

Nutrition & Being Active

Supporting and Promoting Healthy
Lifestyles in your Community

Contents

About this Booklet	1
Introduction	2
Why People Need to Eat Well and Be Active	3
Healthy Eating	4
How to Eat Healthy	7
Serving Sizes	8
Active Lifestyle	12
Resources	14
Reference	16

About this Booklet

At our community consultations, Aboriginal Health Workers consistently reported nutrition and lifestyle choices as a primary health concern. Many felt that family and community health and wellbeing were suffering because people did not understand the connection between dietary and lifestyle choices chronic, but preventable, disease.

This booklet has been developed to help Aboriginal Health Workers promote and support health lifestyle choices in their community by providing information and practical advice on diet, nutrition and exercise, as well as links to further resources and support services.

Introduction

There is a general understanding that nutrition, diet and activity influence health. What is not as easily understood is the exact connection between these factors and disease risk. Diet and nutrition are generally a part of a complex picture which includes environmental, biological and genetic factors. However, diet and activity are health determining factors that the individual can, to some degree, influence and control.

For Aboriginal people, environmental factors, including colonisation and removal from traditional lands, have had a lasting impact on their diet, and subsequently their health. Being forced from country has denied Aboriginal people access to traditional foods, causing a shift from a fibre-rich, high protein, low fat 'traditional' diet to a Western influenced one – high in simple carbohydrates and saturated fats.

Today, factors such as distance and poverty mean that many Aboriginal people do not have the opportunity or resources to access nutritious foods. For people in remote communities access and cost are key factors in poor dietary habits: they often live long distances from stores, local shops stock mainly processed foods that are easy to transport and do not rot, and what fresh food is available is often too expensive. Because many Aboriginal people are low income earners, family resources are stretched to meet overall living expenses: good food is often forgone so that money can be spent elsewhere.

With regard to biological factors, Aboriginal Australians, like other Indigenous peoples of the world, are prone to conditions known as Syndrome X, or 'insulin resistance syndrome'. This group of conditions includes obesity, Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and renal disease. Aboriginal people cannot change their inbuilt biological tendency toward these conditions, however, improved diet and increased activity can act as compensating protective factors to reduce the instance and severity of disease.

Good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle are important at all stages of life. There is growing evidence to suggest that maternal nutrition strongly influences foetal development with lifelong effect. Good nutrition then, needs to start during pregnancy and continue into infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Good nutrition means good health for life. Healthy eating and an active lifestyle are important to Aboriginal communities, kids, and the future of all Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal Health Workers can promote a healthy lifestyle by encouraging people to eat a healthy diet and have an active lifestyle, by:

- Telling people about health benefits such as disease prevention and longer life
- Giving people advice on how to eat healthy and be active
- Helping communities develop programs to lead healthy lifestyles

This booklet will help you promote healthy lifestyles in your community.

Why People Need to Eat Well and Be Active

Good Food + Exercise = Healthy Weight = Less Disease = LONG LIFE

Eat a Balanced Diet

An important part of promoting and supporting healthy lifestyles is exercise. People need to know why they should eat healthy and how they can eat healthy.

Be Active: Find 30 Minutes a Day

There are two good reasons to eat well and be active.

1 – Food for Fuel

Get people to think of their body as a car: it needs good food for fuel. Nutrients and energy from food help the body perform and maintain all its daily functions. It's not just about moving around: functions such as breathing, thinking and immunity also require energy. The right balance of essential nutrients keeps the body running at its best.

Less Fat, Sugar and Salt

Being active helps the body burn excess energy to prevent weight gain in the form of fat. It also makes the body stronger to fight illness and disease. Use the car analogy again: a car carrying too much weight gets slowed down. Extra weight slows the body and increases the risk of disease and illness.

