

# The Great Little Cookbook

hints and healthy eating on a tight budget

It was Work and Income frontline staff who first suggested that families would benefit from a down-to-earth book that showed simple ways to choose, prepare and serve food that was healthy and inexpensive. It is the partnership of the Nelson Marlborough and West Coast District Health Boards with Work and Income's Regional Office in Nelson that has brought this suggestion to fruition.

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Kym Stilwell and her children Tyler, Connor, Flynn, Ronan and Roisin have tested the recipes in this book.

“The recipes were easy to prepare and easy to follow and the meals are hearty and nutritious. I liked the way some recipes used only one pan for cooking and the addition of useful hints,” she said.

# Introduction

Serving healthy food to your family is challenging, especially when you are on a low budget.

The huge selection of foods in supermarkets and constant advertising makes it difficult to know how to get the best deal for your food dollar.

Many people think healthy food costs a lot; with wise shopping and buying food in season, it doesn't have to.

This book has lots of ideas and recipes. They are all healthy eating ideas (except for a few treats) and they are all cheap to prepare. Change the recipes to suit your family's tastes and the ingredients you have.

**Most of the recipes in this book serve four people.**



## Have plenty of fruit and vegetables

**For good health - eat 5+ a day.**

One serving fits into the palm of your hand.

A mandarin is a serve for a pre-schooler, an orange is a serve for an adult.

## Colour = variety

Colourful fruit and vegetables have many vitamins, minerals and other compounds that protect against disease.

**The colour groups are:**

red (plum)  
orange/yellow (carrot)  
brown/white (potato)  
green (peas)  
blue/purple (grapes)



## Eat lean meat, poultry seafood, nuts or eggs

**Choose at least one serve a day of one of the following:**

2 slices cooked meat  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup mince or casserole  
1 medium fillet fish (100g)  
1 chicken leg,  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup dried cooked beans  
1 egg

## Eat wholegrain bread and cereals

Choose wholegrain and wholemeal breads and cereals.

Adults - eat at least 6 serves a day.

Children - eat 4-6 serves a day.

**1 Serve =**

1 roll  
1 muffin  
1 medium slice of bread  
1 cup cornflakes  
1 cup cooked pasta  
1 cup cooked rice

6 servings may seem a lot, but a meal will often have 2 or more serves. For example, a bowl of porridge = 2 serves

# Eating for health, taste and budget

# Milk

## How much is enough?

Adults: 2 serves a day

Children: At least 2 - 3 serves a day

### One serve =

1 glass milk

1 pottle yoghurt

2 slices cheese

2 scoops ice-cream

Cream and sour cream are high in fat. Sometimes you can use yoghurt instead.

For children who don't like milk on its own, try yoghurt, custard, smoothies, dairy food or cereals with milk.



## Which milk to use

Milk helps build strong bones in children and adults because it is high in calcium and other minerals. But some milks are high in saturated fat. You don't need to buy expensive milk - it is all a good source of calcium and protein.

### Adults, children 5+

Trim milk (green top) is the best choice. It is very low in fat and higher in calcium. If you can't get your family to use trim milk, try reduced-fat milk (light blue).

*Making the changes from 500ml standard milk to 500ml of trim milk a day will reduce fat intake by 16 grams (1 tablespoon of fat).*

### Toddlers - one and two year olds

- need full-fat milk (homogenised, dark blue).

**Three - four year olds** - can have a reduced-fat milk (light blue)

# Staying healthy

## **Sugar is not that sweet**

Most high sugar foods are low in other nutrients.

If people fill up on sugary foods, they won't eat other nutritious foods. Sugary and sticky foods can cause tooth decay.



## **What is good fat?**

There are 3 different types of fat. Saturated fat increases blood cholesterol, which can lead to heart disease. Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are healthy fats.

### **Saturated Fat:**

Is solid at room temperature. It is found mainly in animal products like butter, dairy products, lard, dripping and fatty meat.

### **Monounsaturated Fat:**

May be in animal or plant products like olive oil, canola oil, peanuts, avocados and meat.

### **Polyunsaturated Fat:**

Is liquid at room temperature and mainly found in products like nuts, sunflower oil, soybean oil and safflower oil.

# Staying healthy



Generally New Zealanders still eat too much salt. Most of it comes from the processed food and takeaways we eat. Too much salt can cause high blood pressure. It also stops your body absorbing as much calcium. Read the labels on food packets. Products with the 'Heart Tick' are lower in salt.

## Sparing with salt

### But don't miss out on iodine

Iodine keeps our thyroid gland going and prevents goitre. New Zealand soils are low in iodine so it is added to the salt we use in the home.

Not all salt is iodised and most salt added to processed foods and bread is not iodised.

When you buy salt, make sure it is iodised.

Other ways to get iodine are through milk, fish, seaweed (e.g. sushi) and eggs.

Drink  
plenty of water  
everyday

You need 6 - 8 cups of water or other drinks each day. Water is the best drink. Tea and coffee can be included but go easy on cordial, energy and soft drinks and fruit juice.

# Staying healthy



## Lactose intolerant?

There are alternatives

Lactose intolerance is more common than milk allergies, especially among Maori, Pacific Islanders and Asians.

Symptoms include wind or stomach pain.

Most people can tolerate small amounts of milk,

but yoghurt and cheese are better because the lactose has already been broken down.

If you can't drink cow's milk you need other sources of calcium. This could be soy milk, canned fish with bones (salmon, tuna), green vegetables or dried apricots.

## Need special foods?

There may be help to cover the extra costs

Work and Income's Disability Allowance may cover the extra cost of special foods if you or your family member has a disability.

### To qualify...

The special food has to be more than most people's everyday needs.

It needs to cost more than usual food.

It must be part of a diet supervised by a registered dietitian.

(Special foods can include soy milk or food supplements)

To find out how to apply - Phone 0800 559 009

## Pick the Tick

The Heart Foundation

Pick the Tick symbol shows that the product is a healthier choice in that product range.



# Staying healthy

## Supplements: Do you need them?

Eating a wide variety of foods usually gives you all the vitamins and minerals you need.

Supplements are expensive.

Before you buy any, take a look at what your family is eating. Choose breakfast cereals and other foods with added vitamins, iron or calcium. It may be better to spend the money on an extra bag of fruit each week.

However, some people do need supplements like iron on the advice of their doctor.



## Staying active doesn't have to be hard work!

Staying active is not a biggie.

Ten minutes several times a day counts. Try walking the kids to school, parking further away from work or shopping so that you walk at least 5 minutes, playing soccer with the kids or gardening.

## Sugar and dental decay

*Tooth decay is caused by bacteria in the mouth. The bacteria use sugars from foods to produce acids. The acids attack the teeth. Eating and drinking often during the day means there is food in the mouth a lot of the time for bacteria to use.*

- Brush teeth twice a day.
- Good snacks are cheese, fruit, plain crackers, toast, plain popcorn.
- Sugary snacks include biscuits, sticky snack bars, lollies.
- Water and plain milk are the best drinks.
- Cordial, fruit juice and fizzy drinks can cause food decay. These are for treats.
- Never dip a dummy in something sweet.
- Never put sugary drinks in an infant's bottle or a child's water bottle. They suck on these throughout the day.
- Never put an infant or toddler to bed sucking on a bottle.

# Staying healthy

# Planning tips on eating well for less

Being organised is the key to cooking good food on a low budget.

Buying specials wisely and buying seasonal food helps.

Have a shopping list 'on the go.' Write down an item when you run out of it.

After shopping think about how long each item will last - and use the most perishable food first.

When you are having a quieter day, try to prepare parts of a meal for the next day. For example, a tomato-mince sauce can be served with pasta on Monday and as a Shepherd's Pie on Tuesday.

Spare time during the day can also be a time to partly prepare the evening meal e.g. mince dishes, casseroles, quiches. Planning can help.

Leftover meat from roast chicken can be used in a stir-fry next day, or in school lunches.

If you have a freezer, try to cook in bulk and freeze meals and baking for busy times.

Preparing food yourself is usually cheaper than buying pre-prepared meals, but sometimes you don't have the time or energy to prepare a meal.

Check out the Takeway Section (Page 81) for ideas about cheaper takeaways and supermarket 'fast foods.'

Plan the evening meals for the next week and check the ingredients you need.

Include some ingredients to make school lunches and breakfasts.

Include older children in menu planning, perhaps giving them one night a week where they choose the meal and prepare it.

## Make a Plan

# Menu

for a week

## Breakfasts

Cereal, milk and fruit

Weekend treat - pancakes  
(with home-made syrup)



## Lunches

*Thursday*  
grated carrot, crunchy peanut butter  
sandwiches

*Friday*  
egg filled rolls

*Saturday*  
cheese and ham toasties

*Sunday*  
scrambled eggs on toast

*Monday*  
cheese & pineapple sandwiches  
(use left-over crushed pineapple from  
Saturday's pizza)

*Tuesday*  
tuna & celery sandwiches

*Wednesday*  
marmite and cheese sandwiches

## Desserts/treats

Thursday - fresh fruit and yoghurt

Friday - fresh fruit and yoghurt

Saturday - ice-cream in a cone

Sunday - apple crumble

Monday - custard

Tuesday - canned fruit

Wednesday - Weetbix square



# Suggested menu plan for a week

# Dinners

## *Thursday*

Fish pie and coleslaw (*cook extra eggs to use for Friday lunch*).

## *Friday*

Supermarket fast food - bread wraps, beans, grated carrot, chopped celery.

## *Saturday*

Hawaiian Pizza - scone dough, ham, crushed pineapple, onion (*save leftover pineapple for Monday lunch*).

*Sunday* - roast chicken, baked kumara, baked potatoes, cauliflower (*save some chicken for Monday night*).

## *Monday*

chicken stir-fry with rice, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower.

## *Tuesday*

Spaghetti Bolognaise with pasta (make extra mince sauce for Wednesday night), frozen veges.

## *Wednesday*

Shepherd's Pie - bolognaise sauce, can of beans, frozen veges, mashed potato. (Make the Weetbix Square in the hot oven for dessert and snacks.)

Suggested menu plan for a week

# The Shopping List

(the ingredients you will need to buy to make the week's recipes)



- Fresh fish (choose the cheapest)
- Ham
- Frozen whole chicken
- Mince
- Eggs
- Cheese
- Cottage cheese
- Bread wraps
- Canned kidney beans
- Baked beans
- Tin crushed pineapple
- Weetbix
- Pasta
- Pasta sauce
- Bread

- Rolls
- Carrots
- Onions
- Celery
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Potatoes
- Kumara
- Fruit
- Weetbix
- Fruit
- Small tin of Tuna
- Yoghurt (large pottle)
- Milk
- Frozen vegetables

## Check your cupboards to make sure you have:

- Peanut butter
- Marmite or vegemite
  - Rolled oats
    - Flour
- Custard powder
  - Sugar
  - Rice
- Dried fruit
- Ice cream cones
  - Ice cream
  - Margarine

# Menus for a week

(Continued)

*Supermarkets have a huge range of food, but check out other shops for bargains too. There are often good meat specials from butchers, cheaper bread from bakeries, cheap sauces, spices and noodles from Asian food shops and cheaper specials from retailers who sell in bulk.*

## Shopping Tips

- Use foods before their 'use-by' date
- Check newspapers and flyers for specials
- Buy in bulk if you have storage space
- Buy supermarket brands (house brands) as they are often cheaper
- Only buy specials that you need
- Stick to your shopping list
- Always start with the basics before buying extras
- Buy the amount you need. Pre-packed meat, fruit and vegetables may mean you buy more than you need
- Look out for end-of-the day bargains but make sure you can use them while they are still okay

## Surviving the aisles with littlies

- Having a friend look after the children while you shop may make shopping less stressful
- When taking the children, feed them first and don't go when they are tired
- Involve the children when doing the shopping list. Give them options, e.g. a choice of 3 cereals
- Talk about a special food you will buy at the supermarket. This does not have to be unhealthy or expensive, e.g. a fruit bun or a pottle of dairy food for dessert. Make it clear there won't be any other treats
- Let them help choose the food you need, not the food they want
- Don't give into their demands, otherwise they will expect a treat each time
- Take a small toy a child can play with
- Avoid the sweets aisle
- Let them help put the groceries onto the counter
- Keep calm – most people who have shopped with children understand the difficulties

# The art of shopping

*Most of the non-perishable (long lasting) ingredients in the recipes found in this booklet are in the list on this page. Try to stock up on a few items each time you shop. Sauces, spices and herbs are great to add flavour. Store these in air-tight labelled containers, like recycled jam jars or ice cream containers.*

## In the Pantry

- Rice
- Pasta
- Flour \*
- Rolled oats
- Cornflour
- Baking powder
- Baking soda
- Salt - iodised
- Sugar
- Custard powder
- Vanilla essence
- Spices: cinnamon, mixed spice, ginger, curry powder, paprika, chilli powder, black pepper
- Herbs: mixed herbs
- Vinegar
- Soy Sauce
- Tomato Sauce
- Worcestershire sauce
- Cooking oil
- Tinned food: fish, baked beans, pasta sauce, tomatoes, corn, soup
- Milk powder
- Sultanas or raisins
- Potatoes
- Onions

## In the Fridge

- Eggs
- Cheese
- Milk

### \* **When using flour**

Try to use a mixture of white flour and wholemeal flour. Some recipes use self-raising flour because it helps products to rise. Instead you can use 2 teaspoons of baking powder for every 1 cup of flour in the recipe.

