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Australian Guide to Healthy Eating for Vegetarians and Vegans

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGHE) is a visual guide which shows the amount of food from the five food groups that we should eat each day.

To eat well, enjoy a variety of foods from each of the food groups. The guidelines include foods that consider personal tastes, cultural backgrounds or vegetarian dietary patterns. This means vegetarians and vegans can and should continue to follow the AGHE to meet their daily needs.



Group One: Grains and Cereals (mostly wholegrains)

Grains and cereals include wheat, oats, rice, rye, barley, millet, quinoa, buckwheat and corn.

One serve of grain or cereal foods provides 500kJ or 120kcal and includes:

- 1 slice (40g) bread
- ½ medium (40g) roll or flat bread
- ½ cup (75-120g) cooked rice, pasta, noodles, barley, quinoa, buckwheat, semolina, polenta, amaranth, millet
- ½ cup (120g) cooked porridge (oats)

How many serves?

Children 11 and under	4-5 serves
Teenagers	5-7 serves
Adults under 70	4-6 serves
Adults over 70	3-4.5 serves
Pregnant and lactating women	8.5-9 serves

Wholegrains are an important source of carbohydrates, protein, B-vitamins, iron, zinc and other minerals. Some grains are higher in protein than others. Higher protein grains are amaranth, quinoa, millet and buckwheat. Choose a variety of grains and mostly wholegrains.

Group Two: Fruit

Vegetarians and vegans can eat all types of fruit. Choosing a variety of fruits that are in season provides great taste, nutrition and quality.

One serve of fruit is approximately 350kJ or 85kcal and includes:

- 1 medium apple, banana, orange or pear
- 2 small apricots, kiwi fruits or plums
- 30g dried fruit (4 apricot halves, 3-5 dates, 1 ½ tbsp. of sultanas)

By the age of nine years old, children should eat two serves of fruit each day. All adults should eat 2 serves of fruit each day.

Group Three: Vegetables and Legumes/Beans

Choose a variety of colourful vegetables, including legumes. Legumes (lentils, peas and beans) include kidney beans, soybeans, lima beans, cannellini beans, chickpeas, lentils and split peas. Legumes are vegetables and are good sources of protein, fibre, iron and zinc. These foods are also included in Group Five below because they are important protein sources for vegetarian and vegan diets.

One serve of vegetables provides 100-350kJ or 25-85kcal and includes:

- ½ cup cooked green or orange vegetables (broccoli, carrot, spinach, pumpkin)
- ½ cup cooked dried or canned beans, peas or lentils
- 1 cup green leafy or raw salad vegetables
- 1 medium tomato
- ½ cup sweet corn
- ½ medium potato, sweet potato or taro

How many serves?

2-3 year olds	2.5 serves
4-8 year olds	4.5 serves
Children over 8 years old	5-5.5 serves
Adults	5-6 serves
Pregnant women	5 serves
Lactating women	7.5 serves

Group Four: Milk, Yoghurt, Cheese and/or their Alternatives (mostly reduced fat)

Lacto-ovo vegetarians usually include dairy foods. Dairy foods have protein, calcium, vitamin D, vitamin B12 and zinc. People eating a vegan diet can find calcium and vitamin B12 from fortified milk alternatives like soy, oat, rice or nut milks. Soy milk is a good source of protein. Other milk alternatives are lower in protein. Check the labels to ensure calcium and vitamin B12 are added.

One serve of dairy and/or Alternatives provides 500-600kJ or 120-145kcal and includes:

- 1 cup (250ml) fresh milk; calcium-fortified soy, rice, oat or almond milks
- 2 slices (40g) cheddar cheese; ½ cup ricotta/cottage cheese
- ¾ cup (200g) yoghurt or calcium-fortified soy yoghurt

This does not include milk, cheese or yoghurt-like foods made from coconut. Dairy alternative foods made from coconut are low in protein, calcium, vitamin D, vitamin B12 and zinc.

Girls aged between 9 and 11 should eat at least three servings per day for healthy bone growth and ensuring stronger peak bone mass is reached at this critical age. Women need more serves than men after the age of 50 due to calcium lost during menopause.

How many serves?

2-3 year olds	1.5 serves
4-8 year old boys	2 serves
4-8 year old girls	1.5 serves
9-11 year old boys	2.5 serves
9-11 year old girls	3 serves
Teenager boys and girls	3.5 serves
Adult men under 70	2.5 serves
Adult men over 70	3.5 serves
Adult women under 50	2.5 serves
Adult women over 50	4 serves
Pregnant and lactating women	2.5 serves

Group Five: Eggs, Tofu, Nuts and Seeds, and Legumes

One serve provides 500-600kJ or 120-145kcal – examples are listed below:

- 2 large (120g) eggs
- 1 cup (150g) cooked or canned legumes/beans such as lentils, chickpeas or split peas
- 170g tofu
- 30g nuts, seeds, tahini or other nut/seed pastes

How many serves?

2-3 year olds	1 serve
4-8 year olds	1.5 serves
9-11 year olds	2.5 serves
Teenagers	2.5 serves
Adult men under 50	3 serves
Adult men over 50	2.5 serves
Adult women under 50	2.5 serves
Adult women over 50	2 serves
Pregnant women	3.5 serves
Lactating women	2.5 serves

These foods contain protein and other important nutrients such as iron, zinc and other minerals and vitamins. Vegetarians and vegans can easily meet their protein requirements by including a variety of plant protein foods. These can be whole foods like a handful of nuts or chickpeas in a salad, or foods made from the ingredients above, such as veggie burgers or tofu sausages.

Discretionary Food Choices

Discretionary foods are “treat foods”. These foods are high in energy and low in nutrients. They include sweet biscuits, cakes, desserts, confectionary and chocolate, fried foods, potato chips, sweetened soft drinks, cordials, sports drinks and alcoholic beverages. Just like for non-vegetarians, eat these foods only “sometimes” and limit the serve to 600kJ (150 kcal).