti-diarrhoea medication if prescribed.
- Home remedies like ginger-infused water, or salt and honey water may help soothe symptoms.

If the diarrhoea continues your treatment team may recommend to:

- Change to lactose-free milk and yoghurt or plant milk alternatives (soy or oat milk).
- Limit high fibre foods.
- Limit fruit juice, alcohol, caffeinated drinks like coffee and strong tea, and spicy food.

If you get a sore bottom:

- Try using a wet washer or unperfumed 'baby wipes'.
- Use a protective barrier cream around your bottom.

Constipation

Constipation can be caused by some cancer treatments, certain medications (such as pain relievers and anti-nausea drugs), reduced food and fluid intake, and lack of physical activity.



Helpful tips

Tell your treatment team if your bowels are not working regularly.

- A gentle laxative can help soften the bowel motion.
- Eating more fibre, drinking plenty of fluids, and staying active can help prevent constipation.

It is important to slowly increase fibre in your diet, to avoid discomfort. Foods that contain fibre include:

- Wholemeal and wholegrain breads, cereals, pasta, oats and brown rice.
- Fruit and vegetables.
- Legumes or pulses.
- Dried fruit, unsalted nuts, ground seed and nut mixes.

Fatigue

Feeling tired is a common symptom of blood cancer and its' treatment.



Helpful tips

Listen to your body and ensure you have a balance of rest, exercise and nutritious food.

- Doing gentle exercise or being active every day can give you more energy, help with tiredness, and keep your muscles strong.
- Talk to a physiotherapist or exercise physiologist who work with people recovering from illness or injury. They can help find the activities that are suited to you.
- Eating meals and snacks can give you more energy through the day.



For support managing your fatigue and energy levels try using the Energy Coach in the Leukaemia Foundation's Online Blood Cancer Support Service



Trouble sleeping

There are many reasons why you may have trouble sleeping, even when you are tired.

These include side effects of medications, inactivity, an unfamiliar and/or noisy environment and interruptions to your sleep.

Anxiety and depression can also interfere with normal sleeping patterns.

Eating habits and the kinds of foods you eat can affect sleep.



Helpful tips

Talk with your treatment team about any difficulties you are having getting to sleep or staying asleep.

- Try to limit caffeinated beverages like coffee, tea, cola and alcohol.
- Eat regular healthy meals during the day. It is best to have your last meal at least two hours before going to sleep.
- Include protein-rich foods.
- Regular physical activity during the day can improve the quality and length of sleep.
- Try a relaxing activity like stretching or meditation before sleeping.
- If you can't eat much dinner, try having a supplement drink.

Eating in hospital

There are many reasons you might not feel like eating while you're in the hospital.

If you are struggling to eat the hospital food, the dietitian can suggest other foods. They can talk to you about food options not on the menu. If you're on a high-protein diet, you might be given special high-protein, high-energy drinks.

If you can't eat or drink, there are other short term ways to get the nutrition you need. You can also ask your treatment team if your family and friends can bring in your favourite foods.

Have nutritious snacks with you for when you feel hungry. These could include:

- Nut and fruit bars.
- Nuts.
- Tubs of fruit.
- Long life juices and protein drinks.
- Crackers and cheese.
- Tins of tuna, baked beans and/or chickpeas.
- Cake, slices and biscuits.
- Plain or flavoured milk, yoghurt or custard.
- Fresh bananas or avocados.



Food for children

Nutritious food provides the energy and nutrients that growing children need. It also helps them cope better with the cancer and its treatment. It can be challenging for children to understand and eat what is 'good' for them. Especially when they feel sick, tired or do not have an appetite.

Some ideas that may help improve a child's appetite and enjoyment of food:

- Let them eat when hungry, including healthy snacks like cereal or smoothies.
- Offer nutritious snacks and limit sugary or processed foods.
- Keep mealtimes relaxed and follow regular family routines.
- Make food fun with creative presentation and playful packaging.
- Involve your child in meal prep and keep healthy snacks easily accessible.



Resources for nutrition in children with cancer

Perth Children's Hospital

**Nutrition for children
with cancer booklet**



Queensland Health

**Good nutrition for
children with cancer**



Redkite

**Nutrition tips for kids
on cancer treatment**



VICS

**Eating well during
treatment**



VICS

**Survivorship
education - Nutrition**



Queensland Health

**Palliative care –
nutrition for children**



General wellbeing

Vitamin and mineral supplements

Always talk to your treatment team before taking any vitamin or mineral supplements. These can be expensive, and there's still some debate about whether they're helpful or safe. Some may even affect your treatment. Eating healthy, nutritious food usually gives your body all the vitamins and minerals it needs.



