

The 4-week Koori Cooking Program

'How to...' guide



Koori Cooking
Program

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Introduction



Aboriginal people were once the world's best hunters and gatherers of food. They had a very healthy diet. Today many Aboriginal people suffer poor health from not eating good food. A number of factors influence the types of food we eat. Importantly, lack of food preparation and cooking skills can affect the food choices of both children and adults. While hands-on learning can be helpful for improving food preparation and cooking skills, the challenge is getting people to participate in a healthy cooking program to learn and develop these skills.

The **Koori Cooking program** is a 4-week healthy cooking and eating program that was originally developed and delivered in Aboriginal communities throughout the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions of NSW by the Heart Foundation.

The program aims to increase confidence, knowledge and skills about healthy cooking and eating in a fun and social way.

The **Koori Cooking program** has proven popular and has been run with over 30 groups and over 300 people in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven region.

We acknowledge that the word "Koori" is specific to the southern half of NSW and Victoria and it may not be culturally appropriate to call your program a **Koori Cooking program**. It's okay to rename your program to reflect your area. For example you may wish to call your program the "Deadly Cooking program", "Murri Cooking program" or "Nyoongah Cooking program". What ever you call your program, we'd love to hear how it goes.

Evaluation of the **Koori Cooking program** indicated that around 70% of participants reported making a change to their eating habits, with most saying they were eating more vegetables and eating "more healthily". Increases were seen between before- and after-program scores in participants' confidence in following a basic recipe (8%), tasting new foods (28%) and cooking new foods/recipes (16%).

Participants reported that they were "eating more healthily", "eating more vegetables", "trying new foods", decreasing salt intake" and "only eating when hungry". Changes such as these, if sustained, could result in improved health.

This 'How to...' guide has been designed to enable Aboriginal health and community staff to run their own Koori **Cooking programs** with their local community members. Included in this 'How to...' guide is everything needed to run a **Koori Cooking program**.

The Koori Cooking program can be delivered at:

- Workplaces
- Schools
- Community venues
- Outdoor venues

This resource contains the following information:

- Why the **Koori Cooking program** is useful to increase healthy eating and cooking knowledge and skills
- Staff needed to run a **Koori Cooking program**
- The equipment and resources you will need to run a **Koori Cooking program**
- Weekly session outlines and information to support you to run a healthy cooking program
- Links to recipes and resources about healthy eating
- Resource templates including session outlines, attendance sheets, a risk assessment, before-and-after evaluation sheets

We hope you find this 'How to...' guide useful and look forward to hearing about your **Koori Cooking programs**.

Andy Mark
Regional Health Promotion Coordinator – Illawarra
Shoalhaven
Heart Foundation NSW
December 2017

Acknowledgements



We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We would like to thank the community members and staff in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and South Coast regions of New South Wales who participated in the **Koori Cooking program** and contributed to its development and improvement.

The original funding for a pilot cooking program in La Perouse was provided by NSW Health under the Australian Better Health Initiative.

The original program was modified to become the 4-week **Koori Cooking program** which was refined and further developed in the Be Stronger Live Longer project funded by the Australian Government Department of Health between July 2012 and June 2014.

We would also like to acknowledge the following people for their involvement and support in developing this resource kit:

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- Christopher O'Brien – GP Synergy
- Julie Parkinson - Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District
- Julie Anne Mitchell – Heart Foundation NSW
- Kerry Doyle – Heart Foundation NSW



Meaning of the Koori Cooking program artwork By Rodney Seymour



Wattle has many uses and represents bush tucker. When the flowers come out it also lets community know that black fish and mullet are around.



Waterholes represent our diet of fish and shellfish.
Colours represent fruit and vegetables and healthy eating.



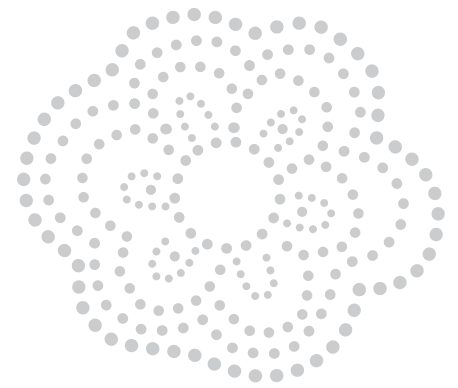
Footsteps represent the journey across the country and the Heart Foundation's message of healthy eating.



