



Welcome

Welcome to the summer edition of *Nutrition News*.

With Christmas almost here we have lots of healthy ideas to help you keep on track during the festive season.

We also take a look at the new 'Percent Daily Intake' labelling scheme and explain what it means.

Check out 'Nutrition Watch' for the latest topics in the nutrition world.

Wishing everyone a safe and merry Christmas and New Year.

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Percent Daily Intake Labelling

Information on food labels can be confusing, but when you know how to read them, labels can be a useful tool to make nutritious choices. To help consumers make more informed dietary choices, food manufacturers will add 'Percent Daily Intake' (% DI) data to labels in addition to the nutrition information panel.

Percent DI labelling is a simple way of showing how much energy and nutrients a product contributes to a person's daily intake. They feature a 'thumbnail' design which provides at-a-glance information on nutrition content for a serving of a product and how much this contributes to daily requirements.

For example, a nutrition information panel may show that one serve of product has 870 kilojoules, whereas % DI labelling shows that consuming 870 kilojoules contributes 10% of a person's daily energy needs. This may be easier for consumers to understand as they can calculate how much food is required to meet 100% of their nutritional needs.

How are Daily Intake values calculated?

Percent DI values are based on the energy requirements of an average adult. Actual individual daily intakes may be higher or lower, and vary with gender, age, level of physical activity and other factors.

Energy

The amount of energy stored in foods is measured in kilojoules. Energy is like fuel in a car – it's what keeps our bodies going and it is needed for vital functions like movement, thought and growth.

Energy can be stored by the body as fat. If the amount of energy (kilojoules) you eat or drink is more than you are using for physical activity then you will gain weight. The DI value for energy is 8700kJ (based on requirements for an average adult).

Protein

Protein is used by the body for cell maintenance, growth and repair. It is a source of energy and is important for maintenance of muscles, nerves, and the immune system. The DI value for protein is 50g.

Fat

Dietary fat plays an important role in a healthy diet. Fat aids the absorption of vitamins A, D, E

and K and provides essential fatty acids. Dietary fat also provides energy, however, it is a more concentrated source than carbohydrate or protein, so eating too much can lead to weight gain. For the general population about 30% of total energy from food should come from fat. Therefore the DI value for fat, based on a diet of 8700kJ, is 70g.

Saturated fat

High levels of saturated fat in the diet have been linked with high blood cholesterol, increased risk of heart disease and some cancers, so it is recommended that saturated fat should provide no more than 10% of energy.

Based on an energy intake of 8700kJ, this equates to 24g per day. This amount is part of the recommended intake of 70g per day for total fat, not in addition to it.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the main source of energy for the body, especially for the brain and nervous system. Carbohydrates are classified as starches, sugars or dietary fibre. It is recommended that the majority of carbohydrate come from high-fibre and starchy carbohydrate sources such as bread, pasta, rice, vegetables, fruit, cereals and legumes. 60% of daily energy should come from carbohydrate, making the DI value 310g (60% of 8700kJ).

Sugars

Sugars are a type of carbohydrate which can be found naturally in foods or added during processing. Although sugars are an important source of energy, eating too is associated with obesity and tooth decay, and they can displace more nutritious foods from the diet.

As a guide, 15-20% of total energy should come from sugars. This equates to a DI value of 90g. This amount is part of the recommended intake of 310g per day for total carbohydrate, not in addition to it.

Sodium

Excess sodium intake has been linked with a number of health conditions including osteoporosis, kidney stones and fluid retention, but its detrimental effect on blood pressure is of greatest concern. It is therefore recommended that individuals choose low-salt foods and use salt sparingly. The DI value for sodium is 2300mg.





Healthy Christmas Ideas



Yes, it's that time of year again! You've decorated the tree, battled through crowds of shoppers on the hunt for gifts, and now you're ready to start thinking about the tasty foods that will be on the table this Christmas. But with the festive

season looming large, your body could soon be heading that way too - the average person can easily gain an extra 2 to 5 kilos over the Christmas period from excess food and alcohol intake.