# Keeping the cupboard stocked

# Must haves and maybes

*A few kitchen items are used all the time - while others are useful but not essential.*

## MUST HAVES

Fridge  
Toaster  
Kettle  
Sharp knives  
*(1 small, 1 large, 1 bread knife (serrated edge))*  
Chopping board  
Pots with lids - 1 small, 1 large  
Frypan or wok  
Grater  
Vegetable peeler  
Sieve or colander  
Fish slice, wooden spoon, spatula (rubber scraper)  
Mixing bowls - 1 small, 1 large  
*(a saucepan can be used as a mixing bowl)*  
Cake tin  
Oven tray  
Roasting dish  
Oven-proof dish with a lid (e.g. Pyrex dish)



## MAYBES

Wok  
Food processor  
Egg beater/whisk  
Tongs  
Muffin tray  
Rolling pin (a tall jar or milk bottle can be used)  
Potato masher (a fork can be used)  
Lemon squeezer (or squeeze through a sieve)  
Freezer  
Yoghurt-maker (after making 10 yoghurt sachets you will save money)  
Microwave  
Steamer  
Cheese-toastie machine for quick meals  
Measuring cups and spoons

# Kitchen equipment

## Substitutes

<b>If a recipe asks for:</b>	<b>Use this instead:</b>
Beef stock	Instant coffee
Baking powder (1 teaspoon)	¼ teaspoon baking soda + ½ teaspoon cream of tartar
Butter	Margarine or oil
Chocolate finely grated (30g)	3 tablespoons cocoa + 1 tablespoon margarine
Cornflour (1 tablespoon)	2 tablespoons flour
Cream	Reduced-fat cream, evaporated skim milk, natural yoghurt
Fresh breadcrumbs	Dried breadcrumbs
Fresh tomatoes	Canned Tomatoes
Honey	Jam, sugar or golden syrup
Mayonnaise	Natural yoghurt
Milk	Milk powder and water
Olive oil	Any other vegetable oil, e.g. soy, salad oil, canola oil
Self-raising flour	1 cup flour + 2 teaspoons baking powder
Stock cube	Vegetable cooking water, marmite/vegemite
Tomato puree or paste	Tomato sauce



Recipe substitutes

Food poisoning is caused by bacteria. They like moist, warm conditions.

- Reheat food only once and until it is piping hot right through to the middle.
- Defrost foods in the fridge, not on the bench-top.
- Keep raw and cooked foods separate in the fridge.
- Store raw meat in the bottom of the fridge well-wrapped.
- When shopping, put chilled products in a chilly bin if you are not going straight home.
- Clean dishcloths and tea towels regularly.
- Remember to use frozen food. Label with the date.
- Don't leave any food in the freezer for more than one year. Use meat sooner.

- Wash hands well and dry them before handling food, and between preparing raw and cooked foods.
- Clean knives and chopping boards in hot, soapy water after preparing meat, fish or chicken.
- Cook minced meat, sausages and poultry until juices run clear, not pink.
- Do not put cooked meat back on the same plate that held the raw meat.
- Cover and cool leftover foods as quickly as possible. Only store cooked food for two days before reheating.

## Food safety tips

Check out the nutrition information on packaged food.

### EXAMPLE: Apricot Muesli Bar

#### NUTRITION INFORMATION

Servings per package: 8

Servings per size: 32.5g

#### Ingredients:

Cereal (rolled oats, oat bran), glucose, fruit (Apricot), puffed rice, vegetable oil, white sugar, brown sugar, honey, flavouring (apricot), salt. May contain traces of peanuts or other nuts.

	Quantity per 32g Serving	Quantity per 100g
Energy (Calories)	472kJ 110 Cal	1416kJ 330 Cal
Protein	1.9g	2.7g
Fat - total	3.0g	9.0g
Fat - Saturated <b>(Saturated Fat is unhealthy)</b>	1.5g	4.5g
Carbohydrate	20.5g	61.5g
Sugars	7.0g	21.0g
Sodium <b>(Salt contains sodium)</b>	20mg	60mg
Fibre	1.5g	4.5g

### Nutrition Information Panel

Use the 10/10/6 rule shown below to make a healthier choice.

#### **Best choices per 100g are:**

- Less than 10 grams fat
- Less than 10-15 grams sugar
- More than 6 grams fibre

# Reading food labels

# Recipes

Breakfasts

*Eating breakfast gives you energy for the day. It helps children learn and adults work better. People who don't eat breakfast often get the mid-morning munchies – usually choosing less healthy foods to fill up on. Cereal is the best breakfast. Cereals fortified with iron are good. The milk on the cereal provides calcium. Including fruit helps absorb the iron in the cereal.*

**Choose a cereal high in fibre. Fibre is found only in plant foods. Fibre is good for preventing constipation. It is good for heart health, diabetes and some cancers. Cereals higher in fibre will fill you up for longer. Pre-schoolers don't need a very high fibre cereal.**

*Some cereals are very high in sugar, expensive and not very filling. Save these for an occasional treat. Weetbix is the best everyday choice for all the family. Look for cereals with added iron.*

	<b>Serving Size</b> (big eaters will eat 2 serves)	<b>Amount of fibre per serve</b>	<b>Amount of sugar per serve</b>
Weetbix	2 biscuits	3.3 grams	0.8 grams
Porridge	1/2 cup rolled oats	3.6 grams	0.4 grams
Cornflakes	30 grams (1 cup)	0.3 grams	2 grams
Ricebubbles	30 grams (1 cup)	0.5 grams	2.6 grams
Crunchy Nut Cornflakes	30 grams (1 cup)	0.3 grams	9.6 grams
Nutrigrain	30 grams (1 cup)	0.8 grams	9.6 grams



# Breakfast

## Stove-top Porridge

Serves 2

1 cup rolled oats  
½ cup cold water or milk  
2 cups boiling water  
Iodised salt (optional)

Mix rolled oats with cold water or milk in a saucepan. Stir in boiling water and salt if used. Bring to the boil and cook for 1 minute, stirring occasionally.

## Microwave Porridge

Serves 2

1 cup rolled oats  
2 ½ cups hot water or milk  
Iodised salt (optional)

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl (to prevent it spilling over while cooking). Cook uncovered on medium power for 1½ minutes. Stir and return for 1 minute.

### **Toppings:**

Instead of sugar try wheat-germ, chopped fresh or canned fruit, sultanas, chopped dates or yoghurt.

### **Hints:**

Mix ingredients together the night before and leave to stand (use cold water or milk). This saves time in the morning and improves the porridge.

For a creamier porridge, use more milk and less water.



# Breakfast

## Home-made Muesli

Most of these ingredients are in the bakery section of the supermarket or can be bought in the bulk bins. Experiment with other grains, nuts and dried fruit.

- 4 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup rice flakes
- 1 cup wheatgerm
- 1 cup bran
- 1 cup seeds/nuts (try sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, chopped peanuts)
- 1 cup dried fruit (try sultanas, chopped dried apricots, chopped dates)

Mix first five ingredients in a roasting dish.  
Toast in the oven for 10 – 20 minutes.  
When cool add dried fruit.  
Store in an airtight container.



# Breakfast

## Weekend Treats

### Pancakes

1 cup self-raising flour  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1 egg  
3/4 cup trim milk

Sift flour and salt into a bowl. Add egg and mix to combine. Gradually beat in milk, mixing to a smooth batter. For lighter pancakes, chill for 1 hour. Heat a lightly greased frypan using oil, or margarine. When the pancake begins to bubble, flip it over and cook the other side till golden.

Serve with honey, jam, golden syrup. *For a healthier topping squeeze a lemon over, or chopped fruit and yoghurt.*

### Home-made Maple Syrup

1 cup brown sugar  
1/4 cup water  
1 teaspoon vanilla essence

Simmer sugar and water in a saucepan until sugar dissolves. Add vanilla essence and cool.



### French Toast

This is a good way to use up stale bread.

2 eggs  
300 ml trim milk  
thick sliced bread

Whisk together the eggs and milk. Melt margarine, or oil in a frypan. Place each piece of bread in the egg mix and soak each side. Carefully lift out and fry each side until brown

### Toast Toppings

Poached eggs  
Tomatoes  
Baked beans'  
Mashed banana  
Creamed corn

*Or see pancake recipe for topping ideas.*



## Breakfast

# Recipes

School lunches



*School lunches can feel like a chore but they are important. Lunch provides about one-third of the nutrients a child needs. Making lunch is a lot cheaper than buying it. Try to save bought lunches for treats or very busy days.*

*Encourage your child to eat their lunch by making it easy to eat, keeping it fresh and getting them involved. Variety is good, but don't worry if they want the same thing every day – as long as it is healthy.*

### The Lunch Box

Lunch boxes have a hard life – the journey to school, then sitting around for hours in a bag or a locker. Choose a sturdy lunchbox. In the summer keep the lunchbox cool by using frozen bread, adding an ice-pack (make your own ice and put in a leak-proof plastic bag) or having a frozen drink bottle in the lunchbox. Package food in bread bags and plastic or washable pottles.

# School lunches

## Sandwiches

A good lunch should have a bread base (or rice or pasta), some protein and fruit or vegetables.

Bread provides fibre, B vitamins and some minerals. Choose whole-grain or wholemeal breads for everyone in the family except infants and toddlers.

## Spreads

Try sandwiches without margarine or butter. There is no need if you have a soft spread like peanut butter, cottage cheese or honey or avocado, and it saves money.

If you do need a spread, any margarine is a better choice than butter. Butter is high in saturated fat, which is a risk for heart disease. Margarine is high in the good fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated).

## The Fillings

- Marmite, vegemite, peanut butter
- Ham, left-over cold meats, tinned fish, salami, luncheon sausage, cheese, egg, hummus
- Lettuce, beansprouts, cucumber, celery
- Add flavour with relish, tomato sauce, mustard or mayonnaise
- Limit high sugar fillings like honey, jam, nutella to twice a week



## Drinks

**Fill water bottles the night before and keep in the fridge or freezer.  
Discourage juice or cordial.  
Water is free and best for their teeth.**

## Sandwich Ideas

- Grated cheese, crushed pineapple
- Cottage cheese, chopped nuts, pinch of curry powder, sprouts
- Grated carrot, crunchy peanut butter
- Creamed corn, chopped celery
- Mashed egg with a little yoghurt
- Cottage cheese, finely chopped dates
- Mashed banana with a squeeze of lemon juice
- Peanut butter with honey
- Sardines with spring onions
- Salmon with low-fat mayonnaise

## The Base

Sliced sandwich bread is the cheapest option. Try different brands for variety, or cutting the sandwich in different ways (triangle, squares, long & thin), or roll-ups.