The artist, Rodney Seymour (*left*) with Regional Health Promotion Coordinator Andy Mark.



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Heart Foundation's key eating tips to consider when running a Koori Cooking program

Eating healthy food doesn't have to be hard, expensive or boring. These tips are simple, can be used to modify recipes to make them healthier and can make a difference to people's health.

Choose smaller portions

If you eat too much food, the extra kilojoules may end up as extra weight. Try putting a bit less food on your plate and think "Am I hungry?" before going back for seconds. Snack less and choose healthy snacks like fruit and vegetables or low fat yoghurt.

Eat more vegetables and fruit

Eating five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit a day helps to keep us healthy. Make plant-based foods the main part of each recipe that you cook. Include vegetables, whole grains, fruit, nuts and seeds in main meals and snacks.

Choose healthier oils when cooking

Choose from a variety of vegetable and seed oils when you are preparing food. Healthier choices include olive, canola, sunflower, soybean, and sesame oils.

When shopping for dairy products choose low-fat or reduced fat products. You can compare the amount of saturated fat in different products by reading the food label.

Cut back on salt

It's better not to add salt to food. If you want to add flavor, use herbs and spices. When shopping for ingredients choose foods labelled 'no added salt', 'low salt' or 'salt reduced'. Compare the amount of salt, or sodium, in different products by reading the food label.

Make water your drink

Soft drink, cordial, energy drinks and fruit juice contain lots of sugar and can be expensive. Water from the tap is free and is the best drink for both adults and children. Water can also be flavoured with many natural ingredients such as lemon, lemon myrtle, lime, ginger and mint to make a refreshing and tasty drink.

For more information on healthy eating go to:

www.heartfoundation.org.au or www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au



Overview



Through the delivery of the **Koori Cooking program** and the culminating **Koori Cook Off**, we aim to enhance practical skills and knowledge about cooking that will in turn build confidence, influence every day decisions about food and potentially benefit members of a participant's immediate family.

In particular the program objectives are to:

- increase the participants' confidence to prepare healthy meals from basic ingredients
- highlight practical ways to increase consumption of vegetables and fruit in every day meals
- reduce consumption of saturated fat and salt through use of healthier alternatives in preparing meals
- recommend water as a drink of choice.

The program has been developed by and for Aboriginal communities living on the south coast of NSW, where it has run for a number of years, but is also relevant and can be adapted to a broad range of communities across Australia.

Before you start we recommend that people who haven't seen a Koori Cooking program in action watch the Heart Foundation Koori Cooking Program film at:



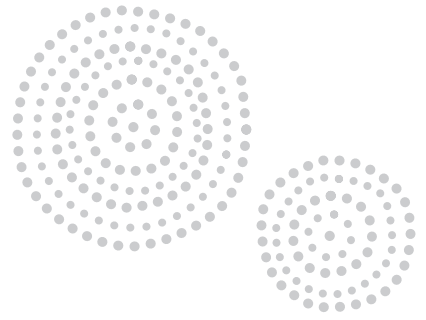
Run your own Koori Cook Off - www.heartfoundation.org.au/koori-cook-off

Koori Cooking program outline

Run once a week over 4 weeks, the **Koori Cooking program** encourages participants to be actively involved in preparing a healthy and tasty meal each week. This helps people develop their cooking skills and learn how to make some new, healthy meals.

There is also a discussion on a different key theme each week, increasing the participants' knowledge of healthy eating. It is recommended that each week's theme is introduced briefly at the start of the cooking session, with more detail provided during cooking or when eating the meal.

Each week a different meal is cooked and it is suggested that participants choose the next week's meal. This allows them to try new recipes, often with ingredients they may not have tried, and it gives them a say in what food they want to eat.



The **Koori Cooking program** focusses on 5 key healthy eating messages.

These are:

- Choose smaller portions
- Eat more vegetables and fruit
- Choose healthier oils when cooking
- Cut back on salt
- Make water your drink

The suggested program outline for the discussion topic is:

Week One

- Food hygiene
- Healthy eating

Week Two

- Healthy weight
- Changing recipes to make them healthier

Week Three

- Label reading

Week Four

- Healthy eating on a budget



What you need to run a Koori Cooking program



Participants

You can work with an existing group or open the program up to any community members who want to join.

