

Healthy Eating Guidebook for Vietnamese Communities

Ethnic Communities
Council of Queensland

English



ECCQ
Chronic Disease
Program



Ethnic Communities
Council of Queensland



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Contents

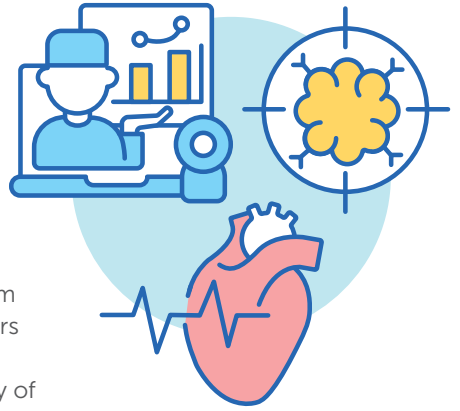
- 3 Introduction
- 4 What are Chronic Diseases?
- 5 How can healthy eating prevent Chronic Diseases?
- 5 What are some tools and strategies to help us eat well?
 - 6 Healthy Eating Plate
 - 8 Serving Sizes
 - 10 Making Better Food Choices
 - 11 Healthy Recipes
 - 26 Example of a One-Day Meal Plan
- 27 Frequently Asked Questions
- 31 Appendix: Australian Dietary Guidelines Recommended Serves for All Age Groups
- 32 References

Introduction

This booklet provides information, tools and strategies to help our communities eat well. We have addressed some frequently asked questions that we have received from Vietnamese and multicultural communities in Queensland.

Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland is a charity and non-governmental organisation representing the needs and interests of people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD) in Queensland. ECCQ Chronic Disease Program provides vital culturally appropriate and translated information, education, and support through face to face, telephone, and online platforms to the community about chronic disease prevention and self-management. If you need more information, please contact us at **(07) 3844 9166** or visit our website: **www.eccq.com.au**

What are Chronic Diseases?



According to the Department of Health, the term “Chronic Diseases” or “Chronic Conditions” refers to long term illnesses or conditions which can significantly impact an individual’s overall quality of life. The major groups of chronic diseases are:

- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Back Pain
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- Diabetes
- Mental Health Conditions
- Overweight and Obesity

Chronic conditions are very common. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported that half of all Australians have at least 1 of the following 8 major chronic conditions: Arthritis, Asthma, Back pain, Cancer, Cardiovascular disease, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Diabetes and Mental Health conditions. (Australian Government Department of Health, 2021).



How can healthy eating prevent Chronic Diseases?

- Healthy eating prevents obesity. Obesity is a major risk factor for many conditions, like type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke, and heart disease. Eating foods that are high in sugar, fats and calories can add extra weight to your body, weakening your bones and making your organs work harder. Studies showing that for people who are overweight or obese, a weight loss of 5-10% of the total body weight is beneficial in improving your blood pressure, total blood cholesterol and blood sugars (Blackburn, 1995) and (Ryan & Yockey, 2017).
- Healthy eating can help improve cholesterol levels by decreasing bad cholesterol (LDL) and increasing good cholesterol (HDL). Low bad cholesterol (LDL) levels can help lower our risk of heart disease.
- Healthy eating improves the mood, which in turn boosts physical activity. If we are happy, we are more likely to be active. Eating the right foods can help us be happier, therefore leading to more motivation for exercise and regular physical activity is an important strategy for chronic disease prevention.

What are some tools and strategies to help us eat well?

Some nutritional issues that are prevalent in Vietnamese Communities are:

- High intake of fats including full fat yoghurts and animal-based fat;
- High intake of high energy grains, cereals and rice;
- Low consumption of vegetables;
- High intake of sugar and sweet foods and
- Cooking with high amount of oil.

In the next pages are some tools and strategies that can help our Vietnamese communities address these concerns and live a healthy life.

Healthy Eating Plate

Use the Healthy Eating Plate as a guide for creating a healthy and balanced meal. The plate size is on average 25cm in diameter. To build our plate, we divide our meals into 3 sections. Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of our plate with non-starchy vegetables including different types and colours, $\frac{1}{4}$ with carbohydrates including mostly wholegrain or high fibre variety and $\frac{1}{4}$ with protein including lean meats or other protein alternatives.



Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of our plate with carbohydrates or a fist size worth

$\frac{1}{4}$ plate carbohydrates



$\frac{1}{4}$ plate protein



Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with protein or a palm size worth



Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of our plate with non-starchy vegetables or 2 full hands worth

$\frac{1}{2}$ plate non-starchy vegetables



What a healthy, balanced meal looks like...



1/4
plate
carbohydrates

1/2
plate
non-starchy
vegetables

1/4
plate
protein

Serving Sizes

To help make sure we are eating a balanced diet, the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommend the serving sizes for each food group depending on our age group. Below are the main age groups and their recommended daily serves.

Vegetables & Legumes / Beans



Fruit



Grain Foods (Cereal Foods)



Meats & Poultry (eggs, nuts, tofu, fish)



Dairy and/or alternatives (Milk, yoghurt, cheese)



Water



A table of the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommended serves for all age groups can be found at the back of this booklet.

	19-50 year olds	51-70 year olds	Pregnant women
Men	6 serves	5.5 serves	-
Women	5 serves	5 serves	5 serves

1 serve = 75g of vegetables, 1/2 cup cooked/tinned vegetables, or 1 cup leafy salad vegetables

	19-50 year olds	51-70 year olds	Pregnant women
Men	2 serves	2 serves	-
Women	2 serves	2 serves	2 serves

1 serve = 150g of fruit, 1 medium piece, 30g pieces of dried fruit, 2 small pieces (e.g., plums, kiwi), or 1 cup tinned fruit

	19-50 year olds	51-70 year olds	Pregnant women
Men	6 serves	6 serves	-
Women	6 serves	4 serves	8.5 serves

1 serve = 1 slice of bread, 1/2 cup cooked rice/pasta/noodles, or 1 small piece of Lebanese bread

	19-50 year olds	51-70 year olds	Pregnant women
Men	3 serves	2.5 serves	-
Women	2.5 serves	2 serves	3.5 serves

1 serve = 80g of canned fish, 2 large eggs, 8-12 nuts, palm size of red lean meat, hand-size of chicken/fish, or 1 cup of cooked beans

	19-50 year olds	51-70 year olds	Pregnant women
Men	2.5 serves	2.5 serves	-
Women	2.5 serves	4 serves	2.5 serves

1 serve = 1 cup of any milk, 2 slices of hard cheese, 3/4 cup yoghurt, or 1 small wedge of soft cheese

	19-50 year olds	51-70 year olds	Pregnant women
Men	2.6L/10 cups daily	2.6L/10 cups daily	-
Women	2.1L/8 cups daily	2.1L/8 cups daily	2.13L/9 cups daily

Making Better Choices

We can enjoy all food if we eat them in moderation, therefore try not to identify food as good and bad but to focus on 'the better choices'. Try to choose foods that have more nutrients such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meats rather than foods containing high level of salt, sugar or fat.

Below are some examples of better food choices.

Swap **THIS** for **THAT**



Chocolate



Berries



White Bread



Wholegrain or Wholemeal Bread



Short or Medium Grain Rice



Long Grain Brown or Basmati Rice



Hot Chips



Vegetable Sticks



Yoghurt (Full Fat)



Yoghurt (Low Fat)



Fatty Beef



Lean Beef



Soft Drink



Water



High Salt Beef or Chicken Stock Cubes



Reduced Salt Beef or Chicken Stock Cubes or Herbs and Spices



Fried Chicken



Skinless Baked Chicken



Ghee or Animal Fats



Canola or Olive Oil

Healthy Recipes

- 12 Phở bò (Vietnamese Beef Noodle Soup)
- 14 Vietnamese Bánh mì
- 16 Vietnamese Rice Paper Rolls
- 18 Ca Kho To (Fish Stew)
- 20 Bánh bao (Pork Bun)
- 22 Bánh Bo Hap
- 24 Bánh Da Lợn (Steamed Layer Cake)

By making small changes in each recipe we can lower the amount of fats, sugars and salts we are eating while still enjoying our favourite foods.

The following are common dishes in the Vietnamese culture. They have been modified to make a healthier version of traditional recipe. The fat content per serve is illustrated in teaspoons (where 1 teaspoon = 5grams of fat) and the salt content per serve is illustrated in teaspoons (where 1 teaspoon = 5grams = 2000mg salt).



Look out for the ingredients highlighted in green for the healthier substitute for the recipe.