# School lunches

## Not sandwiches

Some children don't like sandwiches or want lunchbox variety. Try:

- Left-over dinner (remember a fork or spoon)
- Rice, pasta or cold potatoes (cut in cubes) mixed with grated cheese, ham or salad vegetables.
- Scones, pikelets
- Crackers and cheese
- Cheese toasties, cheese roll-ups

## Extras

Extras need to be as healthy as the rest of the lunch.

- Cheese slices, boiled egg, meat slice, sausage
- Popcorn, nuts (school-age children)
- Dried fruit (not every day as it sticks to children's teeth)
- Fruit bread or buns
- Rice crackers and cheese
- Yoghurt, dairy food
- Muffins, home-made baking.

## Packaged Food

There is a huge range of snack food in packages but they can be expensive.

Have a range of pottles or bags at home to fill yourself and save money.

Encourage the children to bring the empty containers home to re-use.

Clever advertisers target children. They know constant nagging for something usually makes the parent give in.

Be strong. Save treat foods for special occasions. If there are chips and muesli bars every day, they are no longer special.

## Fruit/Vegetables

Add a small piece of fruit or cut into bite-sized pieces. Cut fruit like oranges almost into quarters so it is whole, but easy to eat.

Sliced carrot sticks, cucumber, celery sticks are also great for school lunches.



# School lunches

## Dairy food or Yoghurt?

Dairy food and yoghurt are both great choices. They are both low in fat and a good source of calcium.

Dairy food is made from milk thickened with starch and vegetable gums.

Yoghurt is made from milk thickened by a yoghurt culture. Flavoured yoghurt and dairy food have added sugar.

Natural yoghurt (plain) has no added sugar.



Give older children responsibility for choosing when they have packaged foods. For example buy one box of meusli bars per week and divide between the children. Let them decide when they have their ration. Don't buy anymore till the following week.

Many snack bars are high in sticky sugars that can cause tooth decay.

Roll-ups and fruit leathers are made of real fruit that is dried and is very sticky. Eat with plenty of water or milk, or clean teeth afterwards.

## Packaging your own snacks

*It is cheaper to buy food in bulk than lots of small packages – you pay more for the packaging.*

*Often young children throw away half-full yoghurt pottles or half a meusli bar, so packaging your own means you control the amount.*

## Home-made lunches can be really cheap

(Examples)

- Egg (half a mashed egg) and sprout sandwich = 50c
- Home-made fruit muffin = 25c
- Yoghurt – buy 1kg and put in small pottles = 60c
- Orange – in season = 30c

# School lunches

# Recipes

## Snacks

## Ideas for after-school snacks

- Toast, sandwiches, fruit bread
- Popcorn (see quick snacks)
- Pikelets, muffins, scones (see Home Baking, page 36)
- Cereal and milk
- Weetbix with spread
- Fruit
- Cheese and crackers
- The food not eaten in the lunch-box (if it looks ok to eat)

Some little children are very tired by the family meal-time so an afternoon snack may be more like dinner.

There is nothing wrong with scrambled egg, baked beans or a cheese toastie at 3.30pm.



*Treat foods and snack foods are not the same. Foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar are best left for occasional treats - including meusli bars, sweets, fruit leathers, roll-ups, potato chips, chocolates, sweet biscuits, fast-foods and fizzy drinks.*

*Treats like strawberries (in season), a fresh pineapple or a Boston bun can be cheaper than a fizzy drink or iceblock for each child.*

# Snacks

## Going Out

Take 5 minutes to gather snacks before going out with children. Even if they have just eaten it doesn't take long for them to get their appetites back. Being caught with hungry children and no food can result in everyone getting grumpy or buying expensive food. Grab some fruit, a packet of crackers, the raisin container, a loaf of bread, a knife and the peanut butter. Take water bottles with water (not sweet drinks). If they are thirsty enough they will drink the water.

## Portion Sizes

Portion sizes have got much bigger. We can buy 'bumper' packs or 'up-size' for little extra cost. This makes us eat larger portions. The 'normal' serving is often bigger too.

For example:

- 1 large chocolate chip cookie = 8 standard biscuits
- 1 large serve French Fries = 3 small servings
- 1 café style muffin = 2 ½ standard muffins

## Instant Noodles

Some quick-to-cook noodles are not as healthy as other noodles and pasta.

They are sometimes very high in salt (especially the flavour sachet).

They are often fried in oil before being packaged. Each noodle cake can have

around 3 teaspoons of fat and they are low in nutrients. Keep them as an occasional snack. Make them healthier by adding frozen veggies.

Other dried noodles are as quick and easy to cook. Check the ingredient list, if vegetable oil is not listed it will be a better choice.

# Snacks

## Rewards

Try rewards that don't involve food. Younger children need a small reward often, like a special sticker, listening to a CD of their choice, or an extra story before sleep. Older children may like to work towards a larger reward like a special outing, special time with a parent (without sisters or brothers), a sleep-over, or a special toy.

Encourage other people who look after your children to follow your messages. Parents, an after-school care centre, grandparents and other care-givers need to give the same messages. A treat once a week at grandparents is okay, but if they care for your children most days they need to serve healthy snacks too.

## Snacking Survival

Parenting can be hard work. Remember – you decide what's on the menu and your children decide how much they want to eat. Don't get caught in the trap of offering lots of different foods when the first choice is refused. Giving in to constant nagging may seem like the easy way out. Be in control of food choices. If you have lots of tempting snacks in the cupboard, children will keep nagging. Have firm rules, keep treat foods up high (usually tempting for parents too), to avoid children sneaking food or battles. Have some food that they can help themselves to without asking, for example fruit, raisins or bread.



# Snacks

# Recipes

Home baking & treats

## Scones

Scones are versatile. They can be served for morning tea, with soup as a meal, or in place of bread at lunchtime.

3 cups self-raising flour  
¼ teaspoon iodised salt  
75g (5 tablespoons) margarine  
1¾ cups milk

Sift flour and salt into a bowl.  
Rub margarine into the flour till it looks like fine breadcrumbs.

Add milk and quickly mix with a knife to a soft dough. Add a little more milk if too dry.

Knead a few times. Roll or pat the dough to 2cm thick on a floured bench.

Cut into 14-16 squares. Place on a floured oven tray.

Bake at 200°C in the middle of the oven for about ten minutes or until brown.

### Variations:

Add ½ cup grated cheese, ½ cup sultanas or ½ cup chopped dates.

*Once every house always had fresh baking in the tins. Times have changed because biscuits and other baked goods are cheap to buy now. But baking at home is fun and you can involve the children. It can be healthier and cheaper and everyone loves the aroma of goodies fresh out of the oven.*

## Pikelets

1 cup self-raising flour  
2 tablespoons sugar  
1 egg  
½ cup low-fat milk

Sift flour stir in sugar.

Beat the egg, add the milk. Stir into the flour mixture. Add more milk if the mixture is too stiff, or more flour if it is too thin.

Heat the frying pan with a little margarine or oil. Drop some mixture off the tip of a spoon. When the top starts to bubble, turn it over with a fish slice. Cook until both sides are golden brown.

### Variations:

Add ½ a mashed banana or some grated apple.



# Home baking

## ANZAC Biscuits

¼ cup margarine  
1 tablespoon golden syrup  
1 cup wholemeal flour  
1 cup rolled oats  
1 egg, lightly beaten  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
¼ cup brown sugar  
½ cup coconut

Melt margarine and golden syrup.  
Mix all ingredients together.  
Roll spoonfuls of the mixture  
into balls and place on a lightly  
greased oven tray. Flatten.  
Bake at 180°C for 15-20 minutes  
or until golden brown. Makes 2  
dozen.

### Variation:

For a healthier version, replace  
coconut with sultanas.

## Weetbix Slice

2 crushed Weetbix  
½ cup raw sugar (or brown)  
1 cup rolled oats  
1 cup wholemeal flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 cup low-fat milk  
1 cup dried fruit, e.g. raisins, roughly  
chopped apricots  
1 cup seeds or chopped nuts,  
e.g. pumpkin, sunflower, walnuts

Mix all the ingredients together.  
Press into a lightly greased 18x28cm  
sponge roll tin.  
Bake at 180°C for 25-30 minutes or  
until firm to touch.  
Cut when cold. Makes 24 pieces.

### Variation:

For a treat, replace 1/3 cup of nuts  
with chocolate chips.



# Home baking

## Sultana Loaf

1 cup hot water  
3/4 cup sugar  
3/4 cup sultanas  
25g margarine or oil  
1 ½ cups flour (wholemeal and/or white)  
1 teaspoon mixed spice  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon iodised salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon

Place water, sugar, sultanas, mixed fruit and margarine or oil in a medium-sized saucepan.

Bring to the boil, stirring occasionally, then cook on a low heat (uncovered) for 5 minutes.

Take off the stove and allow to cool. Sift remaining ingredients into cooled fruit mixture. Stir only enough to blend ingredients, as over-mixing causes toughening. Put into a cake or loaf tin. Bake at 180°C for 45-60 minutes.

## Muffins

1 cup self-raising flour  
1 cup bran or wheat-germ  
1 teaspoon spice  
1/3 cup sugar  
1/2 cup dried fruit, nuts or seeds  
1/4 cup oil (optional)  
1 egg, roughly beaten  
1/2 cup – 1 cup low-fat milk  
1 cup grated or finely chopped fruit or vegetable

Sift flour and mix in other dry ingredients. Carefully mix in grated fruit, oil, egg, and milk as required. Avoid overmixing. Spoon into muffin trays. Bake at 180°C for about 20 minutes.



## Variations:

**Carrot:** grated carrot, walnuts, nutmeg and add 1 tablespoon golden syrup

**Pear:** pear, dates (soak in a little boiling water), ginger

**Courgette:** courgette, add 2 tablespoons cocoa powder

**Green coconut:** courgette and long-thread coconut

**Apple:** finely chopped apple, 1/3 cup chocolate chips

**Bananas:** used mashed over-ripe bananas

# Home baking

## Smoothies & Iceblocks

Smoothies are a snack on their own. They are also good for non-breakfast eaters.

It helps if you have a food processor or milkshake maker.

### Fruit Smoothie

1 cup milk  
2 tablespoons milk powder (optional)  
1 piece soft fruit e.g. banana, apricot, kiwifruit, berries  
3-4 cubes ice  
Blend everything until smooth and frothy.

#### Variations:

- Add ¼ cup yoghurt for a thick smoothie.
- Add ½ cup fruit juice



## Water is the best drink

Water is free, always available and healthy. Make it more exciting by adding ice-cubes, a lemon slice or mint. Milk is a good choice. Serve after or between meals. If children only like flavoured milk, use half flavoured and half plain milk. Make flavoured milk at home with milo or quik. Get children used to 1 teaspoon per glass (saves money and less sugar). Keep juice, cordial and fizzy drinks for weekend or birthday treats. Add water to juice and cordial. Tea and coffee have tannin which stops children getting iron from food. 'Smart drinks' like Red Bull are high in sugar and caffeine – and very expensive.

## Chocolate Milk Ice-Blocks

Make your own ice-blocks at home. Plastic ice-block moulds with sticks are cheap to buy. The ice-blocks are quite small – usually 1 ½ cups liquid is enough to fill the tray.

#### Fill with:

- Flavoured milk
- A couple of teaspoons of milo mixed into milk
- Fruit juice
- Water with a squeeze of lemon juice and a teaspoon of sugar.
- Mix together equal amounts of orange juice and milk

# Drinks

# Hints

for healthy meals

## Base main meals around...

### Protein food

e.g. meat, fish, chicken, beans, nuts and seeds. The meat should cover no more than one-third of your plate.

