



# A healthy workplace is good for business

## HEALTHY WORKPLACE NUTRITION GUIDELINES

Healthy eating and food safety are fundamental aspects of a healthy lifestyle. A workplace environment that supports healthy eating can significantly contribute to the health and wellbeing of all employees. Good nutrition helps to maintain energy levels and concentration, helps to maintain a healthy body weight, and assists in the prevention and management of chronic disease.

Your organisation might find it helpful to use these nutrition guidelines in any situation where food is provided. They will help you identify food categories and then decide in what proportion you should offer healthier and less-healthy foods. You can use these guidelines in canteens or cafés, for fundraising, catering, vending machines or any event where food is available.

The guidelines categorise foods using a 'traffic light system'. Using the system can help you decide the appropriate amount or ratios of certain foods that should be offered or provided in work-related situations. The traffic light system is further explained below.

**Green foods and drinks – everyday foods:** Green products are considered 'everyday foods'. They are the best choices and should be encouraged. These are nutritious foods consistent with *The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*. They contain less saturated fat, less salt and sugar, and are lower in energy (kilojoules) than other foods. Examples include fruits and vegetables, lean meats, low-fat dairy products, eggs and legumes.

**Amber foods and drinks – select carefully:** Amber products should be selected carefully. They are mainly processed food and drinks and are commonly higher in saturated fat, sugar and/or salt. Examples include fruit juice, full-fat dairy products and salted nuts and seeds.

**Red foods and drinks – occasional foods:** Red products should be limited, because they are high in energy (kilojoules), saturated fat and/or salt, and are not essential to provide the nutrients the body needs. It is these types of food that, when eaten in excess, may lead to chronic dietary-related disease. Examples include sweet biscuits, confectionery, sugar-sweetened drinks and deep fried foods.



These nutrition guidelines are divided into the following four sections:

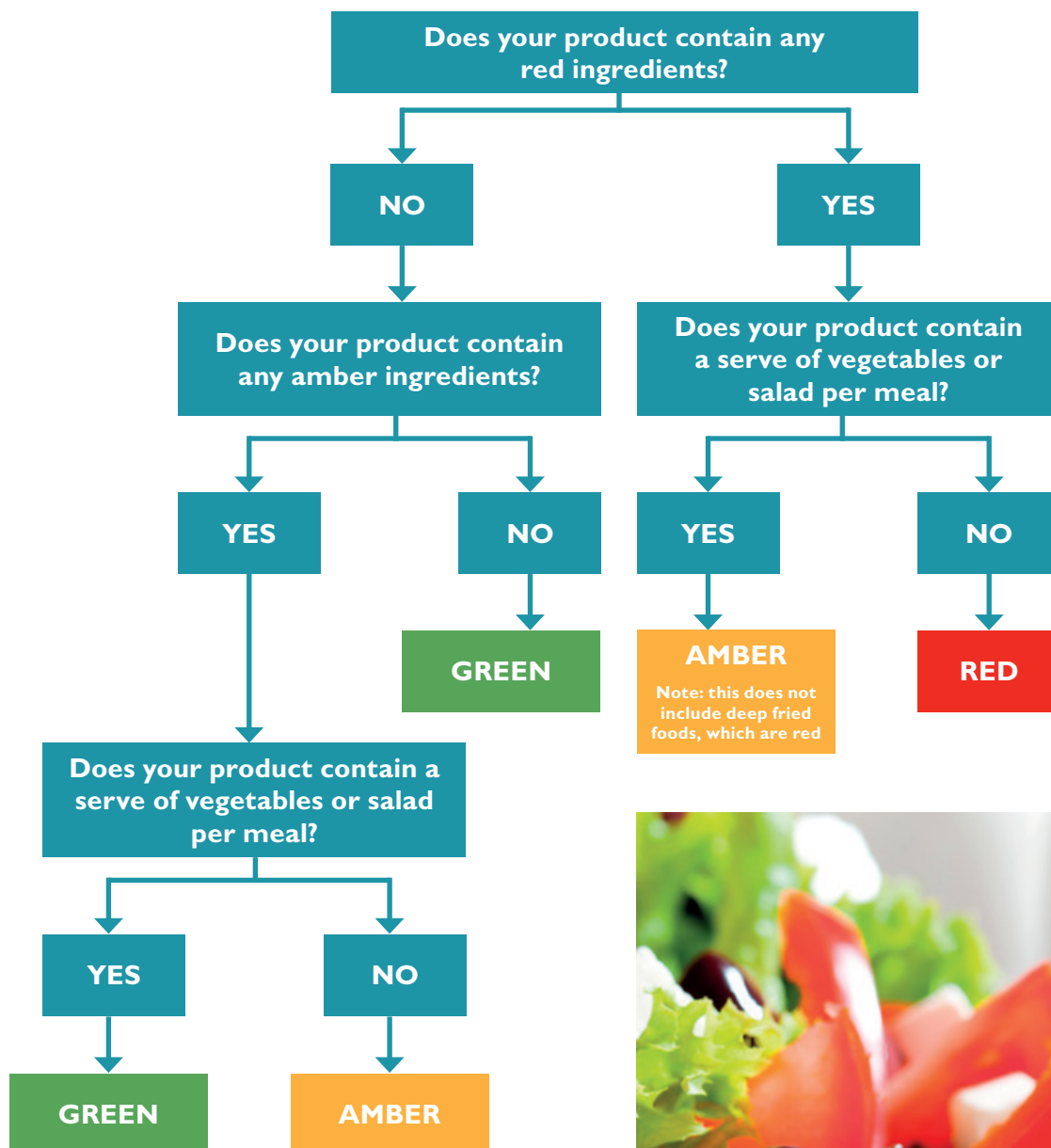
1. **Section 1:** contains a flowchart demonstrating how foods prepared on site can be classified, for example, sandwiches, salads, soups and other hot meals.
2. **Section 2:** contains an in-depth description of the basic foods that belong to each category (i.e. green, amber or red).
3. **Section 3:** contains tables outlining how to decide into which category some of the more complex foods may fit, for example, a main meal, baked goods, packaged foods, condiments and cooking ingredients.
4. **Section 4:** contains information on what comprises a 'serve' of fruit and vegetables, which can be an important factor in classifying foods as green, amber or red.

