

## Comparing Australian women's diets to national dietary guidelines

The Australian Dietary Guidelines are regularly updated to reflect the latest scientific evidence on the types and amounts of foods, food groups and dietary patterns to promote health and wellbeing.

The guidelines encourage Australians to eat a nutritious diet that includes a variety of foods from the five main food groups, and to limit the intake of alcohol and foods containing saturated fats, added salt and added sugar.



In 2013 there were a number of important changes, including separate guidelines for those aged 19-50 and 51-70 years. For example, recommended dairy intake for women aged 51-70 increased from two per day to four.

### Our research

ALSWH compared the diets reported by three groups of women – not pregnant 31-36 years, pregnant 31-36 years, and mid-age 50-55 years – in relation to the latest dietary guidelines.

The research found:

- Less than 2% of women from all groups attained the daily recommended intake of five serves of vegetables.
- Less than 10% of young (pregnant or not pregnant) women reached the recommended intake of grains.
- Less than one in four women met the guidelines for daily serves of dairy products, with only 1% of mid-age women reaching the recommended four daily serves of dairy.
- Only 10% of pregnant women reached the recommended 3.5 daily serves of meat and meat substitutes.
- Based on Body Mass Index (BMI), 54% of the mid-age women (aged 50-55) were overweight or obese, compared with 46% of young women (aged 31-36) and 43% of pregnant women (based on pre-pregnancy weight).
- Almost half of the young women (49%), and more than half of pregnant women (64%) and mid-age women (55%) were sedentary or had low physical activity levels.

For most women to follow the latest dietary guidelines they would require substantially increased consumption of cereals, vegetables and dairy.

### Publication

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