### Vegetables

### Carbohydrates

to fill up hungry tummies, e.g. potato, kumara, pumpkin, rice, pasta



## Enjoying Mealtimes

- Get into a routine with mealtimes.
- Offer small servings of familiar food and gradually introduce new foods.
- If a child refuses a new food, offer it a few more times. Children can be very cautious.
- Let your child decide when they are full. They are the best judge.
- Encourage children to feed themselves. Finger foods help.
- Time meals so your child is not too tired. Young children need an early dinner, or serve their main meal earlier in the day.
- Mealtimes are social times too. When you can, eat the evening meal together.
- Turn off the television – hear your family news instead.
- Don't offer lots of snack foods between meals or after meals.
- Drinking lots of juice or milk between meals can make a child too full for dinner.

# Dinner Tips

## Flavouring Food

*A little flavour can go a long way. Try a little bit first, too much can overpower the food.*

- **Spices:**

cheap to buy, store in an air-tight packet in the cupboard.

- **Fresh herbs:**

many people are happy to give away fresh herbs.

- **Lemon peel** (zest) and lemon juice

- **Sauces**

- **Vegemite and marmite**

adds flavour to stocks, casseroles and sauces.



## Fantastic Apples

Apples are plentiful and often very cheap. They can be added into all sorts of dishes:

*Mustard and apple coleslaw*

*Apple Salad*

*Muffins*

*Instead of carrot in cake*

*Pork and Granny Smith casserole*

*Kumara, apple and chicken*

*casserole*

*Sausage and baked bean hash*

*Apple crumble*

*Stewed apples for breakfast*



## Which oil to use

There is a huge range of oils on the market. They are high in monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fat. These are the good fats for your heart.

- Try soybean, sunflower, canola, grapeseed.
- Olive oil is a good choice but expensive. If a recipe has olive oil, another oil can be used.
- Butter, lard, dripping and animal fats are high in saturated fat. These are not good for your heart and should be used as little as possible.



# Dinner Tips

## Cooking Pasta

Pasta is a favourite food among families. It is quick and easy to cook. Any shape or type of pasta is a good choice. Packets are usually 375g or 500g. A large family will probably need a 500g packet of pasta. A smaller family will need half of the packet.

Bring a large pot of water to the boil.

Adding 1 tablespoon oil helps the pasta stop sticking together, but is not essential.

Slowly add the pasta to the boiling water.

Do not cover the saucepan.

Cook for about 10-12 minutes with the water still boiling.

Stir occasionally to stop sticking.

Drain well.

*Pasta and rice are cheap, high in carbohydrates and low in fat. They have B vitamins and some minerals. Serve generous amounts to fill hungry tummies.*



## Cooking Rice

There are lots of different types of rice, suitable for different types of rice dishes. Generally any rice will be fine. If you're serving rice with a meal long-grain is best. If you are making a risotto, medium-grain is best.

For a small family, use 1 cup uncooked rice. A large family will need 2 cups. There are different ways of cooking rice. Rinse the rice in cold water first. Brown rice will take longer to cook.



# Pasta and Rice

There's more than one way to cook up rice!

### Absorption Method

Bring 1 cup rice and 2 cups water to the boil. Keep the lid on. Turn the element off and leave for 20 minutes. The rice will cook by itself. Serve.

### Rapid Boil

Bring 6 cups of water to the boil. Stir in one cup of rice. Boil rapidly, uncovered for 15 minutes. Drain.

### Microwave

Put 1 cup of rice in a dish with 2 ¼ cups of boiling water. Cover and cook on medium power for 6 minutes. Take out, stir then put back in for another 6 minutes. Watch it doesn't boil over. Stand for 5 minutes before serving.



### Using leftover pasta or rice

Store cooked rice tightly covered in the fridge for up to two days. Leftover pasta or rice can be used in lots of different ways:

- Heat with a little grated cheese.
- Make a salad with salad vegetables and a dressing.
- Put in a lunch box with grated cheese, sliced tomato and chopped ham.
- Add to a soup.
- Cook extra rice and use for dinner the next night in fried rice or kedgeree

## Pasta and Rice

*Red meat is the best source of iron. Other good sources are chicken, fish and mussels. Iron found in plant foods and eggs is not absorbed by the body as well. Good sources include breakfast cereals with added iron, dark-green vegetables, wholemeal bread, dried fruit, baked beans, dried beans, tofu.*

- Choose lean meat, or trim extra fat off.
- Allow about 120g uncooked meat per person, or 100g cooked meat. (This may not seem a lot, but it is all that is needed for most people).
- Watch out for fatty cuts of meat. By the time you've trimmed off the fat, you could have lost any savings you might have made.
- Place meat on a rack when roasting, so that fat can drain away.
- Remove the skin from chicken before cooking to avoid added fat.
- Scoop the fat off the top of casseroles or mince. This is easier to do when cool.
- Heat canned corned beef and pour off the fat.
- Meats that are high in fat include sausages, luncheon, salami, saveloys, pate, rolled roast, brisket, pork bones, fatty mince, streaky bacon, meat gravy, forequarter cuts, canned corned beef, povi masima.
- Store meat well-covered near the bottom of the fridge. Keep raw meat and cooked meat separate.
- Grill, stew, bake or roast on a rack.

### So what's the big deal about iron?

Iron is essential for brain growth, and to fight infection. Iron deficiency is very common, especially in toddlers and women.

If you or your child feels tired, is sick a lot, has a poor appetite or problems concentrating, ask your doctor to test iron levels.

Foods high in vitamin C help your body absorb iron. Most green, yellow, orange, red or purple fruits and vegetables are high in vitamin C.

## Meat: Getting the most for your money

# Recipes

## Meat Meals

## Spaghetti Bolognese

1 tablespoon oil  
1 large onion  
500g lean beef mince  
¼ cup tomato paste + 400g canned tomatoes (or 1 can/jar pasta sauce)  
1 teaspoon dried basil  
1 teaspoon dried oregano (or 1 table-  
spoon fresh)  
1 ½ cups water  
black pepper  
1 packet of dried spaghetti (or other shapes of pasta)

### Variation:

Top with fresh parsley, add chopped carrots or mushrooms.

- \* Heat oil in a large frying pan or saucepan. Chop the onion. Cook for 5 minutes until soft.
- \* Stir in the mince and brown quickly.
- \* Add tomato paste and tomatoes in juice, breaking up the tomatoes. Stir in herbs or water.
- \* Bring to the boil, reduce heat and simmer for half an hour or until like a thick sauce.
- \* Cook spaghetti using the instructions on the packet. Drain. Serve and top with mince sauce.

## Two meals out of one!

Make extra bolognese sauce, top with mashed potato and bake in the oven for half an hour for dinner the following night.



# Meat meals

## Meat Loaf

*Adding grated vegetables to meat dishes is a good way to get fussy eaters to eat vegetables.*

500g lean mince  
3 slices of bread to crumble  
(or 1 ½ cups fresh breadcrumbs  
or ½ cup rolled oats)  
¼ cup tomato sauce  
1 egg (not essential)  
1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs or  
1 tablespoon fresh herbs  
1 cup grated carrot

- \* Mix all ingredients together.
- \* Press mixture into a loaf tin, or oven-proof dish.
- \* Cook at 180°C for 40-45 minutes, or until juices run clear.

### Variations:

Add other grated or finely chopped vegetables. For extra flavour add 1 teaspoon dry mustard and 2 gloves finely chopped garlic.

*Make a large meat loaf and save some slices for school lunches.*



## Meal in a Dish

2 tablespoons oil  
400g lean mince  
2 cups chopped vegetables, e.g.  
onion, celery, carrot, mushrooms,  
frozen vegetables, pumpkin  
½ teaspoon mixed herbs  
¼ cup tomato paste  
1 ½ cups water  
2 medium potatoes, sliced

- \* Heat the oil in a saucepan. Brown the mince, stirring to break up, add the chopped onions.
- \* Add the tomato paste, herbs, water and vegetables. Pour into an oven dish.
- \* Peel and slice the potatoes and cover over the meat.
- \* Bake for 45 minutes or until potatoes on top are soft and brown.

# Meat meals

## Boil Up

- Choose low-fat meat.  
Trim off fat.
- Boil meat, cool and scrape off fat that sets, or pour off boiling water.
- Refill the pot and heat to boil again.
- Add onions, garlic or herbs for flavour instead of salt.
- Add potatoes and kumara.
- Add puha, watercress, silverbeet, cabbage.

## Eggy Fried Rice

A great way of using up left-overs, or a quick meal for fussy eaters.

3 cups cooked rice (1 cup uncooked rice + 2 cups water)  
2 tablespoons oil  
1 onion chopped  
3 rashers bacon chopped (optional)  
1 cup frozen peas (or other favourite vegetables)  
2-4 eggs beaten  
2 tablespoons soy sauce

Heat oil in a frying pan. Fry bacon and onion. Add peas and rice. Cook for 2 minutes.

Add soy sauce and mix through. Pour eggs onto mixture and stir through until just cooked.

### Variation

Use ham, chopped sausages or salami instead of bacon.



# Meat meals

*Stir-fries are a great way to make a little meat or chicken go a long way. The meat needs to be very thinly-sliced and quickly cooked so it isn't tough. Beef schnitzel, diced chicken, pork pieces, and left-over roast meat can all be used. A wok or a large frying-pan can be used.*

## Beef Stir Fry

300g beef schnitzel, flank skirt, chuck or blade steak  
2 tablespoons oil  
1 clove garlic  
1 onion  
2 tablespoons soy sauce  
2 cups finely chopped/sliced vegetables e.g. carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, bean sprouts, peppers, leeks, mushrooms, celery, silverbeet.  
Noodles or rice

Cut the schnitzel into thin strips. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large pan and quickly cook the meat on both sides until just brown. Remove the meat from the pan.

Finely chop garlic, chop onion. Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in the pan, add garlic and onions. Cook for a couple of minutes then add the other vegetables and soy sauce. Add a little water if the vegetables stick. When the vegetables are cooked and slightly crisp return the meat to the pan and heat through. Serve with noodles or cooked rice.



## Here's a Hint

Tofu is a cheap, easy protein ingredient in a stir-fry.

It is made of soya-beans.

Keep it in a fridge in water and use within a few days.

It doesn't need to be cooked – only heated, so add at the end of cooking.

## Variations:

Try other Asian sauces like Black Bean, Fish Sauce, Oyster Sauce, Sweet Chilli Sauce. Add some fresh ginger.

To improve the flavour of tofu, or the tenderness of the meat, soak (marinate) in a bit of soy sauce for an hour before cooking.

If using left-over meat or tofu, add towards the end of the cooking. Heat left-over meat till very hot.

# Meat meals

*Casseroles are a great way of using cheaper cuts of meat. They can be made during the day and put in the oven mid-afternoon to save cooking during the busy after-school time. A casserole needs a long, slow cooking time. Don't turn the oven up to hurry it up. If you can, make extra and freeze for another meal.*

Try blade, chuck or skirt steak. Also topside, fresh silverside, shank/shin, brisket, spare ribs, oxtail. Good lamb cuts include neck or shoulder chops, leg chops or shanks. Gravy beef needs more trimming and shin beef needs a long cooking time

To bring out the flavour of the meat, chop into cubes and quickly brown in a frying pan or saucepan.

## Beef and Vegetable Stew

500g beef steak  
1 ½ cup water  
1 onion, chopped  
2 carrots, chopped into cubes  
½ cup chopped celery  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

Cut meat into cubes. Brown briefly on both sides in a saucepan or frying pan. Put in a casserole dish. Add water to almost cover. Add the vegetables. Cover and cook at 160°C for 1 ½ to 3 hours till the meat is tender. If you like, thicken with corn-flour or flour mixed to a paste with cold water, in the last half hour of cooking, and season to taste.

### **Stove-top stew:**

Brown meat as above in a heavy-based pan, then add vegetables and liquid. Cover tightly and cook on stove top on a very low heat until tender. Stir occasionally, adding extra liquid if needed.