The **Koori Cooking program** is suitable for Aboriginal community members from a range of ages and abilities and aims to promote the fact that everyone can develop the skills to cook healthy meals. It doesn't matter what age you are or if you are male or female, everyone can cook tasty, healthy food.

As with all programs it is often easier to run a program with other workers and staff. Talk with other Aboriginal health or community staff to see if running a **Koori Cooking program** can address some of their organisations' goals or targets. That way they can achieve their goals at the same time as helping you.

The Koori Cooking program is a great activity for an existing Aboriginal group that meets regularly. It can also be promoted through the community more widely to reach people who may not be part of an existing group but want to learn more about healthy cooking and eating.

The **Koori Cooking program** could be relevant for:

- Aboriginal chronic care programs
- Men's and women's groups
- Drug and alcohol groups
- Elders groups
- Primary and secondary school students
- Parents groups

For existing groups, ask participants if they would be interested in doing a cooking program that focusses on healthy cooking and eating. A great starting point is a discussion of foods or meals that they are interested in trying. Most of us have a few recipes that we cook all the time and are often limited in trying new recipes by our budget or what other members of the family will eat.

The **Koori Cooking program** gives people the chance to try foods or recipes they have never eaten before. Leftovers from the meal prepared each week can be taken home to give other family members a chance to try new types of meals or food as well. This can increase the program participant's confidence in cooking these meals at home and remove the risk of spending money on food that other family members won't eat.

You may wish to open up the program to people who aren't participants of an existing group. Circulating a flyer through community networks is a good way to spread the word about the program, and see if there is any interest. Include a link to our website so people can see a video of the program in action www.heartfoundation.org.au/koori-cook-off.



A **Koori Cooking program** flyer template can be found at Appendix 6. All you need to do is put in the details of when and where your program will be held and who to contact to sign up or get more information.

Time requirements

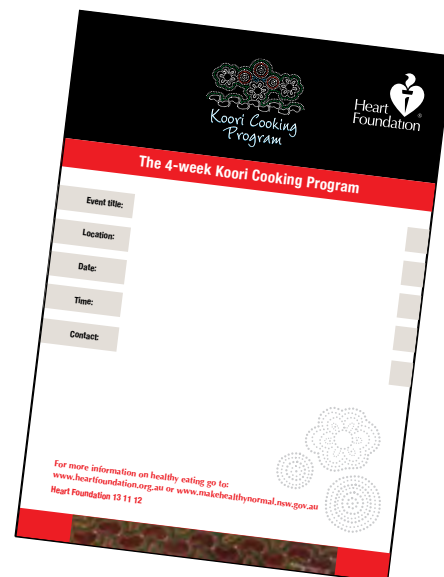
The **Koori Cooking program** is based around a 4-week program, with one session per week running for 2 to 2.5 hours, including the eating of the meal.

The session set up will require an additional 30 minutes before the session begins and a further 30 minutes at the end to pack up. In addition, you will need to purchase the ingredients before the session, which may take up to an hour and include some travel time.

Therefore, staff time to prepare for, and run, each session may be between 4 and 4.5 hours. It is also recommended that the staff delivering the program take time to read through the 'How to...' guide outline before each session to familiarise themselves with what will be covered that week.

Venue needs

The **Koori Cooking program** is designed to be run in venues where existing groups are already meeting. This avoids confusion and disruption to usual program times and routines. It also avoids the need to transport participants to another location and the cost of hiring an additional venue. However, in some cases where the usual meeting venue is not suitable borrowing or hiring another venue may be necessary.



*Koori Cooking flyer
page 51*





The basic venue requirement is a room with enough space for participants to move about easily. A venue with electricity and hot running water is ideal, but if you are using gas stoves you can get by with a venue that just has running water. Also required are tables or benches to allow participants to prepare and cook the meals.

Some groups may choose to run the **Koori Cooking program** outdoors. As with indoor venues, access to water is a must. Shelter, or shade, of some type is also recommended and pop up shade structures can provide this if you have access to them. If tables or benches aren't available at the location, you will need to bring your own collapsible tables.