Christmas is about celebration, not deprivation, so here are some suggestions to help you make it through the silly season without piling on the kilos and harming your health.

Christmas Dinner

For most, Christmas dinner is much more than just a meal. Often it is the one time of year when family and friends get together, and the extra effort dedicated to preparing Christmas dinner is a reflection of this. Traditional Christmas fare doesn't always have to be indulgent—there are plenty of healthier options which are low in fat and kilojoules.

It's much harder to control what you eat when you are a guest in someone else's home and if you are dining with several relatives in one day. Avoid offending your hosts by using discretion when eating and try the following tips:

Take it slow Pace yourself with each course and leave room for the next one.

Fabulous Finger Foods

Nibbles and drinks can be laden with fat and sugar. Watch out for cheesy, crispy and fried foods and, if you're playing host this year, try these healthy alternatives:

- Serve light cream cheese and smoked salmon on crostini (mini toasts).
- Cook and cool potatoes, slice into rounds, and top with caviar and a dot of mayonnaise.
- Combine unsalted nuts like peanuts, cashews and almonds with seeds such as sunflower or pepitas (pumpkin seeds) to add more nutrition to the mix.
- Slice some raw vegetables like carrot, celery, cauliflower or snow peas and serve with a low-fat dip such as hummus or salsa.
- Cut fresh pita bread into wedges, toast lightly in the oven until crisp, and serve in place of potato chips.
- Top mini bagels with slices of lean ham, low-fat cheese and half a cherry tomato.
- Visit your supermarket deli for a selection of flavoured olives and dolmades (stuffed vine leaves).
- Serve falafel on toothpicks with a yoghurt dipping sauce.
- For healthier barbecued snacks, try lean lamb cutlets, skinless chicken drumsticks or grilled vegetable kebabs.

Be discerning There's no need to miss out on any of the foods you love at Christmas if you're selective about what you eat.

Rather than having a little bit of everything, fill your plate with healthier options like vegetables and salad, and indulge in small amounts of your favourite Christmas treats like roast meats, pudding, trifle and eggnog.

Avoid the traps Christmas dinner usually comes with all the trimmings - things like nuts, chips and dips, oily dressings, cream and chocolates. Overindulging in tasty treats like these contributes lots of fat and sugar without satisfying your hunger.

Eating Out

When dining out it's important to remember that you don't have to eat everything on your plate; don't be afraid to 'waste' food which you've paid for if you have already eaten your fill—it's only you who will lose out by eating more than you need. To avoid this trap, suggest paying separately from others so you can order exactly what you want, or simply pass on the entrée or dessert. If you're tempted by dessert while lingering at the dining table, fill the void with a tea or coffee instead.

Party Season

Parties offer plenty of opportunity for overeating. It can be hard to resist temptation when you're surrounded by tasty foods and when everyone around you seems to be indulging without heed. Here are some helpful tips to keep you from falling off the wagon:

Don't go to a party hungry We often eat more food, faster when we're hungry than when we are not. Make sure you eat an adequate breakfast and lunch on the day of the party to avoid binging on arrival.

Party Drinking Tips

- Make every second drink non-alcoholic and avoid topping drinks up as you may lose count of how many you've had.
- Try a non-alcoholic cocktail or punch for a change.
- Ask for half-nips of spirits.
- If you want to avoid drinking, nominate yourself as the designated driver.
- Use diet soft drinks as mixers to help keep your kilojoule intake down.
- Pace yourself. Sip your drinks slowly, or put them down between sips to make them last longer.
- Avoid salty snacks that make you thirsty and more likely to drink more.
- Choose a tall, thin glass for alcoholic drinks rather than a short, wide one. Our mind's eye sees tall glasses as being fuller than shorter ones.



Healthy Christmas Ideas



Watch your portions Try one of each canapé, or treat yourself to a nice drink or dessert without guilt, but always remember that moderation is the key! Eating slowly and savouring your food will also help avoid overeating.