Information in these guidelines has been adapted from the Australian Dietary Guidelines<sup>1</sup>, and from guidelines published by the National Heart Foundation.<sup>2</sup>



## Section I: Flowchart for classifying foods prepared on site

This flowchart applies to all savoury foods prepared on site, for example, hot meals, sandwiches and salads.



## Section 2: Which foods belong in each category?

### Green category: everyday foods

#### Breads and cereals

- Breads and rolls: (wholemeal, wholegrain, multigrain, high fibre, white) bagels, plain burritos, crumpets, pita bread, English muffins, foccacia, lavash bread, Lebanese bread, Turkish bread, tortillas, raisin or fruit bread
- Breakfast cereals: wholegrain, whole wheat, rice, corn or bran flakes and biscuits, puffed cereals, oats and untoasted muesli assessed against criteria in Table 1 (see Section 3)
- Small un-iced fruit buns, pancakes and pikelets (a fruit bun smaller than the size of a tennis ball)
- Unflavoured rice, pasta and noodles.

#### Fruit and vegetables

- Fruit: fresh, frozen, dried, canned (in natural juice only) – choose 'no added sugar' varieties
- Vegetables: fresh, frozen, dried, canned – choose reduced-salt varieties
- Legumes: fresh, frozen, dried, canned (choose reduced-salt varieties), e.g. baked beans, lentils and chickpeas.

#### Dairy and alternatives

- Reduced/low-fat forms: cheese, custard, plain milk, flavoured milk (maximum serve size 375 ml), plain or flavoured yoghurt. For dairy alternatives choose calcium-enriched varieties
- Reduced-fat cheese and cracker snacks.

#### Meat and alternatives

- Unprocessed beef, lamb, veal, pork, turkey, wallaby and chicken with all visible fat and skin removed
- Fresh, frozen or smoked fish (uncoated), including canned fish in springwater
- Eggs, legumes, tofu, unsalted raw or dry roasted nuts and seeds.

#### Extra and snack foods

- Popcorn (air popped and unflavoured)
- Plain unsalted rice or corn cakes.