As with any program, access to toilets and hand washing facilities is a must.

Budget needs

All programs have some costs but the **Koori Cooking program** can be run as a reasonably low cost healthy cooking and eating program. However, you will need to have a budget or engage partners who may be able to contribute to the program costs. Potential costs include: venue hire, transport of participants, cooking equipment, ingredients for each week's meal and staff time.

If the program is being run with an existing group, then check the venue for cooking utensils and stoves or hot plates to cook basic meals. This will reduce your costs.

Even if the other costs can be avoided there will be the cost of ingredients for each week's meal. These costs will vary depending on what you cook, the number of participants and where you shop. The **Koori Cooking programs** run in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven found that shopping at supermarkets for most ingredients resulted in much lower costs. On occasion, extra ingredients were sourced from fruit and vegetable shops, seafood shops and sometimes from the venue's own food garden. Depending on the recipe being cooked and the number of participants, a budget of \$100 per week for ingredients should be adequate, and will often allow some leftover ingredients or cooked meals to be taken home by participants. Inexpensive packs of takeaway food containers can be purchased from most supermarkets.

Some venues may have crockery and cutlery available for use. Otherwise you may have to budget for another weekly cost of disposable paper plates, biodegradable knives, forks and spoons and takeaway containers.

If you do have a small budget to purchase equipment, the next section of this 'How to...' guide provides a suggested equipment list.



Approximate Koori Cooking program budget including one-off set up costs for a group of 10-12

Ingredients per 4-week program (@\$100 per week)	\$400
Gas	\$10
Paper plates, cups, knives, forks, spoons, take away containers	\$100
Venue/room hire	\$100
Stationary/photocopying	\$25
Mail outs/phone calls	\$25
Purchase of cooking utensils and equipment	\$400*
Total	\$1060

* One-off cost, which can be used for future **Koori Cooking programs** and **Koori Cook Offs**. Alternatively, equipment may be borrowed.

Not everyone has access to a commercial or teaching kitchen. If you do that is great and will make the **Koori Cooking program** even easier. But if you don't, that's OK. This 'How to...' guide will outline what you need.

Here we have listed a equipment box for 5-6 people. You can increase or decrease the cost according to your group's need.



Koori Cooking program equipment



The basic equipment box for a group of 5-6 people is:

- 1 storage box
- 2 gas burners and gas cylinders (or 1 or 2 electric frypans)
- 1 large stock pot (if using gas burners)
- 1 frying pan (if using gas burners)
- Knife set of approx. 6 different cutting knives
- 3 small chopping boards
- 1 large chopping board
- 1 measuring jug
- Set of cup measures
- Set of teaspoon & tablespoon measures
- 2 vegetable peelers
- 3 mixing bowls
- 2 wooden spoons
- 1 pair of tongs
- 1 spatula
- Spoon, fork & knife for each participant
- 1 grater
- 1 strainer
- 4 tea towels

An approximate cost for this equipment is around \$200. For groups of 10-12 people you will need two such equipment boxes with a cost around \$400. It is best to store the cooking equipment and utensils in a large plastic container. This keeps equipment clean and makes it easy to carry and store between sessions.

Note that the recipes that participants choose to cook may require specific or different equipment to that listed above. It is important to check before each session that you have all the necessary equipment to cook the chosen meal.



The original **Koori Cooking programs** used 'plug in' electric frypans but now mainly use small gas stoves. Both are suitable to run the **Koori Cooking program**. Use of gas stoves allows the program to be conducted in outdoor venues. Remember when using electric frypans to make sure the electric cord isn't a trip hazard. Preferably frypans and other electrical appliances should be placed near the wall power point they are connected to, in a position where people cannot walk across the electric cord. If this is not possible and an extension cord is needed this should be covered or taped to the floor so people don't trip on the cord if they walk over it.

Information sheets and handouts

People remember information better if you show them as well as tell them so have examples of the types of food and serving sizes when you are talking about those things. Examples can be real food or pictures, whatever is convenient. It is also helpful to be able to give participants printed information to take home with them which they can re-read and share with other family and community.

The Resource Links section later in this guide has a list of suggested brochures, fact sheets and other resources available on-line which you might like to print out and use each week.