Drink Lots of Water

2 – Keeps the Doctor Away

You Are What You Eat

Healthy eating, an active lifestyle and a healthy weight are preventative and protective health factors. Adopting a healthy lifestyle can help prevent and protect against a number of diseases including:

Avoid Alcohol

- Obesity
- Type Two Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Some Cancers
- Kidney Disease
- Liver Disease
- High Blood Pressure
- Heart Attack
- Stroke
- High Cholesterol
- Frailty in Old Age

Two Fruit and Five Veg Every Day

Why People Need to Eat Well and Be Active

continued

Other *benefits* of a healthy lifestyle include:

- Reduce Depression
- Improve Sleep
- Increase Self-Esteem
- Improve Postures
- Gives you Energy
- Boost Immunity
- Strengthen Bones
- Improve Muscle Tone
- Improve Brainpowers
- Boost Memory

More importantly it can help you LIVE LONGER.

Healthy Eating

What to Eat

Many people know that they should eat a healthy diet, but don't always know what to eat. Healthy eating means eating a balance of the good foods and eating the nutrient rich foods in the rights amounts. People need different nutrients – vitamins and minerals – for optimum bodily function. We also need a variety of nutrients because some nutrients help the body to absorb other nutrients. For example, Vitamin C helps the body to absorb Iron.

The table below lists the essential nutrients needed everyday, the bodily functions they support, and foods that are the best sources.

Nutrient	Need	Source
Vitamin A	Good sight Healthy skin and teeth Immune function	Dairy Orange Vegetables and Fruits
B Group Vitamins	Unlocking energy from food Nerve function Breaking down other nutrients	Cereals Dairy Meat
Vitamin C	Absorb other vitamins Immune Function Cell and Bone Growth	Citrus Fruits Berries Capsicum and Chilli
Vitamin D	Absorb other vitamins Immune Function Muscle Growth Helps with depression	Sunlight absorbed through skin and eyes
Vitamin E	Circulation Healthy Skin Nervous system	Fats and Oils Nuts
Calcium	Health Bones and Teeth Healthy Muscles and Nerves Heart Function	Dairy Beans
Folate	Breakdown Protein Tissue Growth Cell Function Prevent Neural Tube Defects	Wholegrain Cereal Fruits and Vegetables
Iron	Circulate Oxygen Muscle Development	Red Meat, Meat Wholegrain Cereal
Magnesium	Energy Healthy Bones	Green Vegetables Beans/Pulses Nuts and Wholegrain
Omega 3	Brain Development and Function Mental Health	Oily Fish such as Tuna
Protein	Cell Growth Tissue Growth and Repair	Meat and Dairy Beans/Pulses

Why People Need to Eat Well and Be Active

continued

A balanced diet means eating the right quantities of foods from the five food groups. As a rule, we should eat as per the Healthy Diet pyramid:



How to Eat Healthy

In order to eat healthy, people also need to know how to shop for food and prepare food in a healthy way. For example potatoes, when boiled or baked, are low in fat and a good source of many essential nutrients. When it is deep-fried and served as chips, it loses many of its nutrients and becomes saturated with fat.

Being able to make informed food choices also includes having information to make sensible choices when eating out or buying take-away food. The following information will help you to promote health shopping and cooking habits.

Shopping

Fresh food is always the best but it's not always available, and in many remote communities is often very expensive. Advise people that if they can't always get fresh food, frozen, tinned or dried vegetables, fruits and meats can sometimes be good substitutes. These still contain some essential nutrients, just remember to:

- Choose Low Salt
- Choose Low Sugar or Natural Juice
- Avoid meat in batter or crumbs – too much fat and salt!
- Don't shop when you're hungry – you'll buy what you crave not what you need
- Avoid processed foods – low in nutrients and high in sugar, fat and salt
- Avoid junk foods – these are often highly processed
- Only buy what you need – not what you crave

Encourage people to keep a stock of non-perishable, healthy foods in the cupboards. Health options include:

- Tinned Tomatoes
- Tinned Tuna (brine/water)
- Rice
- Flour
- Tinned Fruit (natural juice)
- Dried Herbs and Spices
- Wholegrain Breakfasts
- Dried Pasta
- Baked Beans (low salt)
- Tinned Beans/Lentils
- Tinned Vegetable (low salt)
- Skim Milk Powder
- Low Salt Stock
- Good oil – olive and vegetable

Why People Need to Eat Well and Be Active

continued

Serving Sizes

Eating healthy also means not over or under eating. There are a number of national guidelines recommending optimum daily allowances for children, adolescents, men and women, to ensure that they get sufficient calories and nutrients each day. In order to eat the right amount, people need to understand what a 'serve' looks like in everyday terms.

Bread & Cereal Group

2 slices of bread or 1 bread roll

- 1 cup cooked rice, pasta or noodles
- 1 cup cooked porridge
- 1 1/3 cups breakfast cereal (40g)

Vegetable group

Vegetables

One serve =

- 75 grams or
- 1/2 Cup cooked
- 1 medium Potato
- 1 cup salad
- 1/2 cup cooked pulses – peas, beans, lentils

Fruit

One serve =

- 150 grams fresh or tinned
- 1 medium apple
- 2 small fruits – apricots
- 1 cup canned or chopped
- 1/2 cup 100% juice

Milk & Milk Alternatives

One serve =

1 cup milk

- 1 cup soy milk (calcium fortified)
- 1/2 cup evaporated milk
- 40 g cheese
- 200 g yoghurt
- 1 cup custard

Meat & Meat Alternatives

One serve =

- 65-100 g cooked meat, chicken
- 80-120 g cooked fish
- 2 small eggs
- 1/2 cup cooked legumes e.g. baked beans
- 1/3 cup nuts

Extra Foods

- 4 plain sweet biscuits
- 40 g cake
- 25 g chocolate
- 30 g potato crisps
- 12 hot chips
- 50 g jelly beans, jelly snakes

Recommended Daily Servings

The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing recommends the following daily serving intakes:

Cereals (including breads, rice, pasta, noodles)	Vegetables, legumes	Fruit	Milk, yoghurt, cheese	Lean meat, fish, poultry, nuts & legumes	Extra foods (have no more than)
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Children & Teenagers						
4-7 years	5-7	2	1	2	1/2	1-2
8-11 years	6-9	3	1	2	1	1-2
12-18 years	5-11	4	3	3	1	1-3

Women						
19-60 years	4-9	5	2	2	1	0-2 1/2
60+ years	4-7	5	2	2	1	0-2
Pregnant	4-6	5-6	4	2	1 1/2	0-2 1/2
Breastfeeding	5-7	7	5	2	2	0-2 1/2

Men						
19-60 years	6-12	5	2	2	1	0-3
60+ years	4-9	5	2	2	1	0-2 1/2

Why People Need to Eat Well and Be Active

continued

Cooking

Eating healthy also means cooking healthy. How we prepare foods can affect the nutrient and fat content of the ingredients. Many people are unaware of how preparation changes food however with the right information they can learn how to prepare healthy and nutritious meals. There are lots of resources showing how to prepare healthy tasty and how to eat well on a budget: some of these are listed at the end of this booklet for further reference.

There are a number of ways people can cook and prepare healthy foods, and cut out the fat and salt but not the taste:

- Use non-stick cookware, spray oil or a teaspoon of healthy oil
- Don't fry – bake, grill, steam, microwave or BBQ instead
- Steam vegetables rather than boil
- Use herbs and spices
- Cook in stock, lemon juice or vinegar instead of oil

And, people can increase the nutrient count of a meal with a few simple steps, and even get their kids to eat extra vegetables without knowing it. Tips include:

- Adding tinned tomatoes to soups and stews
- Grating vegetables into bolognese or pasta sauce
- Snacking on chopped raw vegetables
- Making pizzas with extras like onions, mushrooms, capsicum
- Making burgers using lean mince and adding salad
- Having baked beans on wholegrain toast

Takeaway and Treats

Everyone enjoys takeaways, meals out and other treats. The trick is to make these 'sometimes' part of a balanced diet and to make sensible and healthy choices. For example, if you like chocolate have one small (50g) bar once a week – maybe as a weekend treat.