#### Meals/mixed food items

- Commercial frozen or ready-to-eat mixed meals (e.g. sandwiches, salads, pasta, curries, roast dinners, stir fries, fried rice) which meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3) and include vegetables as a prominent ingredient (i.e. listed in the name of the product)



- Canned soup which meets the criteria in Table 1 (see Section 3)
  - Savoury foods prepared on site or fresh catered (including hot meals, sandwiches and salads) are green if they meet the following criteria (see Section 1 for more assistance):
    - they comprise ingredients only from the green category or, if any amber ingredients are included, they also contain a serve of vegetables in each meal
    - they do not contain any ingredients from the red category (see Table 4 in Section 3).
- #### Drinks
- Un-flavoured water (tap, bottled, spring or sparkling)
  - Reduced-fat flavoured milk, including non-dairy flavoured milks (maximum serve size 375 ml)



## Amber category: Select carefully

### Breads and cereals

- All breakfast cereals which do not meet the criteria in Table 1 (see Section 3)
- Large un-iced fruit buns (a fruit bun larger than the size of a tennis ball)
- Savoury breads, scrolls and twists.

### Fruit and vegetables

- Fruit which contains added sugar, e.g. canned fruit in syrup or jelly, dried fruit/leather with added sugar.

### Dairy and alternatives

- Full-fat forms: cheese, custard, plain milk, flavoured milk (maximum serve size 375 ml), plain or flavoured yoghurt. For dairy alternatives choose calcium-enriched varieties
- Full-fat cheese and cracker snacks.

### Meat and alternatives

- Unprocessed beef, lamb, veal, pork, turkey, wallaby and chicken that contain visible fat
- Fish (crumbed or coated) which meet the criteria in Table 2 (see Section 3), and fish canned in brine or oil
- Processed meats which meet the criteria in Table 2 (see Section 3), e.g. ham, chicken, silverside, bacon, salami, devon
- Salted nuts and seeds
- Tuna and cracker snacks.

### Extra and snack foods

- Sweet biscuits and snack food bars which meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3)
- Crackers, rice or corn cakes and crispbreads which meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3)
- Sugar-free chewing gum
- Ice-creams, dairy desserts or fromage frais which meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3)
- Ice blocks and ice confections which meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3)
- Popcorn cooked in fat or with added salt
- Cakes, muffins, scones and sweet pastries which meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3)
- Fresh catered or on-site baked sweet goods will be considered amber if they meet all of the following criteria:
  - have a limited sugar content (i.e. ½ cup sugar to 2 cups flour)
  - at least half the flour is wholemeal (not applicable to gluten-free items)
  - contain fruit or vegetables or other grain-based fibre source
  - use a healthier oil or margarine (see Table 4 in Section 3)



- do not contain confectionery or chocolate
- use reduced or low-fat dairy foods (e.g. yoghurt or milk).

### Single-serve hot items, meals or mixed foods

- Commercially prepared savoury pastries, pizza, oven-baked potato products, dim sims, spring rolls and hot noodle cups which meet the criteria in Table 2 (see Section 3)
- Frankfurts, sausages, crumbed and coated products which meet the criteria in Table 2 (see Section 3)
- Commercial frozen or ready-to-eat mixed meals which meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3) and do not have vegetables as a prominent ingredient
- Savoury foods prepared on site or fresh catered (including hot meals, sandwiches and salads) are amber provided they meet the following criteria (see Section 1 for more assistance):
  - they contain ingredients from the amber category, but no vegetables
  - if ingredients from the red category are included, a serve of vegetables is included in each meal (excluding deep fried products or confectionery).

### Drinks

- Diet and artificially sweetened drinks\*
- Reduced-fat flavoured milk, including non-dairy flavoured milk, where serving size is greater than 375 ml
- Full-fat flavoured milk, including non-dairy flavoured milks\*
- 99% fruit juice and 99% juice ices\*
- Sugar-sweetened drinks or ice confections which meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3).\*

\* Maximum serving size of 375 ml

## Red category: Occasional foods

Note: All deep fried foods and confectionery are red.

### Meat and alternatives

- Processed meat which does not meet the criteria in Table 2 (see Section 3).