Finally, don't forget to print out enough copies of the recipe for everyone to take one home!

Guest speakers

The program aims to increase knowledge and skills about healthy cooking and eating in a fun and interactive way. This 'How to...' guide provides what you need to deliver basic, introductory information to participants about healthy cooking and eating. During discussions ask participants if they would like more information on any particular topics. If questions or extra information is requested that you don't feel comfortable answering, you may like to invite a dietician or other suitable health professional to attend the group and answer any questions. Such staff can be contacted through your local Primary Health Network, AMS or local health services.

Evaluation

Feedback from participants of the **Koori Cooking programs** which have already run suggests that knowledge and awareness of healthy eating and skills to cook healthy meals all increase after participation in the 4-week program. To find out how useful the **Koori Cooking program** has been for your participants some form of evaluation is useful. This information can also be useful in showing the benefits of the program to your organisation.

Evaluation doesn't have to be hard and can be done in a number of ways. These include before- and after-program surveys (see Appendices 3 and 4).

You could also have a short discussion with participants at the conclusion of the **Koori Cooking program** and write down what participants thought of the program, especially if they had any suggestions on ways to make it better. Appendix 1 provides some group questions which allows you to record if participants are using skills and recipes picked up at the program in their cooking at home.





Participant quotes

"A good group activity. Gets people of different ages, backgrounds talking. Gets people chopping."

– **Aboriginal Health Worker**

"I've never tried tofu before. I'm going to use it at home."

– **Jade**

Week 1 "I can't cook" Week 4 "Who said I can't cook"?

– **Shannon**

"I'm going to cook this tuna salad on Turkish bread for mum."

– **Georgie** (And she did!)

"The men enjoyed having the cooking workshops delivered again. It helps to re-visit the important messages of healthy cooking and eating. Some of the men continue to use the recipes from the cooking program at home."

– **Aboriginal Health Worker**





Running a 4 Week Koori Cooking program

Weekly session plans

Week One

- Healthy eating and food safety

Week Two

- Swap it, don't stop it

Week Three

- Label reading

Week Four

- Healthy eating on a budget

Weekly session plans

Week One – healthy eating and food safety



Resources

Useful resources for Week One are listed in the Resource Links section later in this guide. In particular you might like to print out and use:

- the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating* poster
- the *Healthy Eating for Adults* pamphlet
- *Health and Hygiene Requirements for Food Handlers* fact sheet
- Week One suggested recipe - Chicken and Vegie Stir Fry

Evaluation

Before starting and while participants are arriving ask each to sign attendance sheets (Appendix 2) and complete a copy of the pre- **Koori Cooking program** evaluation (Appendix 3). Evaluation results can provide a measure of any changes to people's eating and cooking practices and show the benefit of the program to your organisation.

Introduction

Introduce the program to participants and discuss the purpose of the program and program benefits. Key points to cover:

- The **Koori Cooking program** is a 4-session program (1 session a week over 4 weeks) where we will prepare healthy meals and discuss how healthy cooking and eating can be quick and easy, taste good and be affordable.
- The purpose of the program is to increase knowledge and skills about how to prepare and eat healthier meals and snacks.
- Over the 4 sessions we will discuss healthy eating, safe food handling, label reading, recipe modification and cooking on a budget.



Healthy eating and food safety

What is a Healthy Lifestyle?

Discuss with the group what they think makes a healthy lifestyle and why it is important. Key points to cover:

- A healthy lifestyle is not smoking, being physically active every day, eating healthy food, being a healthy weight, managing high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and diabetes, and addressing depression and social isolation.
- If you eat healthy food, drink water rather than sugary drinks, don't smoke, are physically active and get regular health checks you are more likely to live a long and healthy life, less likely to suffer cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other lifestyle related illnesses.

Discuss Aboriginal cultural background relevant to food and what's happening now. Key points to cover:

- Aboriginal people used to be skilled and knowledgeable hunters and gatherers; they had a very healthy diet and were very physically active.
- These days, some mobs have poor health from not eating good food and leading an inactive lifestyle, increasing their risk of being overweight and putting them at high risk of developing chronic diseases such as heart disease, kidney disease, some cancers and diabetes.

What is Healthy Eating?