There are also ways to enjoy the occasional takeaway or restaurant meal and make the choice healthier. Choose:

- Soups
- Grilled meat and vegies
- Two courses not three
- Share desert
- Salad – no mayo
- Drink water
- BBQ chicken – no skin, no stuffing
- Chinese – steamed and stir fried dishes
- Burgers – grilled, lean and salad
- Italian – tomato sauce, less cheese
- Wholemeal bread, lean meat and salad
- Drink lots of water
- Limit sugary drinks
- Limit caffeine – coffee and black tea
- Limit alcohol

(Adapted from Tomorrow People at www.measureup.gov.au/tomorrowpeople)

Ideas to Get Your Community to Eat Healthy

The following are ideas you can use to encourage your community to eat, cook and shop healthier. Think about the resources available in the community and choose an idea that can work there. There are also links to further information at the end of this booklet.

- Cooking Classes – Ask community people to share their skills
- Bush Tucker – Ask people to share their knowledge
- Grow an Edible Garden – Get the whole community involved: there are lots of organisations who can help
- Shopping cards – print healthy shopping lists
- Talk to stores about stocking and promoting healthy foods
- Provide information on how to eat well on a budget
- Breakfast and lunch clubs for kids
- Community dinners – encourage people to share food, cook and eat together
- Get people to keep food diaries to monitor what they eat
- Run the activities from FoodCents for Aboriginal People.

Active Lifestyle

A healthy, nutritious diet needs to be balanced with sufficient activity to burn excess maintain a healthy weight and body. Being active helps all-round wellbeing by:

- Keeping the body fit and strong
- Helping the body fight illness and disease
- Being good for mental health and self esteem

It is recommended that adults get up to 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most or all days of the week to maintain good health. Children need at least one hour. If you can't do 30 minutes in one go, break activity up into 10-15 minute sessions. And, do more than 30 if you can!

Moderate activity will slightly raise the heart rate and breathing. Use the Talk Test – if you find it hard to talk then your heart rate is up.

Exercise doesn't have to mean hours in the gym lifting weights or doing classes. Simple, everyday activities such as those in the table also count as exercise.

- Brisk walks
- Swimming
- Ride a Bike
- Play footy
- Dance
- Join a Sports Team
- Run or jog
- Exercise Tapes

Finding time to be active isn't always easy. If you find yourself strapped for time, make the most of everyday activities to get your exercise—this is called incidental activity. Examples of this kind of activity include:

- Mow the lawn
- Housework such as sweeping
- Take the stairs
- Park the car further away and walk
- Get off the bus a few stops early
- Walk your kids to school
- Walk to the shops
- Play sport with your friends or kids
- Take your kids to the park

Many people who start an activity program find it hard to stay motivated to keep it up. People try to do too much at once. They choose activities they don't like and put pressure on themselves to see results. You can help people stay motivated by encouraging them to:

- Do something they enjoy
- Start slowly
- Not to overdo it
- Be patient, change takes time
- Get active with friends

Ideas for Getting Your Community Active

Aboriginal Health Workers play an important role in promoting the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, and encouraging people to make lifestyle changes. There are lots of things you can suggest to get your community active. Ideas include:

- Walking groups – choose a time to meet and walk through your town or community.
- Fitness classes – find a space and someone to run it. Use an exercise tape or DVD.
- Get people together - play footy, basketball or any other sport. It doesn't have to be a competition – just have fun.

Resources

Aboriginal Health Workers play an important role in promoting and supporting healthy eating and lifestyle choices in their communities. To perform these tasks to the best of your ability you need access to useful information and resources. Below are links to resources and services that you and your community might find useful.