### Extra and snack foods

- Sweet biscuits and bars which do not meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3)
- Confectionery (chocolate, carob, boiled, jelly or chew lollies, liquorice, yoghurt-coated, fruit juice or natural lollies) or any other product containing confectionery, e.g. choc-chip muffins, chocolate cake, choc-chip muesli bars
- Ice creams, dairy desserts and fromage frais which do not meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3)
- Ice blocks and ice confections which do not meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3)
- Cakes, muffins, scones and sweet pastries which do not meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3)
- Savoury biscuits, flavoured rice or corn cakes, crackers, baked savoury snacks, including crisps, which do not meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3)
- Fresh catered or on-site baked sweet goods are red if they meet any of the following criteria:
  - have a sugar content greater than ½ cup sugar to 2 cups flour
  - less than half the flour is wholemeal (not applicable to gluten-free items)
  - do not contain fruit or vegetables or other grain-based fibre source
  - use a less healthy oil or margarine (see Table 4 in Section 3)
  - contain confectionery or chocolate
  - use full-fat dairy foods (e.g. yoghurt or milk).

### Single-serve hot items, meals or mixed foods

- Savoury pastries, pizza, oven-baked potato products, dim sims, spring rolls and hot noodle cups which do not meet the criteria in Table 2 (see Section 3)
- Frankfurts, sausages, crumbed and coated foods which do not meet the criteria in Table 2 (see Section 3)
- Commercial, frozen or ready-to-eat mixed meals which do not meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3)
- Savoury foods prepared on site (including hot meals, sandwiches and salads) are red when they contain any ingredients from the red category (see Table 4 in Section 3) and contain no vegetables (see Section 1 for more assistance).



### Drinks

- Sugar-sweetened drinks, e.g. cordials, energy drinks, flavoured mineral water, iced tea, soft drinks, sports drinks or waters, sweetened waters, fruit drinks, ice confections (less than 99% fruit juice) which do not meet the criteria in Table 3 (see Section 3)
- Diet and artificially sweetened drinks where serving size is greater than 375 ml
- Fruit juice where serving size is greater than 375 ml
- Full-fat flavoured milk where serving size is greater than 375 ml
- All products containing caffeine must comply with FSANZ Food Standards Code 2.6.4 (see [www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodstandards/foodstandardscode.cfm](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodstandards/foodstandardscode.cfm))



## Section 3: Tables

**Table 1: Green criteria**

	Saturated fat (g) per 100 g	Fibre (g) per 100 g	Sugar (g) per 100 g	Sodium (mg) per 100 g
Breakfast cereals not containing fruit	2 g or less	5 g or more	20 g or less	-
Breakfast cereals containing fruit	2 g or less	5 g or more	25 g or less	-
Pasta sauces and simmer sauces	2 g or less	-	-	300 mg or less
Soups: ready-to-eat (condensed, instant)	2 g or less	-	-	300 mg or less
Dips (hommus, tzatziki, vegetable or salsa)	2 g or less	-	-	750 mg or less
Mayonnaise and salad dressing	3 g or less	-	-	750 mg or less

**Table 2: Amber criteria (energy per 100 g)**

	Energy (kJ) per 100 g	Saturated fat (g) per 100 g	Sodium (mg) per 100 g
Commercially prepared savoury pastries (pies, pasties, sausage rolls), quiche, croissants, pizza, oven-baked potato products, dim sims, spring rolls, hot noodle cups	1000 kJ or less	5 g or less	400 mg or less
Frankfurts, sausages, crumbed and coated foods (e.g. patties, chicken products)	1000 kJ or less	5 g or less	450 mg or less
Processed meat: ham, chicken, silverside, bacon, salami, devon	1000 kJ or less	3 g or less	750 mg or less

**Table 3: Amber criteria (energy per packet)**

	Energy (kJ) per packet	Saturated fat (g) per 100 g	Sodium (mg) per 100 g
Commercial frozen or ready-to-eat mixed meals (e.g. pasta, curries, roast dinners, stir fried dinners, fried rice)	2500 kJ or less per packet	4 g or less per 100 g	400 mg or less per 100 g
Sweet biscuits and snack food bars	600 kJ or less per packet	3 g or less per 100 g	-
Ice creams, dairy desserts, fromage frais	600 kJ or less per packet	3 g or less per 100 g	-
Sugar-sweetened drinks and ices (to be considered amber; energy must be less than 50 kJ per 100 ml)	300 kJ or less per packet/ bottle	-	100 mg or less per packet/bottle
Cakes, muffins, scones and sweet pastries	900 kJ or less per packet	3 g or less per 100 g	200 mg or less per packet
Savoury biscuits, flavoured rice or corn cakes, flavoured crackers, baked savoury snacks or crisps (to be considered amber; energy must be 1800 kJ or less per 100 g)	600 kJ or less per packet	3 g or less per 100 g	200 mg or less per packet

