

Plate or pyramid?

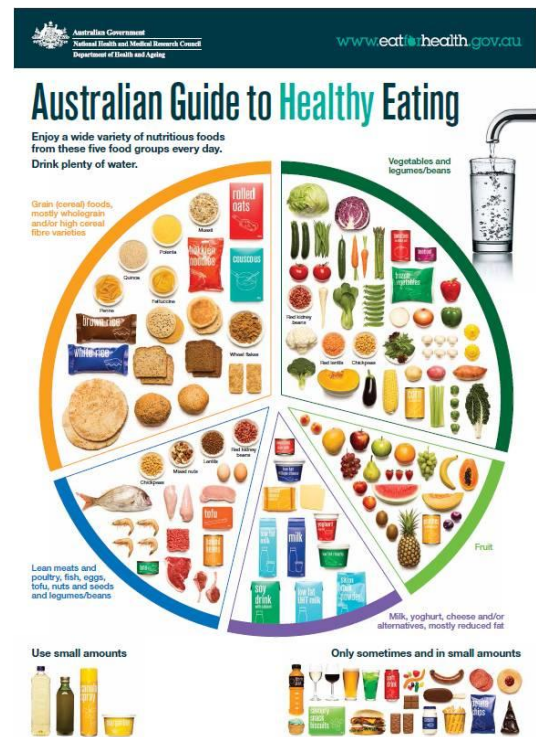
Food Smart Schools • an naq nutrition program

For more information visit www.foodsmartschools.org or email info@foodsmartschools.org

Which tool to use when teaching nutrition in the classroom?

To ensure consistent messages, Queensland's Department of Education recommends using the latest Australian Guide to Healthy Eating "Plate" model shown below for nutrition education in the classroom. This model is consistent with the key messages of Nutrition Australia's Healthy Eating Pyramid.

Both models provide very similar information – simply presented in a different format. The plate model represents the proportion of foods from each of the 5 food groups we should be eating across the day. The pyramid model highlights the foods that we should eat in small amounts, through to what we should eat the most of. This is proportionally represented as those we should eat least, eat moderately and eat most. Both guides are based on the 2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines.



How can this information be used in the classroom?

Students can look at both models and compare and contrast the two models to generate nutrition discussions. Key questions may include:

- How are the models similar?
- How do the models differ?
- Do you feel one is better than the other? Why is this so?

Where can more detailed information be found?

Both the Healthy Eating Pyramid and Australian Guide to Healthy Eating models provide a pictorial representation of the proportions we should eat across a day, but they don't provide specific amounts for each food group for individuals.

The following serve size guide from the Australian Dietary Guidelines is an indication of approximately how much children and teenagers should be eating each day. For serve size examples, see the Healthy Eating for Children and Adolescents (<http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>).

Sample daily food patterns from the Australian Dietary Guidelines

Healthy Eating for Children and Adolescents

Age Range	Gender	Vegetables & Legumes/ Beans	Fruit	Grain (Cereal) Foods	Leans Meats & Poultry, Fish, Eggs, Tofu, Nuts & Legumes	Milk, Yoghurt, Cheese & Alternatives
Children 4-8 Years	Boys	4 ½	1 ½	4	1 ½	2
	Girls	4 ½	1 ½	4	1 ½	1 ½
Children 9-11 Years	Boys	5	2	5	2 ½	2 ½
	Girls	5	2	4	2 ½	3
Early Adolescents 12-13 Years	Boys	5 ½	2	6	2 ½	3 ½
	Girls	5	2	5	2 ½	3 ½
Adolescents 14-18 Years	Boys	5 ½	2	7	2 ½	3 ½
	Girls	5	2	7	2 ½	3 ½

What about other food and drinks that are not part of the Five Core Food Groups?

Food and drinks which are not part of the Five Core Food Groups are shown outside the 'plate' or main circle in the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. These groups are Unsaturated Spreads and Oils and Discretionary Choices.

Unsaturated Spreads and Oils

Age	Unsaturated Spreads and Oils
3-12 Years	1 serve (7-10g)
12-13 Years	1 ½ serves (11-15g)
14-18 Years	2 serves (14-20g)

A small amount of unsaturated fat is needed in the diet and this can come from spreads and oils or core foods like nuts, seeds and avocado.

What is a serve of unsaturated spreads and oils?

1 serve = 10g unsaturated spreads or 7g polyunsaturated oil (olive or canola) or 10g nut butter or paste

Discretionary Choices

Age	Discretionary Choices
0- 8 Years	0 - ½ serves
9- 18 Years	0 - 2.5 serves

Taller and more active children needing extra energy should be getting this extra energy by eating more serves from the five core food groups rather than additional serves of discretionary choices.

Discretionary foods are 'sometimes' foods and should only be eaten in small amounts as they often have little nutritional benefit and can be high in fat, sugar and/or salt.

What is a serve of a discretionary choice?

1 serve = 2-3 sweet biscuits or 1 tablespoon of butter or 12 fried hot chips or 1 can soft drink.

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating Plate image used by permission of the National Health and Medical Research Council.