Alcohol

Check with your treatment team before you drink alcohol. A small amount occasionally may be okay. However, there are times when it's best to avoid alcohol. Especially when taking certain medications or during some types of chemotherapy.

The National Medical and Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines suggest healthy adults drink no more than two standard drinks a day. People under 18 and pregnant or breastfeeding women should not drink alcohol at all.



**You can find the
full guidelines
online at NHMRC
Alcohol Guidelines**



Exercise

There are many benefits to exercising regularly with blood cancer. Exercise can make you feel better, boost your energy, improve your sleep, and strengthen your body.

Before starting any exercise, talk to treatment team about what type of exercise is best for you.

If you're exercising outdoors (like going for a walk), protect your skin from the sun. Your skin is more sensitive to sunlight after treatment and can burn easily. Protect your skin by wearing a hat, long sleeves, pants, and sunscreen on exposed areas. Try to exercise in the early morning or late evening to avoid the strongest sun (UV).



Food safety

Blood cancers and their treatments can weaken your immune system, making you more likely to get infections. How long it takes for your immune system, especially your white blood cell count, to recover depends mainly on the treatment you're getting.

It's important to follow basic hygiene rules for storing, cooking, and handling food. This helps prevent food borne infection, especially when your immune system (white blood cell count) is low. If you have a bone marrow transplant or your immune system is very low, you will be given individual advice from your dietitian.

All foods have some bacteria however this usually isn't a problem if the food is prepared, cooked and stored properly.

The following information provides some simple and easy to follow rules on food safety and reducing the risk of infection.

Food safety and preparation:

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before handling food.
- Clean surfaces and equipment thoroughly before preparing food.
- Wear disposable gloves (available in supermarkets and pharmacies) when handling raw meat.
- Wash chopping boards and knives in hot soapy water between uses when preparing both raw and ready to eat foods.
- Wash and peel raw fruit and vegetables before cooking and eating.
- Thaw frozen foods completely before cooking or reheating, especially raw chicken and other meats (thaw in the refrigerator overnight, not on the kitchen bench).
- Reheat thawed cooked foods, until steaming hot.

Food safety when cooking:

- Cook meats and seafood thoroughly before serving (even if you like rare meat).
- Once cooked, serve the food immediately or keep steaming hot until serving. This destroys any harmful bacteria.
- If you are using a microwave, stir food and ensure it is steaming hot all the way through before serving.
- When eating out, order food that is freshly cooked and steaming hot.

Safe food storage:

- Store raw and ready-to-eat foods separately.
- Always store raw meat covered and away from other foods in the fridge.
- If thawing frozen meats keep them below cooked foods to prevent contamination by spillage.
- Do not eat foods from salad bars, heated bain marie foods, buffets or food warmers (pie ovens).
- If cooking food in advance, cool and chill or freeze straightaway – do not leave food to cool on the benchtop.
- Avoid using foods past their ‘use by’ date.
- Avoid dented or bloated packages.



For more tips on food hygiene and preparation visit Food Safety Information Council



Kitchen and pantry suggestions

To make life easier and make nutritious choices simpler, here are some non-essential, but useful suggestions to have on hand in your kitchen or pantry:

- Whole grain breakfast cereals like oats, muesli, Weet-Bix.
- Tinned chickpeas, lentils, red kidney beans.
- Tinned tomatoes for pasta sauces and casseroles.
- Dried noodles and pasta.
- Packets of dried biscuits - grain crackers, water crackers and/or rice crackers.
- Small tins of tuna, sardines and baked beans.
- Olive oil or vegetable oil for cooking, and cooking sauces, like soy sauce.
- Rice noodles.
- Long-life milk and custard.

Freezer foods

- Vegetables including stir-fry mix such as carrots, broccoli, capsicum, sugar snap peas, water chestnuts.
- Corn and peas, broad beans, cauliflower, baby beans and spinach.
- Frozen fruit is great for smoothies and desserts.
- Fish, chicken fillets, lean red meat (beef or lamb).
- Pre-cooked frozen meals, like casseroles, bolognese sauce.
- Bread - including flatbreads, wraps, or corn tortillas. You can also visit your local bakery to find different types of seeded or wholemeal breads.

If you're gluten intolerant select gluten-free products when shopping.



References and useful website addresses



NHMRC
Australian Dietary Guidelines



Dietitians Australia
What are the Australian Dietary Guidelines?