## Variations

- **Pork and Apple:** Use a similar cut of pork and add chopped apple (Granny Smith is best).
- **Mushroom:** Add sliced mushrooms instead of carrots.
- **Tomato:** Add a can of tomatoes.
- **Kumara:** Add kumara cut into cubes.



# Meat meals

## Braised Lamb Chops with Apples

8 lamb shoulder chops, well trimmed  
2 onions, peeled and quartered  
1 leek, trimmed, washed and sliced  
thickly  
2 apples, cored and sliced thickly  
2 carrots, sliced  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
(or 2 tablespoons fresh oregano)  
2 cups vegetable stock (or water)  
2 tablespoons cornflour  
1 tablespoon golden syrup

Heat a dash of oil in a frying pan and brown the lamb chops well. Transfer to an oven-proof dish.  
Add a dash more oil to the pan and brown the onions, leek and apple slices. Scatter the carrots and oregano over the lamb chops.  
Pour the stock or water over.

Cover and cook at 160°C for 1¼ - 1½ hours or until the lamb chops and vegetables are tender.

Carefully pour the cooking juices into a saucepan, leaving the chops and vegetables in the dish.

Mix the cornflour with enough water to make a smooth paste. Stir into the cooking juices. Cook, stirring over a moderate heat until thickened.

Add the golden syrup and pour back over the chops and vegetables in the dish. Mix well.

Serve with plenty of mashed potatoes.

### Variation

- Use neck, leg chops or shanks.



# Meat meals

## Hamburgers

These are a favourite with children. Home-made hamburgers are cheaper and healthier than takeaway shops.

Choose your pattie, cook and put in the bread. Choose a spread and add some fillings.

### **Pattie options:**

Meat pattie  
Fish pattie  
Grilled bacon  
Cooked chicken  
Lentil pattie (see page 65)

### **Meat Patties**

Have about 100g mince for each burger. Roll mince into a ball with wet hands. Heat oil in a pan. Put pattie in and flatten with a fish slice. Cook on high heat until brown on both sides and in the middle. This should take about 2 minutes each side.

### **Bread options:**

Choose one:  
Hamburger roll  
Sliced toast bread  
French Bread  
Focaccia bread

### **Spread options:**

Tomato sauce  
Mustard  
Chutney  
Mayonnaise



# Meat meals

## “Chickeny” Hints

- A whole chicken is usually cheaper to buy. Chicken pieces do save time. Boneless chicken is expensive but you’re not paying for bones.
- Servings of chicken don’t have to be large. Make sure there is plenty of potatoes, rice or pasta.
- Most of the fat is in the skin. If possible, remove skin before cooking in a casserole, or remove after cooking when roasting or grilling. It is not worth trying to take the skin off chicken wings!
- Chicken needs to be properly cooked. To test, prick with a fork. If the juices run clear, not pink, the chicken is cooked.
- Boiling fowls or roasting fowls are cheaper. They need to be cooked for a long time so they are not tough. Simmer fowl in a large pot, covered in water for about 3 hours.
- Save chicken bones to make stock. (see soup page 77)



*Chicken is often a family favourite. Look for frozen chickens on special and stock up. Left-over chicken can be used in school lunches, on pizzas, in quiche, hamburgers, fried rice and in many other ways.*

## Meat meals

## Chicken Casserole

4 large or 8 small chicken pieces  
4 potatoes  
2 onions  
4 carrots  
chopped celery  
1 ½ cups water  
2 teaspoons instant chicken stock  
(optional)  
1 teaspoon mixed herbs (or 1 table-  
spoon fresh herbs)  
1-2 tablespoons cornflour to thicken

Take the skin off the chicken pieces.  
Cut the potatoes into large pieces.  
Slice the carrots into rounds. Cut the  
onions into chunks.  
Put the vegetables and chicken  
pieces into a casserole dish.  
If using stock, dissolve in the water.  
Pour the water over.  
Sprinkle over the herbs. Cover.  
Bake at 180°C for 1 ½ hours until  
chicken is cooked.

Thicken the casserole by mixing the  
cornflour in a cup with ¼ cup cold  
water. Add this to the casserole near  
the end of cooking.

### Variations:

**Kumara and apple casserole:**  
Use kumara instead of potatoes. Use  
chopped apple instead of  
carrots.

**Rosemary and garlic casserole:**  
Use fresh rosemary instead of mixed  
herbs. Add 2 crushed garlic cloves.

**Apricot casserole:** Add dried  
apricots with other ingredients.

Chicken makes great 'leftovers' food  
for the next day:

- Sandwiches for lunches
- Stir-fry. Tear cooked chicken into  
pieces and add to a stir-fry near the  
end of cooking but make sure the  
chicken is heated well.
- Pasta sauce. Add cooked chicken  
to a pasta sauce. Serve with pasta.



# Meat meals

## Roast Chicken

Roast chicken is popular for special occasions. Make the chicken go further with stuffing and lots of baked potatoes, kumara or pumpkin. Follow the directions on the packet.

A small chicken will only need about 1 ½ hours in an oven at 180°C while a large chicken will need up to 2 ½ hours.

A chicken will cook quicker if it is covered.

### Stuffing

Allow extra time for a stuffed chicken. Double the recipe for a large chicken

¼ cup margarine  
1 tablespoon finely, chopped onion  
2 cups soft breadcrumbs  
fresh pepper  
1 apple, cut into small pieces  
fresh or dried herbs, e.g. parsley, thyme, sage, mixed herbs

Melt margarine in a fry pan, saucepan or in the microwave. Cook onion for a few minutes in the margarine.

Add the other ingredients and mix well.

Stuff into the middle of the chicken.

### Variations:

Add celery, or mushrooms.

## Marinated Chicken Pieces

Marinades add flavour to chicken and other meats.

4 large or 8 small chicken pieces  
2 tablespoon soy sauce  
1 tablespoon honey (or brown sugar)  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
1 teaspoon ground ginger  
(or 1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger)

Remove the skin from the chicken pieces. Combine the other ingredients. Place the marinade and chicken in an oven-proof dish. Marinate for 2 or more hours, or overnight.

Bake at 180°C for 30-40 minutes or until tender. Or, microwave on high for 12-15 minutes.

Spoon the juices over the chicken a few times during cooking.

### Variations

Other ingredients that could be used in the marinade:

- 1 tablespoon oil (sesame oil is best)
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 2 tablespoons sherry or red wine

# Meat meals

# Recipes

## Fish

## Home-made Fish & Chips

500g fish fillets

½ teaspoon vegetable oil

1 cup Weetbix crushed, or breadcrumbs

1 egg

Pat fish fillets dry with paper towels so the crumbs will stick.

Beat egg with 1 tablespoon of water in a shallow plate.

Put crushed Weetbix or breadcrumbs in a shallow plate.

Dip fish in egg, and then in cereal.

Coat both sides.

Bake 10 minutes at 230°C. Thicker fillets may need longer.

Serve with wedges (see vegetable section).

### Variation:

Add 2 tablespoons of sesame seeds and 1 teaspoon ground ginger to the Weetbix.

Add 1 tablespoon soy sauce to the egg mixture.

Canned fish is a cheap way to buy fish. Buy tins of fish in water rather than oil with no added salt. Look for the Heart Tick sign.

Not all fresh fish is expensive.

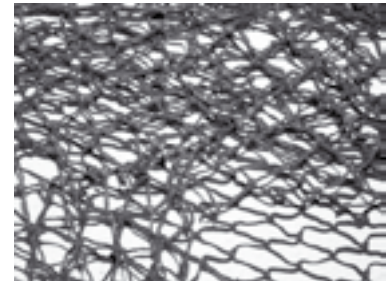
Try the cheaper cuts of fish. The person selling the fish should have some ideas of how to cook it.

Lemon and parsley are great to add flavour to fish and often free. Buy about 100-150g per person.

Try to use fish or seafood on the day you buy it.

Fish is healthy and tasty. Try to eat it at least once a week. The oils in fish (omega 3) are thought to be good for 'mental health', arthritis and preventing heart disease.

Fish is high in protein and low in saturated fat. Fish provides minerals that are low in other foods, e.g. iodine, selenium, phosphorous, vitamin B12.



# Fish

## Fish Pie

1 kg potatoes  
2 tablespoons margarine  
2 tablespoons flour  
1 cup low-fat milk  
450g tin fish (smoked is nice)  
2 eggs, hard boiled  
parsley (if you have it)

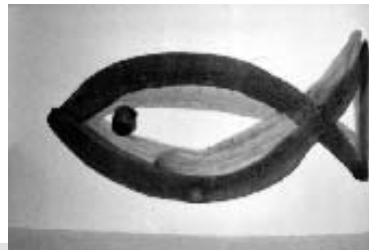
Cook the potatoes and mash.  
Melt margarine in a small  
saucepan, add flour and cook  
for one minute.

Take off the stove and gradually  
stir in the milk. Put back on the  
stove, stir, and cook until thick  
- about five minutes.

Lightly break up the fish.  
Add to the sauce. Add sliced  
hard-boiled eggs and parsley.  
Pile into a large oven dish  
and cover with the mashed  
potatoes.  
Cook in a 180°C oven for  
about 20 minutes or until  
heated through.

### Variations:

- Add other vegetables like frozen peas.
- Use fresh fish. Pie pieces are often very cheap.



# Fish

## Fish Cakes

1 small can smoked fish or tuna  
3 medium potatoes, cooked and  
mashed  
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
1 egg  
1 tablespoon oil

Mix all ingredients except oil.  
Spread a little flour on a board, tip  
mixture out, shape into a rectangle  
and cut into eight pieces. Shape into  
round, flat patties.  
Heat the oil in a pan. Put four cakes  
into the pan. Brown on both sides.

### Variations

Add flavour with black pepper,  
chilli sauce, chopped parsley.  
Dip each patty in beaten egg  
and breadcrumbs before frying.

## Kedgeree

1 can tuna or smoked fish  
2 cups cooked rice  
1 onion, chopped  
2 eggs, hard boiled

Break up fish.  
Slice eggs.  
Heat oil in a pot or frying pan,  
brown the onion.  
Add the rice, fish, and egg.  
Heat and serve.

### Variation:

Use fresh smoked fish,  
or cooked white fish.

## Quick cooking ideas

- Brush fillets with oil. Grill for about 5 minutes on each side. Serve with a squirt of lemon juice and fresh parsley.
- Cover with orange juice and bake in the oven at 180°C for about ½ hour. A little bit of garlic or ginger adds flavour.
- Microwave with a covering of reduced-fat coconut cream on high. Fish cooks very quickly in the microwave.



## Steamed Mussels

Mussels are a reasonable price, or free if you know where to collect them. They are also very high in iron and other minerals.

Put the mussels in a large pot with just enough water to cover the bottom.

Add chopped herbs, lemon slices or garlic if you wish.

Put the lid on and steam the mussels until the shells open easily. Lift out with tongs.

*The liquid makes great stock.*

# Fish & Mussels

# Recipes

Beans and lentils

## Quick beany pasta

- 1 packet of pasta
- 1 440g can of cooked dried beans (not baked beans)
- 1 440g jar of pasta sauce
- 1 finely chopped onion
- 1 carrot chopped into cubes

Drain the beans. Add all ingredients except pasta.

Heat gently in a saucepan until the vegetables are cooked.

Meanwhile cook the pasta. Drain.

Serve pasta with sauce on top.

**Baked beans are a great way of introducing beans. Try canned chilli beans for more oomph.**

*You don't have to serve meat, fish or chicken at every main meal. Try another 'protein food' once a week. This could be eggs, dried, cooked beans (baked beans, chilli beans, kidney beans, chickpeas), lentils, tofu, nuts or seeds.*

### Variations:

- For meat fans, add a little chopped sausage, ham or cooked bacon
- For a tomato-lentil sauce cook  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup lentils in  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups water
- When almost cooked add pasta sauce and vegetables. The lentils replace the beans
- Add other vegetables of your choice
- Top with fresh herbs like parsley, thyme or oregano.



