

Healthy Living – Sleep, Nutrition & Exercise

Navigators guide



Healthy Living

Feeling good, having energy, and being independent are all important factors in promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Living a healthy lifestyle includes:

- Healthy eating and drinking
- Being physically active
- Sleeping well
- Managing stress
- Maintaining social relationships

Being physically and mentally healthy in your day-to-day life makes all the difference to a healthy lifestyle. It may mean reducing or managing stressors, stopping or reducing unhealthy habits (such as smoking drug use, high fat diet, or an inactive lifestyle).

Sleep

Sleep is an important factor in maintaining good mental and physical health. Sleep gives the mind and body an opportunity to rest from the days activities and recharge for the next day. Lack of sleep can lead to irritability, poor concentration, lack of energy and difficulty managing stress. Ongoing disruptions in sleep can affect mood and be a trigger for psychosis. Individually everyone is different and hours of sleep can vary between four and twelve hours, but seven to nine hours is the recommended amount.

Tips for sleeping well:

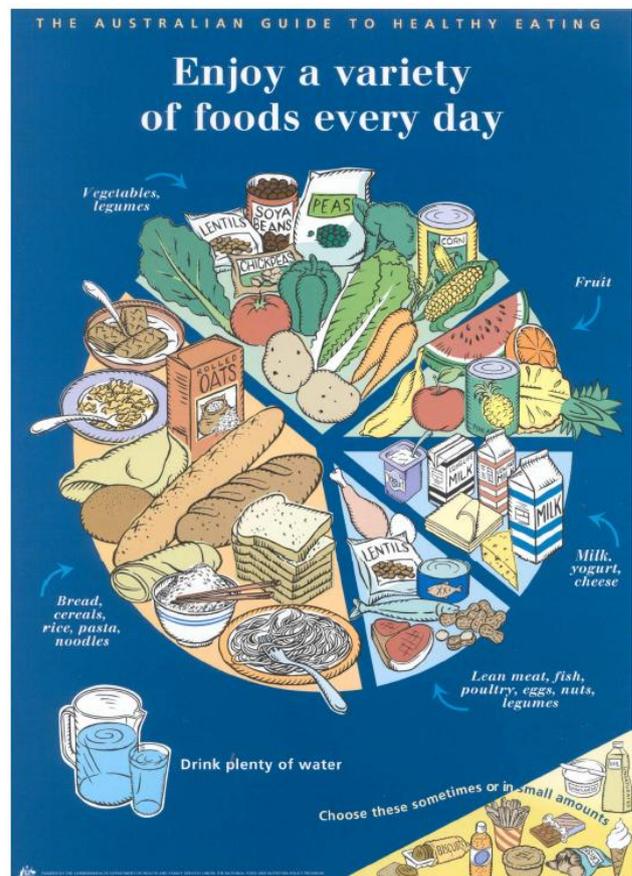
- Avoid caffeine after 2pm
- Avoid the use of alcohol to help you sleep
- Try to go to bed and wake at the same time each day
- Keep your bedroom dark, quiet and at a comfortable temperature
- Avoid watching TV in your bedroom

- If you can't sleep after 20 minutes of trying, get up and do something relaxing before trying again. E.g. read a book.
- Establish a bedtime routine. E.g., brush teeth, take a bath, get into pyjamas read a book or listen to some soothing music
- Try to exercise daily

Nutrition

Eating well is important for everyone in order to ensure nutritional needs are met, maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of lifestyle diseases and maintain energy.

Eating well is especially important for people with mental health issues as symptoms of low energy (leading to low activity) and the side effects of some medications can lead to weight gain.



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A balanced diet includes foods from the 5 food groups in the following amounts:

- Breads, cereals, rice pasta, noodles. 4-7 serves per day
- Vegetables, legumes. 5 serves per day
- Fruit. 2 serves per day
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese (dairy or soy). 2-3 serves per day.
- Lean meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts. 2 serves per day

Fats, sugars and oils (found in cakes, chocolate, ice cream, soft drinks & juices) are occasional foods. 0-2 serves per day.

Tips for eating well:

- Plan meals and shopping list
- Make healthy snack choices. E.g. fruit as a snack instead of chips or chocolate.
- Swap to healthier take away options. E.g. grilled fish & salad or salad roll instead of a hamburger

Exercise

As well as healthy eating, living a healthy lifestyle involves exercising regularly and has many physical and mental health benefits.

Benefits include:

- Controls weight
- Reduced risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and some cancers.
- Reduced levels of depression and anxiety
- Improved sleep and self esteem
- Provide opportunity for social interactions

A good goal for many people is to work up to exercising 4-6 times per week for 30-60 minutes at a time.

Tips on being active:

- Try to exercise with a friend
- Try to stick to a regular time each day
- Look to join a team sport or group
- Vary the types of exercise to keep it interesting. E.g. walking, swimming, yoga, cycling
- Be sure to do a gentle warm up / cool down and stretch before and after exercise. This helps to prevent injury and improve flexibility
- Try to increase your activity in day to day tasks. Eg. Park your car further from your destination, get off the bus one stop earlier, take the stairs instead of a lift, do house work at a quicker pace

If previously inactive or unsure of your health status, seek medical advice from your GP before starting an exercise program.

Resources

Books

Taking Care of Yourself and Your Family, Written by Dr John Ashfield (Can be ordered free through Beyond Blue website) www.beyondblue.org.au

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating - www.health.gov.au

Websites

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

www.beyondblue.org.au

www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

www.healthynsw.com.au

www.getthehealthynsw.com.au

www.mentalhealth.asn.au

www.swapit.gov.au