Dietitians Australia
Seeing a dietitian in Australia



Dietitians Australia
Find a dietitian



Cancer Council
Nutrition and cancer



Cancer Council
Cancer myths and facts



Cancer Council
Position statement / Diet and exercise



Peter Mac
The CanEAT pathway



Recipe ideas

Banana berry breakfast smoothie

Serves 1

- 1 cup milk
- 1 banana
- A handful of fresh or frozen berries
- 2 tsp chia seeds
- 1 tbsp rolled oats

Mix all ingredients in a blender and serve. Pour into 2 glasses and keep one for a snack or consume at once, depending on appetite.



Overnight oats

Serves 1

- ⅓ -½ cup rolled oats
- 3 tbsps yoghurt
- ½ cup of chopped fresh, frozen or tinned fruit
- ½ cup milk
- Seeds or chopped nuts as desired

Place oats, yoghurt, milk and fruit in a bowl, small jar and container. Mix to combine and top with nuts or seeds. Leave in the fridge overnight or for up to 3 days for a healthy breakfast or snack.

Variation: Try the above recipe using 2 crushed Weet-Bix instead of oats.



Espresso chocolate brownie bar

- 1½ cups of pitted, whole dates
- 2 tbsp of chia seeds, hydrated in ⅓ cup of water
- 2 tbsp of ground coffee (alternatively, use instant coffee granules)
- 1½ cups of raw almonds
- 1 cup of raw walnuts
- ⅓ cup of chocolate chips
- 2 tbsp of unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3 tbsp of protein powder (whey or plant-based for a vegan option)
- ¼ tsp of sea salt flakes
- ⅔ cup extra virgin olive oil

Blend all ingredients in a food processor for 30 to 40 seconds until the mixture starts to ball up.

Press the mixture firmly into a brownie pan. Refrigerate for an hour (or until firm) before slicing into finger-sized bars. Best kept refrigerated in an airtight container.



Banana and peanut butter toast

Serves 1

Choose whole grain, rye bread or fruit bread for added fibre. Top toast with peanut butter and sliced or mashed banana. Sprinkle with chia seeds or chopped nuts for extra fibre and nutrients.



Easy omelette

Serves 1

- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsp milk
- Leftover cooked vegetables or chopped tomato and avocado
- Fetta or grated cheese

Lightly beat eggs with milk. Pour into a heated fry pan and spread with olive oil. Add eggs, cook for 1 minute then top with vegetables and cheese. Once edges begin to bubble, flip over or in half to finish cooking. Enjoy with grainy bread and a green salad.



Chicken soup with turmeric and lentils

Serves 4

- 6 cups good quality chicken stock
- 4 chicken drumsticks
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1½ cups green lentils
- 1 x 3.5cm cube of ginger, peeled and finely sliced
- 1 x 2.5cm piece of fresh turmeric peeled and finely sliced (or 1 level tsp of dried)
- 1 lemon
- 1 large zucchini
- 8 baby turnips, stalk and leaves intact (optional)
- Salt and pepper

1. In a medium saucepan over moderate heat, bring the chicken stock, plus 1 cup of water, drumsticks, olive oil and lentils, to a rolling boil, reduce the heat and simmer till liquid has reduced by a third. Approximately 35-40 minutes.
2. Allow to cool. Remove skin and bone from the chicken drumsticks, feather the meat and return to soup; season with salt and pepper. Add the turmeric and ginger to the soup and return to a boil; add in the turnips, split in half, leaves included.
3. Pass the zucchini through a vegetable spiralizer set on a spaghetti setting, place the zucchini noodles into a bowl and season with salt and lemon juice.
4. Distribute zucchini between 4 bowls, ladle over hot chicken soup and serve.



Homemade healthy burger

Serves 1

- Grilled meat, chicken fish or vegetable patties
- Whole grain bun/roll
- Tomato sauce or chutney
- Salad (lettuce, leafy greens, grated carrot, tomato, beetroot, cucumber)
- Cheese slice

Add grilled meat, chicken fish or vegetable patties to a whole grain bun with a colourful salad and a cheese slice. Enjoy with tomato sauce or chutney.



Easy baked potato

Serves 1

- Potato
- Your choice of vegetables
- Tinned beans
- Tinned Tuna
- Cheese

Boil, roast or microwave 1 unpeeled medium potato. Cut open and serve with your choice of cooked, raw or tinned vegetables, tinned beans, tinned tuna and grated cheese.