# Beans & lentils

## Handy tips for cooking beans

If you only have a little bit of meat, add some beans to make the meat go further.

Add lentils to a casserole, red kidney beans to mince, or split peas to soup.

Vegetarians don't eat meat, fish or poultry. Some have milk, eggs and milk products.

It is very important that vegetarians eat a 'protein food' every day. They need more than extra vegetables or a slice of cheese.

Vegetarians who don't eat/drink milk products need to have soy-milk or rice milk with added calcium.

Rinse dried beans and lentils with a sieve.

1 cup of uncooked beans makes about 3 cups cooked beans.

Put beans in a saucepan and cover with lots of water.

Leave to soak for at least 8 hours then drain the soaking water.

(Note: Lentils don't need soaking).

Cover with fresh water, bring to the boil and simmer until very soft. The larger the bean the longer the cooking time.

Lentils only need about half an hour to cook while kidney beans need over an hour. Once cooked, drain the cooking water.

Dried beans and lentils are very cheap.

Canned, cooked beans are more expensive but still much cheaper than meat.

Try canned borlotti beans, cannellini beans, red-kidney beans, bean mix or chickpeas.

Lentils don't need soaking and are quicker to cook than beans.



# Beans & lentils

## Chilli beans

Add as much or as little chilli as your family's taste buds allow.

1 ½ cups cooked kidney beans  
1 tablespoon oil  
1 onion, finely chopped  
1 clove garlic, peeled and finely chopped  
1 cup seasonal vegetables finely diced  
e.g. carrot, pepper, pumpkin, cabbage,  
silverbeet, zucchini  
½ teaspoon to 1 teaspoon chilli powder,  
or 1 teaspoon chilli sauce  
400g tin tomatoes  
2 tablespoons tomato puree  
(or tomato sauce)

Heat the oil in a large saucepan, wok or frying pan and cook the onion and garlic for a few minutes.

Add the vegetables, beans and chilli powder. Cook for 2-3 minutes.

Add the tomatoes and the juice and tomato puree.

Cover and simmer for 20-30 minutes. Stir occasionally. OR cook in the microwave for 10-15 minutes on high power.

Serve with:

- Rice
- Nacho chips and grated cheese
- Burritos

### Variation:

For meat-lovers, brown 200g mince with the onion.

## Lentil patties

Lentil patties are not just for hippies! They are easy to make and very cheap.

Serve in burgers, on their own with a tasty sauce or in pita bread.

½ cups dried lentils  
8 slices bread  
1 carrot  
1 onion  
1 large potato, cooked  
1 egg  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire Sauce  
1 teaspoon curry powder  
black pepper  
3 tablespoons sesame seeds (optional)

Cooks lentils until soft. Drain well.

In a food processor, blend all ingredients briefly, adding the lentils and sesame seeds last.

With wet hands, form into patties.

Heat a little oil in a frying pan. Cook on both sides until heated through.

# Beans & lentils

## Sausage and Baked Bean Hash

A good way to introduce beans to the family. For a spicier meal, use a can of chilli beans instead of baked beans.

8 sausages, boiled and sliced  
2 apples, cut into cubes  
2 onions, sliced  
1 teaspoon mixed herbs  
1 can tomatoes  
1 can baked beans  
chilli sauce to taste (optional)

Brown the sliced sausages in a little oil in a frying pan for 5 minutes. Set aside.  
Fry the apples, onions, and mixed herbs in a little oil for 5 minutes.  
Return the sausages to the pan. Stir in the tomatoes and baked beans.

Simmer on a low heat for 5 minutes.  
Add chilli sauce to taste.  
Serve with rice or mashed potatoes.

### Variation:

Place the sausage mixture in a casserole dish and cover with thinly sliced kumara or potato. Brush with a little oil and brown in an oven at 200°C for 15 minutes.

Beans are high in protein. They keep you full for longer as they are high in fibre and carbohydrates. Beans are low in fat and a good source of B vitamins, iron, calcium and zinc.



# Beans & lentils

# Recipes

Vegetable hints & recipes

*Vegetables are versatile, delicious, and of course, nutritious. Make the most of vegetables by buying when in season, storing carefully and varying the way they are served.*

## Vege Hints

Vegetables don't have to be expensive. Frozen and canned vegetables are as good as fresh vegetables. Choose canned vegetables canned in water without salt. If a recipe has an expensive vegetable, look for an alternative, or try a different recipe. Expensive vegetables are usually out-of-season and don't taste as good.

Children often turn their noses up at vegetables. Their taste buds are different to adults, so some vegetables do taste very strong. They also know that adults want them to eat vegetables. Try not to get into battles about vegetables. Find out which varieties your child likes and serve these.

Many young children prefer to munch on raw vegetables like carrot and celery. If your child likes fruit, don't worry about the vegetables – their 5 serves can be mostly fruit (remember half an apple or half a banana is one serve for a child). Add vegetables to main meals instead of serving them by themselves. Try quick quiche, meat loaf, pasta sauces and even muffins (carrot or courgette muffins).



# Vegetables

## Tips for Cooking Healthy Vegetables

Peel the skin lightly or leave on. Lots of nutrients and fibre are in the skin.

Cook as soon as possible after preparing vegetables.

Do not soak.

Cook for a short time.

Salt is not needed. If you do use salt, make sure it is iodised.

Microwave by using a small amount of water. Cook on high in a covered dish.

Remember that microwaved vegetables usually keep cooking for a few minutes afterwards.

Steamer pots save electricity.

Cook one vegetable, or rice, in a saucepan underneath and steam vegetables in the steamer pot on top.

Vegetables are very low in fat. Keep them this way by not adding butter or cooking in fat.

Mash potatoes with low-fat milk instead of butter.

Serve baked potatoes with plain yoghurt instead of sour cream.

Starchy vegetables taste delicious baked, e.g. potatoes, pumpkin, yams, kumara. Scrub, rather than peel the vegetables.

Brush the pan with oil. Bake at 200°C.



## Storing Vegetables

Vegetables are still alive after harvest. Handle vegetables gently.

Use the vegetables that don't last so long first. (Green vegetables don't last as long as carrots, potatoes, etc).

Store most green vegetables, cauliflower, carrots and parsnips in plastic bags in the fridge. Use first.

Store peppers (capsicums) and cucumbers unwrapped in the fridge.

Store potatoes, kumara, uncut pumpkin and onions in a cool, dark, dry place. Don't store in plastic bags. Wrap cut pumpkin in plastic-film and store in the fridge.

Store mushrooms in a paper bag in the fridge.

Store tomatoes at room temperature, not in the fridge.

# Vegetables

*Some vegetables become very cheap when in season. It can be hard thinking of different ways of cooking the same vegetable everyday.*

## Cabbage

Shred cabbage finely. Cook lightly as overcooking ruins the flavour. Use it in:

- Coleslaws (see salad ideas)
  - Stir-fry – Add near the end of cooking
  - Cook in a frying pan with crushed pineapple, raisins and the pineapple juice
- If cooking Chinese cabbage – put a little oil with finely, chopped onion in a frying pan and add soy sauce*

## Cauliflower

Cauliflowers are often large and can last for lots of meals. Cook lightly as overcooking ruins the flavour. Broccoli can be used in the same way.

- Stir-fry: Add to a stir-fry in the middle of cooking
- Raw or lightly cooked with a dip: Cut into small florets
- Microwave
- Add to casseroles or macaroni cheese.
- Top with grated cheese.
- Chop finely and add to a pasta sauce or mince.

## Courgettes/Zucchini

These veges are versatile for savoury dishes and in baking.

- Stir-fry – add near the end of cooking
- Microwave - Cut into rings, cook till tender
- Use in a quick quiche
- Meatloaf or meat-balls - grate
- Muffins and cakes – grate, use in muffins or in place of carrots in carrot cake
- Pasta sauce – chop finely and add to pasta sauce or mince

## Pumpkin

Pumpkins are often cheap in season and store well. Use them in both savoury and sweet dishes, including:

- Baked pumpkin
- Pumpkin soup (see recipe page 79)
- Casserole – cube and add at the beginning of cooking.
- Boil and mash with potatoes.
- Muffins or scones – add about 1 cup mashed pumpkin

## Silverbeet/Spinach

Silverbeet is easy to grow in the garden. Gardeners often give it away. Silverbeet has a strong flavour but is great mixed with other ingredients. Wash well and chop finely.

- Pasta sauce – chop finely and add to pasta sauce
- Quick quiche
- Stir-fry – add near the end of cooking
- Savoury muffins – lightly cook, and add to cheesy muffins
- Casserole – add in the last hour of cooking
- Soup – chop finely and add to a vegetable soup
- Meat-loaf or meat-balls, chop very finely



# Vegetables

## Making Beans Sprout

Bean sprouts are easy to make, and very cheap. Children enjoy watching them grow. Making your own means you always have a fresh vegetable. Try mung beans, brown lentils, alfalfa seeds or chickpeas.

Rinse 2 tablespoons of beans with water.

Place in a wide jar and cover with water.

Leave to soak for 8 hours or overnight.

Drain the water and rinse the beans.

Leave the jar in a sunny place.

Every morning and night rinse and drain the beans.

After about three days the bean sprouts will be ready.

Store in the fridge.

## Baked Potatoes

Baked potatoes can be a meal by themselves. Potatoes are very filling. Also try kumara.

\* Scrub potatoes.

\* Cook in the microwave until soft or in the oven.

\* Cut a cross in the top and split open.

\* Heat the toppings of your choice and add to the baked potato.

### Toppings:

- Spaghetti
- Baked beans
- Creamed Corn
- Pasta sauce
- Cooked onion
- Sliced mushrooms
- Chopped pepper
- Sliced tomatoes
- Grilled bacon
- Chopped ham
- Tinned tuna or salmon
- Grated cheese

## Potato Wedges

Wedges are a great alternative to chips.

\* Cut potatoes or kumara into wedges.

\* Brush with oil and cook in a baking tray till soft at 200°C.

### Variations:

#### Spicy Wedges

1 tablespoon flour

1 tablespoon ground ginger

1 teaspoon Chinese five spice (optional)

Mix in a plastic bag. Add wedges and coat well.

#### Garlic Wedges

4 cloves of garlic

3-4 fresh rosemary sprigs

Put in a baking tray with crushed garlic and rosemary sprigs.

# Vegetables

*A salad does not need to have lettuce. Choose a salad and mix a salad dressing with it. Make your own variations.*

### **Apple Salad**

Mix apples cut into cubes, chopped celery and chopped dates.

### **Carrot Salad**

Mix grated carrots, bean sprouts and raisins (or sultanas).

### **Carrot and Kiwifruit Salad**

Mix grated carrot, sliced kiwifruit and sliced spring onions.

### **Cauliflower and Broccoli Salad**

Cut into bite-size pieces, lightly cook, cool and add a dressing.

### **Celery and Banana Salad**

Mix sliced celery, finely chopped carrots and sliced banana.

### **Citrus Coleslaw**

Mix shredded cabbage, orange segments and spring onions.

### **Red Coleslaw**

Mix shredded red cabbage, crushed pineapple, sliced celery and raisins.

### **Mustard and Apple coleslaw**

Shredded cabbage, unpeeled apple cut into chunks, bean sprouts. Make a dressing of 1 tablespoon prepared mustard, ¼ cup plain yoghurt.

### **Pasta Salad**

Mix cooked pasta (not noodles), cooked mixed vegetables, chopped cucumber and sunflower seeds.

### **Potato Salad**

Cut cooked potato into chunks. Add bean sprouts, finely chopped carrot and spring onions. Try a curry dressing.

## **Salad Toppings**

### **Lemon Dressing**

Mix ¼ cup lemon juice and ¼ cup oil with black pepper.

### **Yoghurt Dressing**

Mix 1 tablespoon lemon juice (or orange juice) with ¼ cup yoghurt. Add finely chopped fresh herbs.