Phở bò (Vietnamese Beef Noodle Soup)

Serves: 4 | Preparation Time 🕒 20 min

Ingredients

- 8 cups of beef stock
- 2 thick slices ginger
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic sliced
- 3 star anise
- 2 cinnamon quills, lightly bruised
- 2 tablespoons castor sugar
- ✔️ 1/3 cup fish sauce (Korean Essential Brand)
- 375g flat rice noodles
- 400g beef eye fillet, very thinly sliced
- 1 cup bean sprouts
- 1 long red chilli, seeds removed, thinly sliced

- 1/3 cup fresh basil to serve
- 1/3 cup fresh mint, to serve
- 1/3 cup coriander leaves, to serve

Method

1. Place stock and 2 cups (500ml) water in a saucepan with ginger, garlic, onion, star anise, cinnamon, sugar and fish sauce. Bring to boil, then reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Strain, discarding solids, then return soup to pan. Cover and return to boil.
2. Meanwhile, prepare noodles according to packet instructions. Drain Well.
3. Divide the noodles among warmed soup bowls, then top with the sliced beef fillet. Pour over the hot soup mixture (the heat will gently cook the meat) and top with the bean sprouts. Serve garnished with chilli and fresh herbs.



How we reduced the salt content

Original Recipe used regular fish sauce

1 1/2

Teaspoons per serve



Modified Recipe with Korean Essential fish sauce

4/5

Teaspoon per serve



up)



Vietnamese Bánh mì

Serves: 4 | Preparation Time 🕒 30 min

Ingredients

200g French baguette
(cut in 4 equal parts) or
4 Vietnamese bánh mì.

✔ **8 tsp** light mayonnaise
(2tsp per sandwich)

✔ **348g** skinless-chicken breast
(boiled and shredded)

A bunch of coriander

1 wedge of lime (optional)

1 chilli (optional)

Pickled veg

2 small carrots

1 small daikon

$\frac{1}{2}$ small cucumber

$\frac{1}{2}$ medium onion

$\frac{1}{2}$ **cup** of white rice vinegar

$\frac{1}{4}$ **cup** sugar

1 pinch of salt

Method

1. Make ahead: Place the daikon, carrots, cucumbers, and onion in a medium jar with the white rice vinegar, sugar, and salt. If the liquids don't cover the veggies, add about 2 tablespoons water and more vinegar if necessary. Let chill for at least an hour, or store in the fridge for up to a week.
2. Make ahead: boil the skinless chicken breast in water with a pinch of salt.

Assembly

1. Slice the baguette in half the long way to leave a cavity for the filling. Place the baguette halves in the oven to lightly toast, 2 to 3 minutes.
2. Spread each half of toasted baguette with 2 tsp of light mayonnaise, and fill the cavity of the bottom half of the bread with shredded chicken, cucumber slices, pickled carrot, onion, daikon, and coriander leaves.

Optional: squeeze a wedge of lime over the filling and add chilli.



How we reduced the fat content

Original recipe used traditional mayonnaise and chicken with skin

3

Teaspoons per serve



Modified recipe with light mayonnaise and skinless chicken

1

Teaspoon per serve





Gỏi cuốn (Rice paper rolls)

Serves: 7 | Preparation Time 🕒 30 min

Ingredients

7 - 14 sheets of 22cm round rice paper

11 small prawns
(peeled, deveined and cooked)

50g of vermicelli noodles (dried)

7 lettuce leaves

14 mint leaves

1 cup of bean sprouts.

Vietnamese peanut dipping sauce

✔ **1 tbsp** reduced salt peanut butter
(smooth)

2 tbsp hoisin sauce

1 ½ tbsp white vinegar or lime juice

⅓ cup water

1 clove garlic (minced)

½ tsp chilli paste or fresh chillies
(crushed), adjust to taste (optional).

Method

Peanut Sauce

1. Combine all the peanut dipping sauce ingredients.
2. Microwave for 30 seconds and mix again until smooth. Set aside to cool.
3. Adjust to taste and let sauce thicken.

Assembly

1. Place vermicelli noodles in a bowl and cover with warm water for 2 minutes, then drain (or follow packet instructions).
2. Peel the prawns, slice in half lengthwise and devein.
3. Remove the crunchy core of the lettuce leaves.
4. Fill a large bowl with warm water and place the rice paper in the warm water for 2 seconds.
5. On the top part of the rice paper, place 3 prawns with a mint leaf in between
6. Place the lettuce bundle onto the middle of the rice paper.
7. Fold the left and right edges of the rice paper in, then starting from the bottom, roll up to cover the lettuce bundle. Then keep rolling firmly. The rice paper is sticky, it will seal itself.
8. Continue the same with the rest of the rice papers and fillings.
9. Serve immediately with the peanut dipping sauce.

