

Heart-healthy eating

Healthy eating is an important part of your recovery and can help reduce your risk of future heart problems. Living in rural or remote Australia, accessing fresh and affordable heart-healthy food can sometimes be challenging. However, there are still plenty of ways to eat well and support your heart health.

Top tips for healthy eating in rural and remote Australia



Fill half your plate with a variety of colourful vegetables and fruits

- Choose local fresh foods that are in season and more readily available.
- Select fruits and vegetables that stay fresh longer. E.g. carrots, sweet potatoes, onions, pumpkins, apples and oranges.
- Buy canned and frozen fruits and vegetables as pantry and freezer staples, especially when fresh isn't easily available. Look for no added salt/reduced salt varieties and choose fruit cups or canned fruit in 'natural juice'.



Swap white bread and rice with wholegrain bread, brown rice and high-fibre cereals

- Brown rice, wholemeal pasta and oats are healthy budget-friendly pantry staples.
- Freeze unused bread to make it last longer.



Aim for 2–3 servings of fish a week

- Frozen and canned fish are great alternatives to buying fresh fish and are often cheaper too.
- Choose fish canned in spring water or olive oil.
- When choosing frozen fish, opt for varieties that aren't already crumbed or battered. These can be high in salt and unhealthy saturated fats.



Choose lean meat and a variety of healthy proteins

- The best options are plant proteins like legumes (e.g. no added salt canned beans, lentils, chickpeas), nuts and seeds, as well as fish and seafood. Include smaller amounts of eggs and lean poultry and limit lean red meat to 1-3 times a week.
- Try adding lentils to spaghetti bolognese, or chickpeas in curries or stews to make them go further.
- Cut off fat before cooking meat in stews, casseroles and soups.
- Eggs are easy to make or add into a family meal. E.g. omelettes, stir fries, savoury bowls and soups.



Limit processed foods like chocolate, biscuits, pizza and fast food

- Snack smart with unsalted nuts, fresh fruit, canned fruit in juice, or homemade popcorn with your favourite spices instead of salt.
- Cook and freeze meals in advance as a quick, easy and healthy alternative to buying takeaway.



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This program was developed with funding received from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

Healthy eating for your heart can be simple and delicious

Healthy eating for your heart is not about 'good' and 'bad' foods or restrictive diets. It's about making small changes that you can continue long term.

A heart-healthy eating pattern includes:



1
Plenty of vegetables, fruits and wholegrains.



2
Healthy proteins especially fish, seafood, legumes, nuts and seeds with smaller amounts of eggs and lean poultry. Limit lean red meat to one to three times a week.



3
Unflavoured, reduced fat milk, yoghurt, and cheese.



4
Healthy fat choices with nuts, seeds, avocados, olives and their oils for cooking.



5
Herbs and spices to flavour foods, instead of adding salt.