

## Tips to stretch your dollar further

- ◆ Set aside a certain amount of money each week to go towards a weekly or fortnightly shopping trip.
- ◆ Prepare a shopping list prior to going to the supermarket. This helps to avoid purchasing 'impulse buys' that you don't really need.
- ◆ Shop at large supermarkets rather than corner stores for non-perishable, long life or frozen products, as prices are generally lower.
- ◆ Fresh fruit and vegetables are often cheaper at local markets or green grocery stores. Canned or frozen fruit and vegetables are just as nutritious as fresh items and are a cheaper alternative.
- ◆ Look for generic 'home brand' products (eg Savings, Home Brand, Black and Gold). These products are always cheaper and are just as nutritious as the more expensive brands.
- ◆ Meat products can be cheaper when purchased at a butcher and are cheaper if bought in bulk. Look for the specials of the week.
- ◆ If purchasing smaller amounts of meat (eg for casseroles and pasta sauces), they can be extended by adding extra vegetables and legumes (such as red kidney beans, 4 bean mix, lentils, baked beans).
- ◆ Canned fish (tuna or salmon) is an excellent, yet cheap, protein source.
- ◆ Use discount vouchers (eg shopper docket, food vouchers from newspapers, etc) for cheaper food items or meals.

## Doing it for yourself

It can be difficult to prepare meals if you are cooking for one person, feeling unwell, have limited ideas of what to cook or lack motivation. This cookbook provides ideas for simple healthy meals that are suitable for 1–2 people and can be frozen for future use.

### Tips for meal preparation:

- ◆ **Choose 2–3 days** a week to cook and make this a weekly routine.
- ◆ **Cook meals in bulk.** This refers to cooking a large meal that will feed you for at least 2–3 main meals. After cooking, portion the meal into 2 – 3 containers and either freeze or refrigerate. This provides you with quick convenient meals on the days when you are unable to cook or simply don't feel like cooking.
- ◆ It is a good idea to **purchase small storage containers** that are big enough for one meal. These containers can be cleaned and re-used.
- ◆ If you choose to refrigerate meals or leftover foods, they **should be consumed within 2–3 days of refrigeration.**
- ◆ Cooked foods which are **stored in the freezer** should be **consumed within 3 months.** Frozen meals should always be labeled with the contents and date (when cooked).
- ◆ The **safest method for defrosting** is to remove the food from the freezer and allow it to defrost in the fridge (for approximately 24 hours) or to defrost using a microwave.
- ◆ **IMPORTANT:** Once a meal has been defrosted it should be eaten or thrown away. **Do not refreeze** any food items, as this will increase the risk of food poisoning.

## Eat safe

Food handling, food storage and food safety is essential to prevent food poisoning from occurring.

- ◆ Put cold food into the fridge as soon as you get home from shopping. Keep perishable food in the fridge and store **below 5°C** to prevent food poisoning. It is also important to keep the fridge clean.
- ◆ Store raw meat covered and in a dish at the bottom on the fridge so it cannot drip onto other cooked or ready to eat foods.
- ◆ Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water before handling food, after handling raw meat/fish, after touching pets and after going to the toilet.
- ◆ Always thaw frozen food in the fridge, microwave or under cool running water (while still in container or in plastic wrapping). Do not thaw food on the kitchen bench.
- ◆ **Do not refreeze** any food products after they have been defrosted.
- ◆ Rinse all fruit and vegetables under cold running water before eating, to remove traces of chemicals or bacteria.
- ◆ When preparing meals keep raw meats separate from other raw/cooked ingredients to prevent 'cross-contamination'. Use separate cutting boards and knives for raw meats, cooked meats and other food products. It is best to scrub cutting boards and knives in hot soapy water immediately after use to prevent bacterial growth.
- ◆ Make sure all high protein foods (eg meat, fish, eggs, dairy products) do not spend long periods of time out of the fridge.
- ◆ Make sure poultry and fish are cooked thoroughly. Do not consume raw fish (eg salmon, sushi) if your CD4 count (measure of immune system function) is low.
- ◆ Keep cooked/hot food **above 60°C** to prevent food poisoning.
- ◆ When cooling hot food, put it in the fridge as soon as it stops steaming. Do not leave food out on the bench to cool. The '**danger zone**' for growth of bacteria (responsible for food poisoning) is **5°C–60°C**.
- ◆ Cooked foods should always be covered and stored in a fridge or freezer.
- ◆ Reheat meals until they are steaming. The centre of the food should reach **at least 75°C** to destroy bacterial growth. If reheating in a microwave, stir the meal halfway through the cycle to ensure even heating.
- ◆ Use hot soapy water to wash all dishes and cooking utensils – most bacteria is destroyed at temperatures above 74°C.
- ◆ Allow dishes and cooking utensils to air dry – this prevents bacteria being transferred from a cloth 'tea towel' to the clean dishes.