Cá Kho Tộ (Fish Stew)

Serves: 2 | Preparation Time 🕒 60 min

Ingredients:

450g of Basa/Cat fish

30ml of canola oil

5 cloves of garlic

½ medium brown onion

1 bunch of spring onion.

Seasoning and cooking liquid

✔ **20ml** of fish sauce
(Korean Essential Brand)

½ tsp sweet soy sauce

½ cup coconut water

1 small chilli (sliced) (optional)

Ground black pepper as a topping
when serving.



Method

1. Clean fish under running water. Set aside to dry.
2. Add oil to a pan and sauté garlic over medium heat until lightly browned.
3. Layer onion on top, then the fish, evenly spaced.
4. Add the seasoning and cooking liquid (and chilli-optional) and turn the heat to high until boiling. Taste the sauce and adjust the seasoning.
5. Bring it to a simmer for 20 minutes. Adjust seasoning if needed.
6. Gently flip the fillets of fish over and simmer for a final 10 minutes with the lid partially covered.
7. Cook for another 10 minutes, during this time you can continually spoon the sauce over the fish.
8. Add spring onion during last 2 minutes and top with sliced chillies and some freshly ground black pepper.



How we reduced the salt content

Original recipe used regular fish sauce



Modified recipe with Korean Essential fish sauce



Bánh bao (Pork Bun)

Serves: 18 | Preparation Time 🕒 120 min

Ingredients

For the filling

- 450g** extra lean pork mince
- 30ml** salt reduced fish sauce
- 20ml** oyster sauce
- 15ml** reduced salt soy sauce
- 2** spring onions (minced)
- 4 extra large** eggs (hard boiled)

For the dough

- 4 cups** of wholemeal self-raising flour
- 2 cups** low fat milk
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar.

Method

1. Mix pork, spring onion, fish sauce, oyster sauce and soy sauce together in a large bowl. Let mixture marinate in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes.
2. Combine self-rising flour, milk and sugar in another large bowl; knead until dough is smooth and no longer sticky. Cover dough with cheesecloth and let it rest for about 5 minutes.
3. Divide dough into 18 balls. Roll out each ball into a circle with a rolling pin on a floured work surface. Place a spoonful of the pork mixture in the centre; top with an egg quarter. Gather the edges of each circle together like a coin purse; twist and pinch to seal the bun.
4. Cut waxed paper into eighteen 5cm squares. Place each bun on a waxed paper square. Arrange 3 cm apart in a steamer and cover with lid.
5. Steam the buns until they puff up for about 30 minutes.



How we reduced the fat content

Original recipe with Chinese style sausages

2

Teaspoons per serve



Modified recipe without Chinese style sausages

1

Teaspoon per serve





Bánh Bò Hấp

Serves: 8 cakes | Preparation Time 🕒 150 min

Ingredients

4 cup rice flour

4 tsp tapioca starch

✔ **1 can** reduced fat coconut milk (400 ml)

1 1/2 tsp active yeast

1 cup sugar

1/2 tsp vanilla extract

1/4 tsp salt

2 cup warm water

Canola spray oil

Green, Yellow, Red food colorings (optional)

Method

1. In a mixing bowl, whisk together all the ingredients above, except food colorings until smooth. (The water should be warm to the touch so that it won't kill the yeast.)



How we reduced the fat content

Original recipe with standard coconut milk

2

Teaspoons per serve



Modified recipe with fat-reduced coconut milk

1

Teaspoon per serve



2. Cover with a lid. Let the batter rest for 2 hours or more (The more time you let the batter rest, the more fluffy the cakes will come out.) If it is a winter season, place the batter in the oven or any warm place. In the summer, place the batter at room temperature.
3. After 2 hours, You will see air bubbles raise on the surface of the batter.
4. Grease 8 small cake moulds or small bowls with oil. Place them into the boiling steamer. Pour in the batter until $\frac{3}{4}$ of each bowl (so that it will have room to rise.)
5. Cover and steam for 10 minutes on medium heat or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean.