Beware fatty foods Fatty foods like nuts, salami, cheeses, chips and dips are plentiful in the party season. Small, bite-sized snacks such as these are easy to eat and easy to overindulge in! Look out for healthier alternatives like vegetable crudités, low-fat cheeses and dips, and fresh fruit.

Don't stand near the food Easy access makes it harder to resist!

Watch your drinks Instead of beer, wine and creamy cocktails, try a Bloody Mary, or mix your spirits with diet soft drinks which have fewer kilojoules. Better still, quench your thirst with water!

Be a healthy host If you're hosting a party, be sure to make lots of healthier foods available for your guests. Avoid too many pastries and cheeses, and include lots of vegetables and fruit. For inspiration, see our 'Fabulous Finger Food' suggestions overleaf!



Don't Forget Exercise!

Maintaining a healthy weight involves more than just watching what you eat. The other side of the weight equation is, of course, exercise. Many gyms and sports clubs take a break over the Christmas period, and given that this is a time of extra eating for most, it is especially important to ensure that your physical activity is adequate. Take advantage of the warm Christmas weather with outdoor activities like walking, running, swimming and cycling, and encourage family and friends to join in.

Healthy Dessert Ideas

We all love to top off a delicious Christmas meal with a sweet after-dinner treat. Be good to yourself with one of these healthier options:

Poached fruit Poach thin slices of fruit such as pear, peaches, nectarines or apricots in water with a cinnamon stick or clove for flavour. Serve with raspberry sauce made from pureed raspberries and artificial sweetener.

Mini meringues or pavlovas You can find mini meringues and pavlova cases in the bakery section of your supermarket. Serve with fresh berries and a mixture of half whipped cream, half low-fat vanilla yoghurt.

Tinker with your trifle Try making a healthier traditional trifle using the same cream and yoghurt mix, fresh berries instead of jam, and low-fat custard.

Fruit canned in water It has almost half the kilojoules of fruit in natural juice!

Low-fat ice-cream, sorbet or frozen yoghurt Look for lighter alternatives to creamier, high-fat varieties.

Fresh fruit Fill a platter with fresh tropical fruits like pineapple, melon, mango and paw paw. Top with low-fat ricotta cheese sweetened with a little honey.

For those who are trying to lose weight, the festive season can be especially tough. It may be more realistic to try and maintain your weight during this period rather than lose it—that way you won't be setting yourself up for failure.

Christmas is a time for sharing food and drink with loved ones, but it doesn't have to result in excess kilos. By making a few small changes to what you eat, you can enjoy this special time and start the New Year feeling fit and healthy!

Healthy Festive Food Tips

Consider serving some of these healthier alternatives to traditional fare this Christmas.

- Use cooking oil sprays when cooking your meats and vegetables to use less fat. Grilling meat allows excess fat to drip away and adds flavour.
- Try serving smoked salmon on pumpernickel bread with lemon juice and freshly chopped dill.
- Try yoghurt as a base for dips and salad dressings instead of mayonnaise and sour cream.
- When crumbing meat, fish, or poultry use just the egg white rather than the whole egg.
- Use spices and herbs to add flavour to dishes rather than butter and creamy sauces.
- Instead of the traditional roast, try some heart healthy seafood. Whole fish cooked on the barbeque or oven-baked is both tasty and easy—simply garnish with chopped herbs, spring onions, lemon juice and a drop of oil; wrap in foil and cook.
- For a variation on the old-fashioned prawn cocktail, try barbequed prawn kebabs.
- Make your soups or stews a few days before Christmas and leave them to cool in the fridge. The fat will rise to the surface and congeal allowing it to be easily removed.
- Whole ham is not only traditional, it is a great, low-fat option for feeding a large family. Be sure to trim away any fat before serving. Serve with apple sauce and crusty bread rolls.
- Cooking turkey or chicken with the skin on does not add any fat to the dish as long as you remove the fatty skin before serving. However, when cooking beef, lamb or pork, be sure to trim fat away *before* cooking to reduce the amount of fat in the final dish.
- Cook your vegetables separately from meat in the oven or barbeque with a little spray oil, or better still, steam them.
- New potatoes make a delicious side dish. Wrap in foil and bake until tender, then top with yoghurt, low-fat cream cheese or low-fat sour cream instead of butter.
- Salads are healthiest when served without lashings of mayonnaise and dressing. Try adding lemon juice, fresh herbs, nuts or toasted seeds for extra flavour.



