

# Nutrition and Healthy Weight

As women, we are constantly faced with images and ideas from the media and from those around us about our weight and what we should be eating. In reality, our nutritional needs and our healthy weight will depend on our individual circumstances and goals.

**Did you know that 98% of people will regain any weight they lose on a diet?**

Women often expect that they will lose huge amounts of weight quickly. Some women are overwhelmed by this and do nothing, while others might go to extreme efforts that they cannot maintain. This usually means we put all the weight we have lost back on.



If you feel you are overweight, losing just 10% of your bodyweight can have a fantastic effect on your health and is a great goal to start with. If you are currently gaining weight, simply aiming to maintain your current weight is a very worthwhile goal. We know that a 10% weight loss greatly reduces the risk of

future complications from diabetes, heart disease, and the risk of infertility. It can also contribute to a positive attitude and feeling of control.

## What is a healthy weight?

A healthy weight is not the ideal weight you get from BMI calculations or from unrealistic magazines. A healthy weight is one where you feel comfortable with your body, where you are able to move around and where you have the energy to achieve what you want to.

When deciding on what is a healthy weight for you, consider the following:

- What is a comfortable weight for me?
- At what weight would I be able to move around and have the energy I need to do the things I enjoy?
- What kind of weight can I achieve?
- What kind of weight keeps my body and mind healthy?

## What is a nutritious diet?

A nutritious diet is made up of a wide variety of foods from each of the food groups. Use the following serving sizes as a guide.

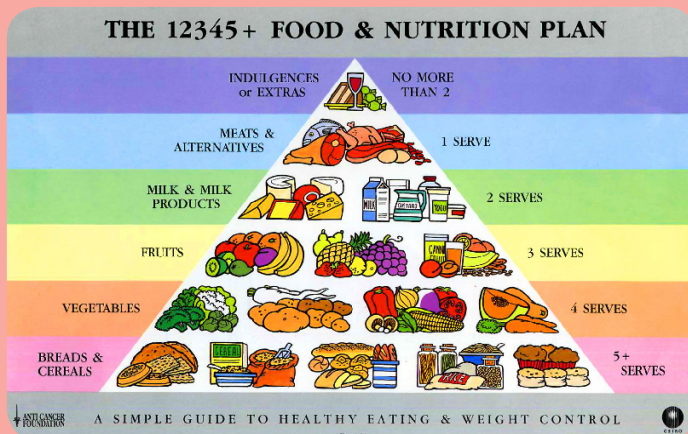
### Breads and cereals – 5+ per day

1 serve = 1 slice of bread, 1 English muffin, ½ a cup of cooked rice, 1 cup of cooked pasta or noodles. Choose wholegrain or multigrain where possible.

### Vegetables – 5+ per day

1 serve = ½ cup of cooked vegies  
Choose both raw and cooked.





## What can we do to manage hunger, thirst and perhaps weight gain?

Here is a list of ideas that a group of women came up with to manage their hunger:

- Drink lots of water
- Distract yourself by going for a walk or calling a friend
- Eat lots of vegies with your meals and as snacks
- Don't go to the supermarket or to a party hungry
- Keep away from sugary drinks, try mineral water instead
- Don't focus on your weight or weigh yourself more than once per week, you will obsess about food
- Try to think about 'every day food' and 'occasional food' – don't judge yourself and think that you eat a 'bad' diet or 'junk' food
- Don't skip meals
- Try to identify if you are really hungry or simply bored, lonely, or stressed
- Take snacks if you are going to be out all day so you don't have to rely on takeaways or vending machines
- Think of non-food ways to spoil yourself e.g. take a long bath, get a massage, go window-shopping or see a movie
- Look for opportunities to move and be active. Meet friends for a walk instead of coffee and cake

### Fruit – 2+ per day

1 serve = 1 piece of medium-sized fruit (e.g. an apple), 3 pieces of smaller-sized fruit (e.g. apricots) Choose canned fruit in natural juice.

### Milk and other dairy products – 2 serves per day

1 serve = 1 large glass of milk, 40g of cheese, 200g yoghurt. Choose reduced fat where possible.

### Meats and other proteins – 1 serve per day

1 serve = ~100g cooked meat (chicken, beef, lamb, fish) or tofu, 2/3 cup dried beans, lentils or chick peas, 1 egg. Choose lean meat and low fat cooking methods.

### Indulgences or extras (occasional foods)

Alcohol, lollies, cakes, toffee, sweet biscuits, soft drinks, takeaways, chocolate, ice cream, potato chips.

## Lifestyle and the foods we like to eat

As you can see from the food groups we have listed, you don't have to go without anything you love to eat. It's just a matter of thinking about how often you eat particular kinds of food. Occasional foods can be eaten every now and then, while we fill our diets with other nutritious foods.



women's health west

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peer education program for women who have experienced a mental illness

## For more information

Ring the Power On Team at Women's Health West on 9689 9588 or look us up online at [www.whwest.org.au](http://www.whwest.org.au)