Discuss with the group what they think healthy eating is? Key points to cover:

- Healthy eating is eating more vegetables, eating some fruit, cutting back on saturated fat, cutting back on salt, cutting back on sugar and drinking water rather than sugary drinks.
- Healthy eating is also eating the right amount of food (serving size). The size of meals and snacks many people eat is often much larger than they need to meet their energy needs. This is likely to cause weight gain.

Use the *Guides to Healthy Eating* resources to show participants food types and serving sizes.

- The Australian Dietary Guidelines have been developed to provide all Australians with the right information about the amount and types of food that we need to eat for health & wellbeing, while reducing our risk of chronic diseases. These are summarised in the *Healthy Eating for Adults* pamphlet.
- Guidelines have also been developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders which includes traditional foods.

Refer to the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating* poster and go through the guidelines on page 21.

The guidelines recommend people:

1. Achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious food and drinks to meet your energy needs.
2. Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from the 5 food groups every day and drink plenty of water.
3. Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt, added sugars and alcohol.
4. Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding.
5. Care for your food; prepare and store it safely.





Suggested group discussion on healthy eating:

Today we are going to go into more detail about healthy eating.

Refer to the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating* poster to show types of foods included in each food group and the *Healthy Eating for Adults* pamphlet to show the appropriate serve sizes of different foods.

Now we're going to focus on healthy eating. It's important to eat a variety of different foods from the five food groups.

Does anyone know what the five food groups are?

Answer: *Vegetables and legumes/beans; Fruit; Grains and cereals; Lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans; Dairy and alternatives.*

Go through the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating* poster to show types of foods included in each food group and show real food examples.

Vegetables

Can anyone tell me how many serves of vegetables we should be aiming to eat every day?

Answer: *Five serves.*

Does anyone know what 1 serve is?

Go through list of serves in *Healthy Eating for Adults* pamphlet and show real food examples.

Fruit

Can anyone tell me how many serves of fruit we should be aiming to eat every day?

Answer: *Two serves.*

Does anyone know what 1 serve is?

Go through list of serves in *Healthy Eating for Adults* pamphlet and show real food examples.

It's important to try and eat a variety of different types and also colours of fruits and vegetables because they have different nutrients in them.

You don't always have to have fresh fruit and vegetables, frozen and canned are good options too. However, choose canned fruits in natural juices rather than sweetened juice and canned vegies with no added salt or rinse them really well before using them.

Grains and cereals

What foods belong in the grains category?

Answer: *Rice, oats, wheat, cous cous, bread, pasta, flour.*

The foods in this group are a good source of energy and fibre. It's also best to choose whole grains and high fibre cereals.

Fibre has many health benefits including assisting with weight management, helping control our appetite, lowering cholesterol, diabetes prevention and control and keeping the digestive system healthy.

Can anyone tell me how many serves of grains we should be aiming to eat every day?

Answer: *6 serves (male/female 19-50 years of age).*





Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to **Healthy Eating**

Eat different types
of foods from the five
food groups every day.



Drink plenty
of water.



Use small amounts



Only sometimes
and in small amounts



Reproduced with permission from the Commonwealth of Australia as represented by the Department of Health.



Does anyone know what 1 serve is?

Go through list of serves in Healthy Eating for Adults pamphlet and show real food examples.

Dairy and dairy alternatives

What foods belong in the dairy and dairy alternatives category?

Answer: Milk, cheese, yogurt, dairy alternatives such as soy, oat or rice milk
Most of these products come from animals and they contain saturated fat, so choosing the reduced fat options is best.

Can anyone tell me how many serves of dairy we should be aiming to eat every day?

Answer: 2½ serves per day (for males and females 19-50 years, increasing to 4 serves for females over 50 years and over)

Does anyone know what 1 serve is?

Go through list of serves in Healthy Eating for Adults pamphlet and show real food examples.

Meat and meat alternatives

What foods belong in the meat and meat alternatives category?

Answer: meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds and legumes/beans. (Legumes/beans are also in the vegetable category).

Can anyone tell me how many serves of meat we should be aiming to eat every day?

Answer: 3 for males aged 19-50 years; 2½ for females aged 19-50 years.

Does anyone know what 1 serve is?

