

WHAT CAN GPs DO TO HELP THEIR PATIENTS EAT MORE SUSTAINABLY?

EATING FOOD IN AMOUNTS RECOMMENDED IN THE AUSTRALIAN DIETARY GUIDELINES PROMOTES HEALTH AND AVOIDS FOOD WASTE, KEY TO SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION.

Sustainable diets have a low environmental impact, and are nutritionally adequate, accessible, affordable, and culturally acceptable.

Whether measuring the impact of climate, water scarcity, cropland scarcity, or pesticide toxicity, Australian research shows that the amount of food consumed is the main determinant of the environmental impact of the diet.

The amount of food consumed explains up to 25% of the environmental footprint of the Australian diet.

The findings suggest that changes in agricultural practices are necessary to achieve sustainable production, while eating to your needs and avoiding food waste is important for sustainable consumption.

Dietary factors that determine the amount of food consumed include the number of portions and serving size of food, frequency of consumption, and variety of food choices within each food group.

The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* provides guidance on the amounts and variety of food choices recommended for people of different ages and life stages to achieve a healthy diet and maintain a healthy weight.

Three ways to promote sustainable eating and avoid food waste

- 1 Maintain a healthy weight: eat foods in recommended amounts
- 2 Improve diet quality: eat a variety of nutritious foods to promote health
- 3 Reduce household food waste: buy only what you need

Health care professionals, such as GPs and dietitians, have an important role to play in promoting healthy, sustainable eating for all Australians by providing practical messages to drive behaviour change and positive health outcomes.

How can GPs help patients?

Patients are looking for easy ways to fit healthy, balanced meals that are affordable and enjoyable into their busy lifestyles.

Decisions about food choices and portions are typically made within the context of meal planning. Meal planning guidance builds practical skills that make it easier for your patients to integrate healthy and sustainable eating habits into their everyday meals.

Use these portion size guides below to balance out each meal:

Choose 1 protein	LEAN RED MEAT	FISH	LEGUMES	CHICKEN AND EGGS
	100-200g meat*	100-200g fish*	1 cup cooked legumes 200g firm tofu	100-200g chicken* 2 eggs
Choose any 3 different coloured vegetables	GREEN	ORANGE/YELLOW	RED/PURPLE	WHITE
	1 handful leafy veg	½ carrot	¼ eggplant	¼ zucchini
	4 florets of broccoli	2 slices pumpkin	¼ capsicum	4 florets of cauliflower
	1 handful of beans or peas	2-3 squash	½ tomato	¼ onion
Choose 0-4 carbohydrates	GRAINS	STARCHY VEG	LEGUMES	
	½ cup cooked pasta, noodles, quinoa	1 medium potato	½ cup cooked legumes	
	¼ cup cooked rice	¼ medium sweet potato		
	1 slice bread or ½ roll/wrap	½ corn cob		

*Raw weight

Portion guidance in line with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* is an effective way to help your patients choose the right food, in the right amounts, to promote health and avoid food waste.

MLA's *Guide to Balanced Meals* resource provides practical tips for planning and serving healthy, balanced meals using portion size guides.

Protein variety

To meet nutrient needs, have different protein foods for meals across the week.

LEAN RED MEAT	FISH & SEAFOOD	LEGUMES	CHICKEN & EGGS
EVERY SECOND DAY:	TWICE A WEEK:	TWICE A WEEK:	ON OTHER DAYS:
For iron and zinc. Includes beef, lamb, pork or kangaroo.	For omega 3. Includes fresh, canned or smoked.	For dietary fibre. Can be eaten as a protein or carbohydrate food.	Provides alternative protein choices for variety.

- Include a **variety of protein foods** to meet different nutrient needs such as iron, zinc, and omega 3 fatty acids.
- Choose a range of **different coloured vegetables** to provide important nutrients such as vitamin A, C, and antioxidants.
- Modify the **amount of carbohydrate** with the meal depending on individual energy needs and physical activity levels.

PRACTICAL RESOURCES

Meat & Livestock Australia's nutrition resources are based on typical meal planning practices and are consumer-tested to ensure the information is engaging, achievable and easy to understand. These patient-friendly resources provide practical tips and portion guidance to help patients eat to their needs and make every bite count.

WHO IS MLA?

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) is an industry owned Rural Research and Development Corporation that delivers marketing, research and development services to Australia's red meat and livestock industry. The Australian red meat and livestock industry is committed to reducing its environmental impact through adoption of new technology and production practices. Read about the industry's ambitious target to be **carbon neutral by 2030** (CN30 roadmap) and its **sustainability progress here**.



For a full list of references and more information, visit www.mlahealthymeals.com.au