Websites

The following internet sites offer useful information and resources that can be downloaded free of charge, as well as links to other organisations.

Tomorrow People www.measureup.gov.au/tomorrowpeople	Measure Up www.measureup.gov.au
Find Your 30 – Queensland Government http://www.your30.qld.gov.au/	Department of Health and Aging www.health.gov.au
Find 30 http://www.findthirtyeveryday.com.au	FoodBank Western Australia www.foodbank.com.au
Foodcents Western Australia http://www.foodcentsprogram.com.au	Go For 2 and 5 www.gofor2and5.com.au
Health Department of Western Australia www.health.wa.gov.au	Heart Foundation www.heartfoundation.org.au
Nutrition Australia www.nutritionaustralia.org	Diabetes Australia www.diabetesaustralia.com.au

Cookbooks

The following can be downloaded free of charge

Deadly Tucker http://www.healthfuture.health.wa.gov.au/Health_topics/ASTI-FOOD/ATSI_FC_Manual.pdf	Feeding Your Mob with Fruit and Veg: Bush Tucker Tips http://www.gofor2and5.com.au/DataStore/files/pdf/NSW/Feeding%20your%20mob.pdf	Living Strong Healthy Lifestyle Cookbook http://www.gofor2and5.com.au/DataStore/files/pdf/QLD/QLD-ATSI%20Cookbook-Feb09.pdf
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Weight Management

Losing Weight the Healthy Way
Available free of charge at
http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Losing%20weight%20the%20healthy%20way_LR_FINAL.pdf

Shopping

FoodCents for Aboriginal People in WA http://www.healthyfuture.health.wa.gov.au/Health_topics/ASTI-FOOD/ATSI_FC_Manual.pdf	Heart Foundation Buyers Guide http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Tick%20Brochure%20Buyers%20Guide.pdf
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Edible Gardens

There are a number of organisations who will help schools and communities establish gardens to produce their own fruits and vegetables.

Eon Foundation www.eon.org.au http://news.sbs.com.au/livingblack//edible_gardens_563867	FoodBank Western Australia http://schoolbreakfastprogram.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=67&Itemid=93
Lotterywest http://www.lotterywest.wa.gov.au/grants/grant-stories/7023	Remote Aboriginal Garden Networks www.remoteAboriginalgardens.net

Breakfast Clubs

FoodBank School Breakfast Program http://schoolbreakfastprogram.com.au	Australian Red Cross Good Start Breakfast Club http://www.redcross.org.au/ourservices_acrossaustralia_goodstartbreakfastclub.htm
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Exercise

Find Thirty Everyday Tips for Adults www.findthirtyeveryday.com.au/default.aspx?MenuID=15	Heartmoves - Heart Foundation Program http://heartmoves.heartfoundation.org.au/	Heart Foundation Walking www.heartfoundation.org.au/sites/walking/Pages/default.aspx
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Further Training

Cancer Council WA runs FoodCents training programs www.cancerwa.asn.au/prevention/nutrition/	Red Cross WA FoodCents Training www.redcross.org.au/wa/services_community-nutrition.htm
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Reference

The following resources were used to produce this section of the Toolkit.

Australian Better Health Initiative '*Tomorrow People*' available at www.measureup.gov.au/TomorrowPeople

Centre for Clinical Interventions '*Nutrients for Health Factsheet*' available at www.cci.health.wa.gov.au

Department of Health WA (2004) '*FoodCents for Aboriginal People in WA*' available at http://www.healthyfuture.health.wa.gov.au/Health_topics/ASTI-FOOD/ATSI_FC_Manual.pdf

Department of Health and Aging '*Healthy Eating: Vitamins and Minerals Factsheet*' available at www.health.gov.au/internet/healthyactive/publishing.nsf/Content/vitamins-minerals

National Health and Medical Research Council '*Dietary Guidelines for All Australians*' available at <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/dietsyn.htm>

Northern Rivers Area Health Service (2004) '*HEALING Program: Healthy Eating Activities and Lifestyles for Aboriginal Groups*' available at www.nrhs.health.nsw.gov.au

Get going fact sheet

Get on your way to a happier, healthier lifestyle

Learning how to eat well and be active as part of your every day lifestyle means you may need to change some habits. Start by looking at your current eating habits and the level of physical activity you do. Keep a diary for at least three days so you know what your current habits really are, then you'll see where you can make improvements.