Table 4: Ingredients

Category	Green	Amber	Red
Oils and creams		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A small amount of poly or mono-unsaturated oils (e.g. canola, sunflower, virgin or extra virgin olive, grape seed, safflower, sesame, soybean, corn, wheatgerm, almond, linseed, macadamia, peanut and pecan)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cream, coconut cream or milk, sour cream</li> <li>Coconut and palm oils</li> <li>Solid vegetable frying fats</li> <li>Cottonseed oil</li> </ul>
Margarines		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A small amount of poly or mono-unsaturated margarine spreads (e.g. spreads made with canola, sunflower, soybean, safflower or olive oils)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cream cheese</li> <li>Solid animal fats (e.g. tallow, cophera, lard, dripping, ghee, duck and goose fat, butter, cooking margarine)</li> </ul>
Spreads		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nut spreads (without cocoa)</li> <li>No added sugar jam</li> <li>Yeast spreads</li> <li>Fish, chicken and meat paste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jam with added sugar</li> <li>Cocoa-based nut spreads</li> <li>Honey</li> </ul>
Sauces and condiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vinegar (e.g. white, red wine, balsamic, apple cider)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use sparingly, as most sauces and condiments contain high levels of salt. Try using salt reduced options, or fresh herbs, spices, lemon or vinegar</li> <li>Asian sauces (e.g. soy, hoisin, oyster, fish)</li> <li>Gravy</li> <li>Mayonnaise</li> <li>Mustard or mustard-based mayonnaise</li> <li>Tomato, sweet chilli or BBQ sauce</li> <li>Chutneys and relishes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial cream or cheese sauces</li> </ul>
Dressing and mayonnaise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salad dressings prepared on site (e.g. containing vinegar, lemon or lime juice or oils from the amber category)</li> <li>Commercial salad dressings which meet the criteria in Table 1 (in this section)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial mayonnaise or salad dressings which don't meet the criteria in Table 1 (in this section)</li> </ul>	
Baking/other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flour (e.g. white, wholemeal, rye, wheat, rice, corn, spelt)</li> <li>Dried fruit</li> <li>Fresh, frozen or canned fruit (no added sugar)</li> <li>Low-fat milk or yoghurt</li> <li>Essence (e.g. vanilla)</li> <li>Unsalted nuts and seeds (whole, roasted and ground)</li> <li>Eggs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full-fat milk or yoghurt</li> <li>Salted nuts and seeds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastry</li> <li>Sugar (including table sugar, brown sugar, honey, treacle, golden syrup, fructose syrup)</li> <li>Salt</li> <li>Coconut (cream, desiccated, shredded)</li> </ul>



## Section 4: Serving size

### What is a serve of fruit and vegetables?

#### Fruit

One serve of fruit is 150 g of fresh fruit or:

- 1 medium-size piece (e.g. apple)
- 2 smaller pieces (e.g. apricots)
- 1 cup diced, cooked or canned fruit (choose varieties with no added sugar)
- ½ cup (125 ml) of 100% fruit juice (choose varieties with no added sugar)
- 1 ½ tablespoons of dried fruit (e.g. sultanas or 4 dried apricot halves).



1 medium piece  
(e.g. apple)



2 small pieces  
(e.g. apricots)



1 cup diced, cooked  
or canned fruit

#### Vegetables

One serve of vegetables is 75 g or:

- ½ cup cooked vegetables
- ½ medium potato or sweet potato
- 1 cup raw green leafy vegetables
- ½ cup legumes (cooked, dried or canned beans, chickpeas or lentils, choose varieties with no added salt).



½ cup cooked  
vegetables or  
legumes



½ medium potato or  
sweet potato



1 cup raw green  
leafy vegetables

#### References

1. National Health & Medical Research Council 2013, *Australian Dietary Guidelines*, Commonwealth of Australia.
2. National Heart Foundation 2010, *The right ingredient: Guidelines for healthier recipes*, [www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Recipe-Guidelines.pdf](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Recipe-Guidelines.pdf)