Bánh Da Lợn (Steamed Layer Cake)

Makes: 1 cake / 20 pieces | **Preparation Time** 🕒 75 min

Ingredients

For the Green Layers

2 cup tapioca flour

¼ cup rice flour

½ cup sugar

¼ tsp salt

✔ **1 ½ can** reduced-fat coconut milk

3 pandan leaves

⅓ cup water

2 drops green food coloring.

For the Yellow Layers

¾ cup mung beans

(cooked with ¼ tsp salt)

½ cup sugar

¼ cup rice flour

½ cup tapioca starch

✔ **½ can** reduced-fat coconut milk

½ tsp vanilla extract

2 drops yellow food coloring.

Method

- Combine all the “Yellow Layers Ingredients” in a food processor and process until smooth. Strain through a strainer and set aside.
- Cut pandan leaves into small pieces. Blend well with 1/3 cup of water. Strain to extract the pandan juice as much as possible.
- In a bowl, combine all the remaining of the “Green Layers Ingredients”. Then pour in the pandan juice and whisk until nice and smooth.
- Cover a steamer’s lid with a kitchen towel to prevent any water from dripping onto the cake.
- Grease a 20cm pan with some cooking oil. Steam the greased pan in a boiling steamer for 3 minutes or until it is hot on high heat.
- Pour about 1 cup of green batter into the hot pan for the first layer; cover and steam for 5 minutes or until it is slightly set. The second layer, gently pour in about 1 cup of yellow batter and steam for 7 minutes. Then continue to pour in 1 cup of green batter for the third layer and steam for 10 minutes. Add layer fourth, yellow layer, and steam for 12 minutes. Pour in the last green layer and steam for 20 minutes. (The steamed time has increased as we add more layers into the pan.)
- Once the cake is done, wait for it cool down completely before removing from the pan.
- Use a knife, wrapped with plastic wrap, to cut the cake into 20 pieces.



How we reduced the fat content

Original recipe used standard coconut milk



Modified recipe uses fat-reduced coconut milk



The key issue in this recipe is the high amount of carbs. One small piece of cake Carbs = 36.6g carbs that's equivalent to 2 slices of bread.

Example of One-Day Meal Plan



Breakfast

- 1 Vietnamese bread roll
- 1 egg (boiled or scrambled)
- 1 medium tomato sliced
- 1 slice low fat cheese or 1/4 cup low fat ricotta cheese

- 1 cup Vietnamese style coffee (made with low fat milk + 1 tsp sugar)



Morning Snack

- 1 piece of Banh da lợn
- 1 piece of fruit
- 1 cup of green tea



Lunch

- 1/2 cup steam rice
- 170g Tofu with scallion and fish sauce
- 1 cup cooked green leaves with mince pork soup



Dinner

- 1/2 cup steam rice
- 1 cup cooked Vietnamese spinach with garlic
- 65g Pork and egg stew
- Before bed-1 cup warm soy/cow milk



Afternoon Snack

- 3/4 cup (200g) of low fat yoghurt
- 1 piece of fruit



Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do we lose or gain weight?

Energy is the way we measure how much food we are consuming and using each day. It can be written in calories (cal) or kilojoules (kJ). The best way to think about weight loss or weigh gain is through a scale.

- If we regularly consume more kilojoules than our body uses, we will store extra energy as fat and we are more likely to experience weight gain.
- If we regularly eat and drink fewer kilojoules than our body needs, we are more likely to experience weight loss.



2. Which kind of cooking oil is the best?

- The type of oil we use depends on the type of cooking we do as every fat has a different smoking points, which is when the fats we use begins to breakdown and become unhealthy and loses its flavour (American Heart Association, 2018).
- As a rule of thumb, it's good to remember that oils like extra virgin olive oil have a low smoking point, so it is the healthiest option for foods that don't require cooking like salads. Canola oil, sunflower oil or light olive oil is best for general cooking.
- Another thing to consider is how we cook our foods. We should avoid deep frying where possible and swap to baking, air-frying, or stir-frying in a pan instead. We should also try to use non-sticking pans. This will reduce the overall amount of oil we add to our food, making it generally a lot healthier.



3. Are nuts healthy?

- Nuts are a good source of healthy fats and protein and can be eaten as a snack or an extra topping in our foods. These healthy fats support our hormones, lowers our cholesterol and is generally good for our overall wellbeing.
- However, it's important to remember that nuts contain fats, and eating a large amount of them, even though they are healthy, can be harmful to our health.
- Aiming to have 8-12, or a ¼ of a palm of any nuts as a snack throughout the day provides us with enough healthy fats to support our body and a healthy lifestyle (Baker Heart & Diabetes Institute, 2021).