Salmon and veggies in cartoccio

Serves 2 | Preparation 5 minutes | Cooking 10-15 minutes

- 1 medium (100 g) zucchini, sliced into thin rounds
- 2 salmon fillets (140 g each)
- Salt & freshly ground black pepper
- Zest of one lemon
- ½ small red capsicum, cut in thin strips
- 2 (40 g) button mushrooms, sliced
- 8 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 tablespoon (20 ml) extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium kumara or brown or basmati rice, microwave brown rice/quinoa blend, pearl couscous, pasta, soba noodles, wholegrain, rye or sourdough bread, to serve

1. Pre-heat oven to 200°C.
2. Cut four 34 x 30cm pieces of baking paper. Lay two on the bench, top each with second piece.
3. Place a bed of zucchini slices in the centre of baking paper, add salmon fillets, season with salt and pepper, lemon zest, capsicum, mushrooms, mushrooms and drizzle with oil.
4. Bring the long sides of each piece up and fold and roll firmly down. Then fold in the 2 short sides and tuck them under tightly to create a pocket. Repeat to make a second parcel.
5. Place parcels seam side on oven tray. Bake 10 minutes for salmon to still be slightly pink in the middle, or 12 - 15 minutes for cooked through.
6. Meanwhile peel and chop kumara (orange sweet potato) and microwave, covered on high for 3 minutes. Mash with salt and pepper.

- Remove straight onto serving plates, carefully open the top of each parcel. Serve with kumara mash or brown rice, rice and quinoa mix, steamed potatoes, pasta or crunchy bread – whatever appeals.

Note: Any fish can be used or try thinly sliced chicken breast or pork medallions.

Vegetarian alternative: replace salmon with thinly sliced kumara on the bottom. Add slices of orange or anything which appeals to you.

Do-ahead: If you want to make more parcels and save for the next day, take out of the oven when only just cooked. Leave in the parcel in the fridge. Next day pre-heat oven to 200C and it will only take a few minutes to heat up without overcooking.



Quick braised chicken and mushrooms

Serves 4

- 8 chicken thighs, bone in, skin on, seasoned with salt and pepper
- Sea salt flakes
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 5 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
- 1 tin of crushed tomatoes (440g)
- 2 tbsp of plain flour
- 500ml rich chicken stock
- 7 sprigs of thyme
- 250g small button mushrooms, stalks trimmed
- ¼ cup finely chopped curly-leaf parsley

1. Heat olive oil in the base of your electric pressure cooker.
2. Add seasoned chicken and brown in batches (2-3 minutes on each side, be mindful not to overcrowd the pan). Transfer the chicken to a plate.
3. Add the onion, carrot, celery, garlic and tomato to the pot. Saute over heat until the onion is translucent (6-8 minutes). Sprinkle flour over the vegetables and stir continuously, scraping the base so the roux cooks evenly. Stir until it starts to colour (2-4 minutes).
4. Add a good slosh of stock to deglaze the pan, scraping the base and stirring to form a smooth, thick sauce.
5. Return the chicken to the pan, adding the remaining stock, mushrooms and thyme. Cover directly with the lid and lock into place. Set a timer for 15 minutes. Once the timer alarms, allow a few additional minutes before releasing the steam.
6. Remove the lid. Add in chopped parsley and adjust the seasoning to taste. Note: every pressure cooker is different, so cooking times may vary. Some brands offer preset timings so be sure to click through the presets first to offer guidance on cooking time.



Mandarin and almond cake

- 250g washed mandarins, skin on (seedless is best)
- ⅓ cup of orange juice (or lime juice)
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1½ tbsp of sugar for dusting
- 5 large eggs
- 500g ground almonds
- 250g of sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- Natural or Greek yoghurt to serve

1. Remove as many seeds from the mandarins as possible and roughly chop, keeping the skin on.
2. Preheat the oven to 190C/375 F. Oil baking tins evenly with a pastry brush and dust with sugar to create a non-stick coating.
3. Place the mandarins, orange juice and eggs into the food processor or a blender and puree until smooth. In a separate bowl, mix the almond meal, sugar, baking powder and salt.
4. Whisk the mandarin mixture into the almond mixture until well combined. Pour the batter into the prepared pan.
5. Place into the oven and bake for approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes.
6. Serve dusted with powdered sugar and a helping of natural yoghurt.

Note: because this is a dense cake, cooking time may vary. The best way to test for “doneness” is to push a skewer in, and when pulled out, it should be relatively cake-free.





**Enjoy colourful
vegetable
pieces and dips
as an easy,
healthy snack.**

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