## Reading food labels

Food labels hold the secret to what is really in the food you eat. Learning how to read and interpret information on food labels can help you to make informed decisions about the items you are purchasing.

The “basic rules of label reading” are:

- ◆ Low in fat: <3g fat (total) / 100g
- ◆ Low in saturated fat: <1.5g / 100g
- ◆ Low in sugar: <5g / 100g
- ◆ Low in sodium (salt): <120mg / 100g
- ◆ High in fibre: 4g / serve of food
- ◆ High in protein: 10g / serve of food

Here is an example of how these “rules” are depicted in each of the recipes in this book (note that not all of these aspects will be highlights of each recipe) –

↓fat ↓saturated fat ↓sugar ↓salt ↑fibre ↑protein

Food labels can assist you to choose the appropriate food products for good health or for management of chronic health conditions / side effects.

### ◆ High blood lipids (cholesterol, triglycerides)

Labels can enable you to identify the types of fats contained in various foods.

Food products which are **low in saturated fat** and **high in unsaturated fat** should be chosen to lower blood lipids (see ‘Heart-smart’ foods on page 19).

### ◆ High blood pressure & fluid accumulation (oedema, ascities)

Labels can enable you to identify the sodium (salt) content of various foods.

Food products which are low in sodium are recommended to assist in lowering blood pressure and fluid accumulation.

### ◆ Diagnosed Lactose Intolerance

Labels can enable you to identify food products containing lactose (milk sugar).

Low lactose products include soy, rice milk, Lidell’s and Zymil.

Adherence to a low lactose or lactose free diet can assist in the management of lactose intolerance and associated chronic diarrhoea.

### ◆ Irregular bowel movements (constipation/diarrhoea)

Labels can enable you to identify foods which are a significant source of dietary fibre.

Increasing **insoluble fibre** (i.e. grain bread, bran, unpeeled fruit and vegetables) can assist with the management of **constipation**.

Increasing **soluble fibre** (i.e. bananas, rolled oats, Metamucil, Benefibre) and decreasing insoluble fibre can assist with the management of **diarrhoea**.



# How to use a nutrition table

To compare the nutrient content of different brands (and packaging sizes) of food, use the “per 100g” column.

For example: product A contains 25g saturated fat / 100g, whereas product B contains 5g saturated fat / 100g. Using this comparison, product B is the better choice as it contains a lower amount of saturated fat per 100g.

This is the average serving size of the product suggested by the company

Look for <1.5g per 100g of saturated fat

Nutrition Information		
Serving Per Package: 1		
Serving Size: 146g		
	Per serve (146g)	Per 100g
Energy	334kJ	457kJ
Protein	11.8g	16.2g
Fat	1.7g	1.2g
Saturated	1.1g	0.8g
Carbohydrate		
Total	1.2g	1.6g
Sugar	1.1g	1.3g
Dietary Fibre	0.4g	0.4g
Sodium	221mg	147mg
Potassium	155.8mg	213.4mg

Use the 100g column to compare products

Normally, the lower the fat content, the better it is for you

Look for <120mg per 100g of sodium

**Nutrient claims can often be confusing and misleading – the table below will help you to decipher the truth!**

<b>Light or Lite</b>	This claim does not necessarily mean the product is lower in fat. It can mean low in energy, lightly salted or light in colour.
<b>Reduced fat</b>	Reduced fat products contain less fat than the equivalent standard product, however the product can still contain a high amount of fat. Example: 25% reduced fat cheese, 50% reduced fat cream.
<b>Cholesterol free / no cholesterol</b>	This does not mean low fat. This claim is often used on vegetable products which naturally don't contain cholesterol. Examples: olive oil, canola margarine spreads. A bottle of olive oil contains no cholesterol, but is nearly 100% fat.
<b>No added sugar</b>	This claim applies to all food products which contain no added can sugar, honey, malt, malt extract or maltose. Be aware that a product can have this claim and still be naturally high in sugar (e.g. fruit juice, tinned fruit)