Each day, write down the following:

• Day/date	
• time you eat/drink	• time of physical activity/exercise
• what you eat/drink	• type of physical activity/exercise
• where	• where
• with whom	• with whom
• comments (why you ate)	• comments

Save time and print out the [Weekly Diary Sheet](#) found on the Eat Well Be Active website.

Set realistic goals

Setting clear goals will help you succeed in eating well and being active as a normal part of your healthier lifestyle. Start by using the 'SMART' guide to setting your goals:

- **Specific** - make your goal specific so it's very clear what you're aiming for.
- **Measurable** - make it a measurable goal, so you will know when you have reached it.
- **Achievable** - make it something you are able to do.
- **Realistic** - a goal that is practical for you and that you know you can achieve.
- **Time-based** - set a time frame to reach your goal (e.g. by the end of the month).

It's better to make one change that you can stick to rather than several you can't keep up.

So start with a short-term goal - just a small change to your habits like eating two pieces of fruit a day, then gradually work towards your long-term goal. For example, a short-term goal may be to walk for 30 minutes three times a week. This could be one of the stepping-stones towards a longer-term goal of enjoying a 10km trek at a National Park in six months.

The 'Burn It Off' chart fact sheet

Most people are surprised to learn just how much activity is needed to burn off that extra fuel, particularly high fat and sugary foods! The table below shows the amount of activity required for an adult male to burn off the energy contained in selected foods.

How much physical activity do you have to do to burn off the following?

If you eat...	Burn it off by:			
	Sitting still for	Slow walk for	Brisk walk for	Jog for
glass of water (375ml)	0	0	0	0
1 apple (150g)	1 hr 10 min	35 min	17 min	10 min
glass of wine (150ml)	1 hr 15 min	43 min	21 min	12 min
full-strength beer, 1 stubbie (375ml)	1 hr 52 min	56 min	28 min	16 min
ice cream cone (80g)	2 hrs 6 min	1 hrs 3 min	32 min	18 min
1 chocolate bar (60g)	4 hrs 5 min	2 hrs 15min	1 hr 8 min	39 min
1 can soft drink (375ml)	2 hrs 13 min	1 hr 7 min	33 min	19 min
large juice-bar juice (650ml)	4 hrs 16 min	2 hrs 8 min	1 hr 4 min	37 min
2 rashers bacon, (60g grilled, fat trimmed) + 2 poached eggs	4 hrs 18 min	2 hrs 9 min	1 hr 5 min	37min
2 rashers bacon (60g, lean + fat, fried) and 2 fried eggs (100g)	5 hrs 46 min	2 hrs 53min	1 hr 27 min	50 min
1 meat pie (200g)	6 hrs 9 min	3 hrs 5 min	1 hr 32 min	53 min
flavoured milk (500ml)	6 hrs 14 min	3 hrs 7 min	1 hr 34 min	53 min
2 slices takeaway pizza (240g)	10 hrs 6 min	6 hrs 3min	2 hrs 32min	1 hr 27 min
1/4 chicken (110g) and chips (170g)	10 hrs 53 min	5 hrs 27min	2 hrs 44 min	1 hr 33 min
1 serve fish (165g, battered and fried) and chips (170g)	11 hrs 45 min	6 hrs 53min	2 hrs 57 min	1 hr 40 min

*Calculated from Food Standards Australia New Zealand food composition tables based on average energy expenditure for a 70kg, 40 year old male.