Nutrition Watch

Eating Slowly Makes You Eat Less



For more than three decades we have been told that if you eat slowly, you will eat less. Until recently, there was no scientific evidence to support this theory, but now a small study has shown that eating slowly really can lead to reduced energy (kilojoule) intake and an increased sense of fullness.

The study used two groups of women, both of which ate a full breakfast, fasted for four hours and then ate lunch. The first group was told to eat as fast as possible; the second group were told to eat with a small spoon, take small bites and chew each bite 15 to 20 times. The study found that those who took their time eating felt fuller and more satisfied hours after their meals, and took in 293 kilojoules less than the faster eaters. The women who ate slowly also reported enjoying their meals more.

This study suggests that eating slowly may promote weight loss and help people maintain a healthy weight.

Eat slowly, eat less

- Don't multi-task while eating. Activities like watching TV or reading takes your focus off how much you are eating and your sense of fullness.
- Eat slowly and drink water with a meal. It takes 20 minutes for the message to travel from your stomach to your brain that you are full, so meals should take at least 20 minutes and preferably longer.
- Chew each mouthful thoroughly and pause in between mouthfuls.
- Stop eating when you sense that you are full no matter how much food is left on your plate.

Eat Out with the Tick

The Heart Foundation has achieved a world first by introducing the Tick to meals eaten out.

Dr Lyn Roberts, CEO – National Heart Foundation of Australia, said that with shape of Australians today, there is an urgent need for healthier choices both in the supermarket and when eating out.

Nearly one in three of us eat out every day, adding up to a massive 3.8 billion meals eaten out in 2004.

Research conducted on behalf of the Heart Foundation shows 7 out of 10 Australians are concerned about how healthy the food eaten away from home is.

“To address this issue, the Heart Foundation has taken action to challenge food outlets to make genuinely healthier lunches and dinners available and easy to spot,” said Dr Roberts.

A Tick meal will have to meet tough nutrition standards for saturated and trans fat, salt and vegetable or fibre content, and for the size of the meal.

Simplot Launches New Website!

Simplot Australia recently launched their new-look corporate website. The new website features product information, nutrition education resources, grower's information and food facts, as well as a fresh and innovative health and nutrition section.

Check it out at www.simplot.com.au

Spice Up Your Life!

We all know that herbs and spices add great flavour to meals, but did you know they are also a rich source of phytonutrients and antioxidants?

Although herbs and spices are part of the vegetables and fruit food group, their health benefits have received limited attention in the past, possibly because they are not usually consumed in large amounts.

An Australian study looking at the health benefits of herbs and spices has recently been published. While further research is required, the study showed that herbs and spices aid in the prevention of chronic diseases like cancer and cardiovascular disease, and

also appear to help maintain our health by supporting the immune system, assisting digestion and managing nausea. They also have anti-inflammatory properties which promote bone and joint health and relieve pain.



Herb or spice	Potential effect
Basil	Anti-inflammation
Cinnamon	Reduction in blood sugar
Cumin	Anti-inflammation in cancer development
Garlic	Cholesterol lowering, Improved immunity
Ginger	Reduction in arthritic pain, improved immunity
Oregano	Antimicrobial
Parsley	Antimicrobial
Rosemary	Inhibition of cancer-forming processes
Tumeric	Inhibition of cancer-forming processes