### **Vinagrette**

Mix ¼ cup vinegar and ¼ cup oil.

### **Mayonnaise**

Make mayonnaise go further by mixing with plain yoghurt.

### **Curry dressing**

Add 1 teaspoon curry powder to yoghurt or mayonnaise.

When adding apples to a salad, put them in just before serving.

# Salads

# Recipes

Light meals

## Pizza

Home-made pizza is quick and easy. Young children love rolling the dough and putting on the toppings.

Choose 1 base, 1 spread and a variety of toppings.

Spread tomato spread (from the options below) on the dough.

Sprinkle with some toppings.

Finish with the cheese.

Bake at 200°C for 15 minutes or until golden brown.

### Base options

- Home-made pizza dough
- Ready-made pizza base
- Pita bread
- Scone dough (make a plain dough)

### Tomato spread options

- Tomato paste
- Tomato sauce
- Pasta sauce
- Tin of spaghetti

### Topping options

- Grated cheese
- Drained, crushed pineapple
- Chopped onion
- Sliced mushroom
- Sliced peppers
- Finely diced bacon, ham or salami
- Tinned tuna or salmon
- Sliced tomato



## Home-made pizza base

- 1 tablespoon dry yeast
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- 1 cup warm water
- 3 cups flour (not self-raising)
- 1 tablespoon oil

Mix the yeast, sugar and water. Leave for five minutes. It should start to froth.

Put flour and oil in a large bowl. Add the yeast mixture. Mix well. Add more flour or water if the dough is too sticky or too dry.

Tip mixture onto the bench. Knead and shape into a ball.

Put in the bowl, cover and leave in a warm place for half an hour.

Punch dough down. Roll out quite thin to fit on an oven tray.

Sprinkle flour on the oven tray and lay the rolled dough on the tray.

# Light meals

## Quick Quiche

A great way to use leftovers.

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup low-fat milk
- ½ cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 cup onion
- 1 cup grated cheese
- 1 x 180g tin salmon/tuna

Mix eggs and milk in a bowl.

Add rest of ingredients and mix.

Place into a greased quiche dish or ovenproof dish.

Cook for 30-40 minutes at 200°C or until the liquid stops running.

### Variations

- Cooked potatoes, sliced or cubed pumpkin or kumara
- 5 grated zucchini
- Finely chopped silver-beet
- 1 can corn, drained



## Omelette

Add some extra ingredients or leftovers to turn an omelette into a meal.

- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 2 potatoes, peeled, cut into cubes
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 tablespoon fresh herbs, e.g. parsley, chives, rosemary
- 6 eggs

Beat eggs in a large bowl.

Heat oil in a frying pan. Add potatoes and cook for 5-7 minutes until just cooked. Add a tablespoon of water if the potato sticks.

Add garlic and cook another minute.

Pour over egg mixture.

To cook the top, either cover with a lid, or put the frying pan under the grill for a few minutes.

### Variations

- Add grated cheese, smoked fish, sliced zucchini, mushrooms, corn kernels, silverbeet, ham, leftover sausage.

# Light meals

## Macaroni Cheese

1 ½ cups dried macaroni  
2 tablespoons margarine  
2 tablespoons flour  
1 teaspoon dried mustard (optional)  
1 ½ cups low-fat milk  
1 cup grated cheese  
breadcrumbs (fresh or dried)

Cook the macaroni. Drain.  
Melt margarine in a small saucepan.  
On medium heat, stir in the flour and mustard. Cook for 1 minute.  
Slowly stir in the milk. Stir until the sauce thickens.  
Take off the element. Stir in the grated cheese.  
Put macaroni and cheese sauce in an ovenproof dish. Top with breadcrumbs.  
Bake at 180°C until golden brown.

### Variations

- Add a finely chopped onion or finely chopped bacon to the melted margarine.
- Add cooked cauliflower, broccoli or celery.

## Vegetable Fritters

2 eggs  
½ cup self-raising flour  
¼ cup to ½ cup low-fat milk  
2 cups grated zucchini (see variations)  
oil for frying

Beat the eggs and half of the milk.  
Stir in the flour and zucchini. Add more milk if you need to make a soft batter. If the mixture is too runny, add a little flour.  
Heat some oil to cover the bottom of a frying pan.  
Place a spoonful of mixture in the frying pan for each fritter. When the mixture bubbles on top, turn over with a fish slice or tongs. Cook on the other side until golden brown.

### Variations

- 2 cups grated potato or kumara
- 1 425g can of whole kernel corn, drained

## Toasted Sandwiches

Toasted sandwiches are an ideal snack or quick meal on the run. Some fillings work well cold in the lunchbox. Grated cheese goes further than sliced cheese.

### Bread

Spread on the outside with a thin spread of margarine

- Wholemeal sliced bread
- Hamburger buns
- Sliced French bread

### Fillings

Grated cheese +

- Baked Beans
- Creamed corn
- Crushed pineapple, well drained
- Sliced onion or tomato
- Lean bacon, ham or salami
- Pickle or relish
- Tinned fish

### To Cook

- Use a toasted sandwich maker.
- Cook under the grill using one slice of bread with a topping.
- Heat a frying pan and cook both sides until golden brown.

### For a sweet filling try:

Fruit bread filled with mashed banana and cinnamon.

# Light meals

# Recipes

## Soups

## Vegetable Soup

Use stock, vegetables and other ingredients of your choice.

6 cups stock (add water if you need to)  
3 cups finely chopped vegetables  
½ cup barley, rice, lentils, dried peas or soup mix  
herbs and pepper to taste

Bring the stock to the boil. Add other ingredients.  
Simmer for 1-2 hours until everything is cooked.  
Flavour with herbs and pepper.

*Soups are great comfort meals in the winter. Serve with scones, with toast or with fresh, crusty bread. Garnish soup with fresh herbs, grated cheese, or natural yoghurt. Make croutons by brushing toast bread with oil. Cut into cubes and grill or bake for five minutes.*



## Stock

Stock adds flavour to soup. Commercial stocks and tinned soups are usually very high in salt. Reduce salt by using less stock, a home-made stock or adding other ingredients to a tin of soup.

## Chicken Stock

Chicken bones or leftover roast chicken carcass  
2 stalks celery, including leaves  
2 carrots  
2 unpeeled onions  
3 bay leaves  
6 cups water

Roughly chop the vegetables. Put everything in a large saucepan. Cover and simmer gently for 1 hour. Cool and strain the stock through a sieve. Leave in any chicken meat but throw away the bones and vegetables. Chill the stock overnight. Skim the fat off the top. Stock can be frozen until needed.

## Mussel stock

Save the water used from steaming mussels. Stock can be frozen until needed.



# Soups

## Quick minestrone

1 can tomato soup  
2 cans water  
2 potatoes  
2 carrots  
2 onions  
200g pasta (or leftover cooked pasta)  
fresh parsley

Finely chop the potatoes, carrots and onions. Roughly chop the tomatoes.

Place the soup, tomatoes, juice from tomatoes, water and vegetables in a saucepan. Bring to the boil.

Add pasta and simmer until pasta is cooked. Add more water if needed. Sprinkle on fresh parsley.

### Variation

Add cooked dried beans.

## Pumpkin Soup

1 onion, chopped  
1kg pumpkin  
(about ½ large pumpkin)  
4 cups water or stock  
½ teaspoon nutmeg  
1 teaspoon curry powder

Peel and chop the pumpkin into large pieces. Roughly chop the onion.

Cover the vegetables with water in a large saucepan. Bring to the boil. Simmer for about 20 minutes or until pumpkin is very soft. Puree in a food processor or mash with a potato masher.

### Variations

- **Spicy soup:** Replace spices with 1 teaspoon ground ginger, 1 teaspoon cumin and 1 teaspoon coriander.
- **Carrot and pumpkin:** Use less pumpkin and add a few carrots.
- **Pumpkin and potato:** Add a potato for a thicker soup.
- **Creamy soup:** Add 1 cup of low-fat milk at the end. Heat through but don't boil.

## Fish Chowder

2 tablespoons margarine  
1 onion, finely chopped  
4 potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes  
1 carrot, peeled and cut into cubes  
2 cups water or stock  
2 cups low-fat milk  
black pepper  
300g white fresh fish  
2 tablespoons cornflour or flour  
fresh parsley

Melt margarine in a large pot. Lightly cook onions. Add potatoes, carrots and water or stock. Simmer for 10 minutes or until potato is almost cooked.

Cut fish into cubes. Add to soup. Bring to the boil.

Turn down the heat and add the milk. Do not boil again or the milk will curdle. Mix the cornflour to a paste with a little bit of cold milk. Stir through the soup until it thickens. Do not overcook.

## Mussel chowder

Steam the mussels open in water (see fish page). Save the water and use as stock in the recipe. When cooled enough, remove the mussels from their shells. Chop into small pieces. Add instead of fish.

# Soups

# Recipes

Takeaways

*Takeaways are great for special occasions, on holidays or when we are too busy or tired to cook but they can be hard on the budget and because they are often high in fat and salt, hard on our bodies as well.*

*There are a huge variety of takeaway choices – it's not just the shop down the road. Think of the supermarket as a place for takeaways too. Grabbing a pre-prepared meal that only needs re-heating is just as quick as going to a takeaway shop.*

## Healthier Supermarket Takeaways - examples:

Rotisserie chicken with fresh bread and pre-prepared salad.

Fresh stuffed pasta (tortellini, ravioli) with grated cheese.

Put baked beans or chilli beans with grated cheese and grated carrot into bread wraps.

Pre-prepared pizza.

Many takeaway chains offer 'healthier choices'. Some can be more expensive. Go easy on the added dressings on salads and rolls as these can add a lot of fat.

Limit add-ons and choose smaller portions. Drinks add a lot of extra cost – water is free. Takeaways are already a treat, save fizzy drinks as a treat for another day.

## Takeaway options

- Some takeaways offer food with less fat.
- Chinese meals with rice.
- Kebabs, falafels and other Turkish/Middle Eastern takeaways.
- Baked potatoes – go easy on the sour cream.
- Meat pies – potato-topped pies are lower in fat.
- Chips – thick-cut chips have less fat than shoe-string.
- Burgers – choose vegetables as extras. Additional meat and cheese add fat.
- Buy less fried chicken and add potato and gravy and coleslaw instead of fried chips
- Choose pizza without extra cheese.
- Buy part takeaways and part food prepared at home. *For example, buy hot chips and crumb your own fish at home. Or buy the battered fish and make wedges in the oven.*
- Make the takeaways go further by adding some bread or coleslaw at home.

# Takeaways

# Recipes

Desserts & Parties

## Fruit

Store bananas and citrus fruits in fruit bowls. Store apples and other pip fruit in the fridge.

Take advantage of apples, plums and other seasonal fruit. Slice and cook in a little water or in a saucepan till soft. Most fruits don't need added sugar or peeling. Freeze extra.

## Fruit Kebabs

Bamboo skewers – 1 for each person  
Selection of raw fruit  
Marshmallows (optional)  
Cut fruit into bite-sized pieces.  
Thread onto the skewer.

## Fruit with yoghurt dip

Toothpicks – 1 for each person  
Selection of raw fruit  
Flavoured yoghurt

Put the fruit on a plate. Pick up with toothpick and dip into the yoghurt.



*We don't have desserts every night anymore. Now a home-made dessert is a special treat.*

*Many people still like something sweet after dinner or before bed. Everyday desserts can be as simple as fresh fruit, or flavoured yoghurt. Ice-cream is popular and cheap, but try to limit it to once or twice a week.*

*Milk powder is cheaper than milk. In desserts and baking, use milk powder and water according to the instructions on the packet.*

## Custard

Make custard using custard powder, reading the directions on the packet. For extra flavour add sliced banana, 1 tablespoon of golden syrup, and chopped dates. Make a chocolate pudding by adding 1 tablespoon cocoa to the custard powder before making the custard - if you add it last it'll turn lumpy!