Go through list of serves in Healthy Eating for Adults pamphlet and show real food examples.

Saturated fat. - Eating too much saturated fat increases the 'bad' cholesterol in your blood and increases your risk of heart disease. Because our body needs the protein and iron and other nutrients that is in meat, we shouldn't cut it out all together.

So what do you think you can do to reduce the amount of saturated fat you're eating from meat sources?

- Choose leaner cuts of meats when you can.
- Trim the visible fat off meat before cooking.
- Choose skinless chicken or remove skin before cooking.
- Limit the amount of processed meats such as salami, sausages, chicken loaf, devon etc.

And remember - drink plenty of water. It's the healthiest choice and it's free!



Food safety and hygiene

Provide participants with the handout *Health and hygiene requirements for food handlers* which outlines some simple rules to consider when preparing and handling food. (These will be explained more when preparing dishes.)

Discuss the importance of food safety and hygiene

Key points to cover:

- If food is not handled properly or safely, bacteria can multiply to dangerous levels and cause illness. Food poisoning affects over five million Australians each year. Food poisoning is not only unpleasant; it is harmful to your health and in extreme cases can cause death. The most common symptoms of food poisoning include:
 - vomiting
 - diarrhea
 - stomach cramps
- Food with unsafe levels of bacteria does not always look, smell or taste any different from food that is safe.
- The risk of food poisoning can be reduced if food is carefully handled, stored and prepared. Bacteria are most likely to multiply between 5 degrees C and 60 degrees C. This means that it is best to keep food very cold or very hot.

Suggested group discussion on food safety and hygiene:

Can anyone think of some ways to reduce the risk of food poisoning?

Answer: Some food safety rules are:

- *Separate raw and cooked foods to prevent cross contamination.*
- *Rinse vegetables and fruit under cold water before use.*
- *Use separate utensils when preparing raw food such as meat and ready-to-eat foods such as salad (or wash all utensils well in hot soapy water before re-using.,*
- *Thaw frozen food on the bottom shelf of the fridge to reduce any chance of liquid from meats dripping onto foods below.*





- *Keep fridge temperature at 5 degrees C or less and freezer temperature at -18 degrees C or less.*
- *Ensure all food is piping hot all the way through before serving. This is especially important if using a microwave.*
- *Serve hot food hot and cold food cold.*
- *Cover leftovers and place in the fridge immediately after serving, rather than leaving to cool on the bench.*
- *Wipe up food spills immediately.*
- *Clean work surfaces with hot soapy water.*
- *Do not buy or use out-of-date or damaged food.*
- *Store food as directed on packaging.*
- *Wash kitchen and eating utensils in hot soapy water. Wash the cleanest dishes first, and the messiest dishes last.*

Also remember to wash your hands:

- *before preparing, touching or eating food,*
- *after touching raw meat, fish, chicken or unwashed vegetables,*
- *after using the toilet,*
- *after blowing your nose,*
- *after touching a pet.*

You should also cover any exposed cuts on hands or fingers with waterproof bandages and dressings before preparing food.

Note: If gloves are used, still follow food safety and hygiene rules. The Food Standards Code does not require food handlers to use gloves. Even when wearing gloves, in many situations it may be preferable to use utensils such as tongs or spoons. Gloves must be removed, discarded and replaced with a new pair in certain circumstances.

Ask participants to report to you if they are ill.

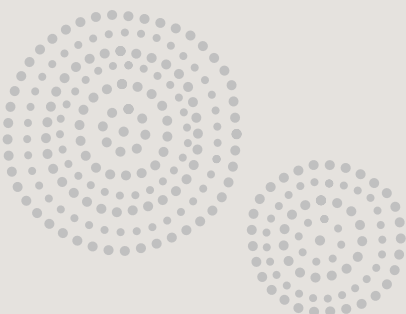
This can be done in confidence. Participants must not handle food if there is a reasonable likelihood of food contamination as a result of illness.

For further food safety tips see the NSW Food Authority's *health and hygiene requirements of food handlers* available at:

<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/>

Other safe cooking tips:

- Handle knives and other sharp equipment with care. When using a knife, always cut down away from yourself.
- Turn handles of saucepans away from the front of the stove when cooking.
- Use oven mitts when taking hot dishes from the oven.