4. How many eggs can be eaten daily?

- The Australian Heart Foundation states that we should have no more than 7 eggs in a week if you are currently suffering from high cholesterol, have existing heart conditions or have type 2 diabetes. We should limit our intake of eggs to only 7 because of the amount of cholesterol that are in them. Consuming a high amount of cholesterol can increase our risk of developing heart related diseases. (Heart Foundation Australia, 2019)
- However, if you don't have any health concerns, there is no limit to the number of eggs that can be consumed. Eggs are a great source of protein, healthy fats and vitamin D. (Heart Foundation Australia, 2019).



5. What is the best alternative for cow's milk?

- Consuming cow's milk can create pain or discomfort for some people because we may struggle to digest it or have an intolerance. When swapping to alternative milks and dairy options, like soy, almond, oat, or others, we should always remember to check for how much calcium is in the other option (Better Health Channel, 2011).
- Make sure to pick alternatives that have similar calcium levels to regular cow's milk or have added calcium to the milk. These products will say 'calcium-fortified' on the packaging. Milk alternatives with a calcium content as close to 120mg/100ml is a good alternative to cow's milk.
- Calcium keeps our bones, teeth and joints strong as we age so it is important to maintain our intake of dairy foods, like milk, to provide us with this nutrient.



6. What is your advice for choosing a healthier soy sauce for seasoning foods?

- Soy sauce can be high in salt and can increase your sodium intake very quickly. High sodium intake can increase our risk of chronic conditions including high blood pressure, heart disease and kidney disease (NEMO, 2015). A higher salt intake also makes us more thirsty and hold onto fluid.
- Swapping soy sauce for a reduced salt soy sauce option or flavouring foods with dried or fresh herbs, lemon, pepper and garlic or onions. These will provide enough flavour to your meals without adding more salt to our intake.



7. What are some statistics related to Chronic Disease in Australia?

Over

1.7
MILLION

Australians are diagnosed with Type II diabetes every year (280 people every day).¹



35%

of Australians who develop Type II Diabetes every year are born overseas.²



Cardiovascular disease is the **leading cause of death** amongst CALD populations.⁴



Over

620,000

people are diagnosed with heart disease in Australia every year and it kills more than 52 Australians every day.³



There are over

100

people every day that suffer from strokes.⁵



Appendix: Australian Dietary Guidelines Recommended Serves for All Age Groups

	Age	Vegetables & Legumes / Beans	Fruit	Grain Foods (Cereal foods)	Meats & Poultry (eggs, nuts, tofu, fish)	Dairy (milk, yoghurt, cheese)	Unsaturated Fats & Oils	Water (L)
Boys	2-3	2½	1	4	1	1½	½	1.4
	4-8	4½	1½	4	1½	2	1	1.6
	9-11	5	2	5	2½	2½	1	2.2
	12-13	5½	2	6	2½	3½	1½	2.2
	14-18	5½	2	7	2½	3½	2	2.7
Men	19-50	6	2	6	3	2½	4	2.6
	51-70	5½	2	6	2½	2½	4	2.6
	70+	5	2	4½	2½	3½	2	2.6
Girls	2-3	2½	1	4	1	1½	½	1.4
	4-8	4½	1½	4	1½	1½	1	1.6
	9-11	5	2	4	2½	3	1	1.9
	12-13	5	2	5	2½	3½	1½	1.9
	14-18	5	2	7	2½	3½	2	2.2
	Pregnant (up to 18 years)	5	2	8	3½	3½	2	1.8
	Breastfeeding (up to 18 years)	5½	2	9	2½	4	2	2.3
Women	19-50	5	2	6	2½	2½	2	2.1
	51-70	5	2	4	2	4	2	2.1
	70+	5	2	3	2	4	2	2.1
	Pregnant (19-50 years)	5	2	8½	3½	2½	2	2.3
	Breastfeeding (19-50 years)	7½	2	9	2½	2½	2	2.6

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The resource is distributed by the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland Chronic Disease Program as an information source only. We try to make sure it is accurate and up to date, however, it is not to replace any medical advice. Please contact your doctor or health professional for your own medical advice.

Notes:

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