## Instant Pudding

Add a tin of fruit salad or sliced banana. Set in little pottles or dishes for a change.



# Desserts

## Chocolate Fudge Pudding

This self-saucing pudding is a favourite with children. Even though it has a lot of sugar, it is very low in fat.

1 cup self-raising flour  
2 tablespoons cocoa  
3/4 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla essence (optional)  
1/2 cup low-fat milk  
2 tablespoons margarine, melted

### Topping

1/4 cup cocoa  
3/4 cup brown sugar  
1 1/2 - 2 cups boiling water



Measure the flour, 2 tablespoons cocoa and 3/4 cup sugar into a large oven-proof (or microwave-proof) dish. Stir well. Add milk, vanilla essence and margarine. Stir until well mixed.

Mix 3/4 cup brown sugar and 1/4 cup cocoa together and sprinkle on top. Carefully pour over the boiling water.

### Cooking options

Microwave on high for 8-12 minutes or until centre feels warm. Make sure the sauce does not boil over. Or bake at 180°C for 35-45 minutes until firm in the centre.

## Apple Crumble

Apple crumble is a favourite pudding, delicious served with custard. Try other seasonal fruit, or canned fruit.

3 cups sliced apples  
1/3 cup margarine  
1/2 cup rolled oats  
1/2 cup flour (not self-raising)  
1/2 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon cinnamon

Layer the apples in the bottom of a micro-wave proof or oven-proof dish. Mix the rest of the ingredients together to a crumbly mixture. Sprinkle over the top.

Bake at 180°C for half an hour or until golden-brown.

### Microwave version

Microwave apples on high for four minutes. Add topping and cook for 2 minutes. For a golden top, grill for 3 – 5 minutes before serving.

### Variations

- Use other seasonal fruit like pears, kiwifruit, rhubarb.
- Use less rolled oats and flour. Add sesame seeds, coconut, wheatgerm or bran.

# Desserts

## Carrot Cake

2 eggs  
½ cup oil  
1 cup brown sugar  
2 teaspoons cinnamon  
2 cups grated carrot  
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind  
½ teaspoon baking soda  
1 cup white flour  
1 cup wholemeal flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder

Beat the eggs, oil and brown sugar until thick and smooth. Add the cinnamon, lemon rind and grated carrot. Mix well.



Add the sifted flour, baking powder and baking soda. Stir until just combined.

Rub the bottom of a cake tin with margarine or oil. Pour mixture into the cake tin.

Bake at 180°C for 45 minutes, or until the centre is firm or a fork comes out clean.

Leave to stand for 5 minutes in the tin. Cool on a cake rack. Sprinkle with icing sugar.

## Bread and Butter Pudding

This is a good way of using stale bread.

3 slices bread or buns  
2 cups low-fat milk  
2 eggs  
4 tablespoons sugar  
2 tablespoons sultanas  
½ teaspoon cinnamon

Spread the bread with margarine. Cut into small squares and put in an ovenproof dish.

Beat eggs and milk together. Add sugar, cinnamon and sultanas and pour mixture over bread.

Bake at 180°C for 30-40 minutes until set.

The pudding will cook more evenly if you place the ovenproof dish in a roasting pan, which is half-filled with boiling water.

# Desserts

## Birthday Parties

Birthday parties don't have to be expensive. They are times for treats. Choose a few special party foods the children will love. You don't need to serve lots of different foods. The excitement of the party and a few treat foods is usually enough.

### Party tips:

- Lollies appear everywhere at birthday parties – prizes, party bags, cake decorations, etc. You probably don't need a bowl of lollies as well.
- Serve fruit juice with lots of ice cubes or flavoured milk rather than fizzy drink.
- Party bags add expense to a party. Instead let children take home a piece of cake, their party hat and a balloon.
- Make sure every child wins a prize. It doesn't have to be lollies. Try stickers, balloons, coloured pencils, bouncy balls, etc.

## Favourite Foods

- Cheerios with tomato sauce
- Fairy bread – spread bread lightly with margarine, lightly sprinkle on 100s + 1000s
- Jelly – make jelly in yoghurt pottles, add a fruit surprise like a grape
- Instant pudding – especially chocolate
- Chips
- Popcorn
- Gingerbread men – let them decorate their own with icing, raisins and small lollies.
- Fruit kebabs
- Birthday cake: buy an unfilled sponge cake, ice and decorate



# It's party time!

# healthy babies





*For the first 6 months of life, babies only need breast milk or formula. They don't usually need extra fluids. On a very hot day a formula-fed baby may need some cooled, boiled water.*

### **Breast Milk is Best**

Breast milk is specially made for your baby:

- It changes with your baby's needs
- It helps protect your baby against infections
- It lowers the risk of allergies
- It is cheap, safe and ready to use

Feed young babies often on demand. Baby's appetite, happiness, weight gain and lots of wet nappies tell you how much milk your baby needs. If baby is still hungry after feeding from one breast, offer the next breast.

### **Expressing breast milk**

- Expressing milk is useful if you need to be away from your baby. Not all babies will take milk from a bottle. Try in advance if you know you will need to express.
- Express the milk with a breast pump. You can do it by hand (clean hands) if you only need a little.
- Store in the fridge for up to 5 days or freeze for 3-4 months.
- Store in a sterile container.
- Warm or defrost the milk in a jug of hot water. Don't microwave or boil.
- Thawed breastmilk should be used within 12 hours.



## Babies: Giving them a healthy start

## Formula Feeding

For many reasons, some parents use an infant formula. There are a lot of brands to choose from. Once you have found a formula that suits your baby it is best to keep to the same one.

- Make up the formula using the instructions on the can. Do not dilute. Use cooled, boiled water.
- Do not add anything else to the formula.
- All equipment needs to be very clean, including hands and the bench.
- Heat formula by placing the bottle in a container of hot water. Be very careful if heating using a microwave oven. Stir well. The milk heats unevenly in the bottle making 'hot-spots' in the bottle.

## Sterilising containers and bottles

- Wash your hands.
- Rub teats with dry salt, inside and out, thoroughly.
- Rinse bottles and teats under cold running water.
- Wash with hot water, detergent and a bottle brush.
- Rinse again.
- Boil bottles, teats and equipment for five minutes.
- Or use an anti-bacterial solution.
- Always check the temperature of the formula. Put some on the inside of your wrist. It should just feel warm.
- If baby is hungry and demands more, give more formula at each feed or add an extra feed. Do not make the formula stronger.
- Throw away any formula left in the bottle after feeding, as bacteria from the baby's saliva can grow rapidly.
- You can make up formula for the next 24 hours and store in a covered, sterilised jug or in bottles in the refrigerator.
- For babies under one year, only give breast milk or formula. Do not give cow's milk, goat's milk or soy milk.
- Babies should not be left with a bottle to suck on for a long time. This damages new teeth.



# Babies: Giving them a healthy start

*Babies are ready to have solids by four to six months. Waiting till six months is good. It takes time for a baby's digestive system to be ready for solids. In the past, solids used to be introduced a lot earlier.*

*Introducing solids later can protect against food allergies. Babies and toddlers need small meals and snacks often. They have small stomachs and use a lot of energy.*

## New-to-food tips

- Puree food in a blender or push food through a fine sieve.
- Try one new food every 4-5 days.
- Babies can choke easily. Make sure they are sitting when eating. Don't give small, hard foods like whole nuts until five years old.
- Each baby is different, and learns to chew, swallow and eat at different rates.
- White bread is best. Fine, soft wholemeal breads can be introduced at 15 months.
- Milk or water is the best drink.
- Don't offer sweet drinks or tea.
- Do not add salt or sugar to baby food.
- Make extra food and freeze in ice cube trays.
- Only put small amounts of food in the baby's bowl. Throw out any food left in the bowl.
- Canned baby foods are good to use, but more expensive.



# Babies: Giving them a healthy start

4-6 months	Offer solids after a milk feed.	Soft, smooth, bland foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Baby rice, infant cereal</li> <li>•Pureed apple, pear, apricot, peach, mashed ripe banana</li> <li>•Pureed pumpkin, potato, kumara, carrot, marrow, avocado</li> </ul>
7 months Baby can sit and is interested in finger foods.	Offer solids after a milk feed.	Add iron-containing foods	<p>Add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Finely minced meat, chicken</li> <li>•Liver, kidney</li> <li>•Cooked egg yolk</li> <li>•Yams, taro, puha, courgettes, cauliflower, broccoli</li> </ul>
8-9 months Baby has good chewing and biting skills.	Offer solids before milk feeds	Mash or finely-chop food instead of pureed.	<p>Add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Finely chopped lean meat</li> <li>•Boneless fish, tofu</li> <li>•Silverbeet, spinach, mashed peas, beans, tomatoes, cabbage, creamed corn</li> <li>•Fine porridge, Weetbix</li> <li>•Yoghurt, custard, grated cheese</li> <li>•White bread or toast, plain crackers</li> <li>•Orange segments, sliced kiwifruit</li> </ul>
1 year	Offer small amounts of the food your family eats		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Chopped lean meat, chicken, seafood, whole egg, dried beans and lentils</li> <li>•Whole milk – ‘blue-top’</li> </ul>



## Babies: What to feed when

# Other hints

for households

## Miscellaneous money savers

- The easiest things to grow in the garden are silverbeet, lettuce and parsley. Grow in pots or in a sunny spot in the garden.
- Cloth nappies save money. Use when you can, or have some as spares when you run out of disposables.
- Make your own bean-sprouts. (refer page 71)
- Only use the car when you need to. Walk or bike when possible. Children may be able to join a walking school bus to school.
- Children often get tired of toys quickly. Save on the spending by joining a toy library.

## Cheap Cleaners

Use cheap, natural cleaners. Baking soda, salt, lemon juice and vinegar are all effective cleaners.

- Baking soda can replace bought cream cleaners to use on benches, ovens, baths and sinks. Mix baking soda to a paste with water.
- Put 2 tablespoons baking soda in an open container in the fridge to get rid of smells.
- Use salt for cleaning stains off carpets and babies teats.
- Refresh the fridge and rubbish bins with lemon juice and water.
- A strong solution of vinegar is a good toilet cleaner.
- All purpose cleaning liquid: 4 litres hot water, ¼ cup vinegar, 1 tablespoon baking soda.

## Saving Power

Have quick showers. Use the kitchen timer for teenagers.

Never use the oven as a heater.

Draught-proof doors and windows. Use curtains and blinds.

Use the clothes line, rather than a dryer.

Use the washing machine only when you have a full load. A cold water wash is easier on the power.

If you are able to buy a 'clothes horse', it is amazing how much you can fit on one and it saves using the dryer on wet days.

# Other ideas to save money

## Playdough

3 cups white flour  
1 ½ cups salt  
2 tablespoons cream of tartar  
3 tablespoons cooking oil  
3 cups boiling water  
Food colouring

Mix flour, salt, cream of tartar and cooking oil together in a large bowl.

Add the boiling water and food colouring.

Stir well until the mixture leaves the side of the bowl.

Add more flour if the mixture seems too sticky. Turn out of the bowl and knead.

Store in a container in the fridge. It will last a long time.

## Gloop

2 cups cornflour  
1 cup cold water  
food colouring (optional)

Pour cornflour into a bowl. Add water slowly, stirring constantly and stop when water stops being absorbed by the cornflour. If using food colouring, add with the water.

The gloop can be scooped up with the fingers, squished, squashed, or played with using kitchen utensils.

## Power Saving Tips when cooking

- Use pot lids that fit
- Use a small pot on a small element, and a large pot on a large element
- Cook food on the elements instead of in the oven
- Use a steamer
- Microwaves cook food faster
- Make sure fridge and freezer doors are properly closed
- Don't overload the fridge or freezer
- Cool foods down quickly before putting in the fridge or freezer
- When the oven is on, cook several items. For example, a casserole, muffins, home-made muesli and baked potatoes
- Electric frying pans can be used for all sorts of cooking. They are cheaper to run than the oven

# Other ideas to save money

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