Cooking Activity: Chicken and Vegie Stir Fry

Chicken and Vegie Stir Fry is a good choice for the first cooking session in Week One. See page 27 for the recipe. It is easy to prepare and gives plenty of opportunity for discussion. At the end of the cooking activity participants can help choose the recipe for cooking in Week Two.

Why this dish?

Discuss the following talking points as the group prepares the ingredients for this dish:

1) Quick, simple, easy to plan, and inexpensive

- You can use seasonal, frozen or canned vegetables – whatever is cheapest or that you have on hand. Make sure the recipe includes at least 3 different types of vegetables. Most vegetables are inexpensive, high in fibre, and therefore, help make you feel full or satisfied. They are a good way of making a meal go further.
- Chicken (breast or thighs) can be bought in bulk (compare price per kilo for bulk versus smaller packs) and frozen in smaller portions. Defrost in the fridge the night before you are going to use it. Compare price per kilo of chicken in supermarket deli section with pre-packed chicken – it can be cheaper.
- Rice is inexpensive, can be stored easily and is easy to prepare in the microwave. Leftover rice can be frozen and /or makes a good healthy snack or dinner.
- Check supermarket weekly specials (e.g. free magazines or brochures), and plan meals and shopping.

2) Healthy and tasty

- Stir-fry using minimal oil, e.g. use a non-stick pan and a small amount of oil (can use spray oil), maintains nutrients in vegetables.
- Use salt-reduced stock and low salt soy sauce – check the label. If in doubt, choose a product with a higher Health Star Rating.

3) Healthy Ingredients

- Discuss the ingredients, what food groups they belong to, why they are healthy, what nutrients they have in them etc.

4) Versatile

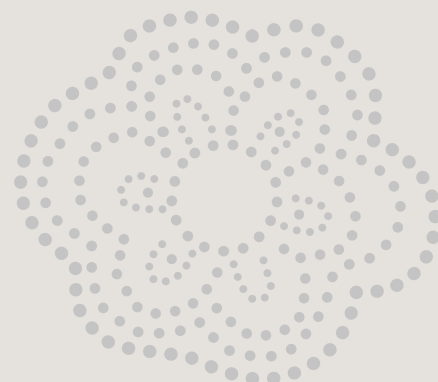
You can use:

- any vegetables that you have at hand or that need using up;
- any lean meat (e.g. beef), poultry (remove skin before cooking and trim visible fat off), fish or tofu.
- noodles instead of rice – consider wholemeal or brown options.

5) Food hygiene.

For more information see NSW Food Authority's Health and hygiene requirements of food handlers. Important issues to highlight for the participants with regard to cooking Chicken & Vegie Stir-Fry:

- Wash hands before handling food - especially before and after handling raw chicken.





- Store food appropriately:
 - Ensure that chicken is kept in the fridge until use. If using frozen chicken, make sure it is thawed thoroughly (overnight in fridge or microwaved) before cooking.
 - Keep raw meat and poultry in the bottom of the fridge or in a sealed container so it can't drip onto other food.
 - Keep raw meat and poultry from touching other food. Wash chopping boards and knives after cutting chicken and don't chop other ingredients on the same boards.
- Rinse vegetables thoroughly under cold water before using.



5) Leftovers.

- Planning and using leftovers carefully can save money and time. To prevent food-borne illness, it is important to prepare and handle and store foods properly. (See handout Food Safety and Hygiene). Remember the 2 hour rule; reheat any leftovers thoroughly so they are hot, and don't keep anything for longer than 2 days in the refrigerator or 3 months in the freezer.
- Left over rice can be made into Fried Rice.

Conclusion:

While sitting down to eat, conclude the session by asking questions to get feedback.

- *What did you learn from today's program?*
- *Did you find the recipe easy to follow?*
- *Are you enjoying the meal that you cooked?*
- *Do you think you would cook this at home?*
- *What was the best thing about today?*
- *Do you think some things didn't work as well?*
- *Is there anything in particular that you want to learn about at this program? (e.g. reading food labels)*
- *Discuss water as a drink to have with meals.*
- **What would you like to cook next week?** (Refer to cookbooks or favourite recipes participants would like to share.)
- *Next week we're going to talk about 'Healthy Weight'.*

