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Living healthy

report
2024



Protecting the health of our **FUTURE GENERATIONS**

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY WOOLWORTHS GROUP

About this report

The *Living Healthy Reports (2022, 2023, 2024)* are produced by Healthylife's Advisory Board, a part of Woolworths Group. These are evidence-based documents providing an annual 'pulse check' on Australians' health. Their themes are relevant to their times with the Advisory Board's thoughts on 'Next steps' to further improve our health.

The reports combine key statistics with unique Woolworths Group data, grouped into 'pillars' with this year's being: Eat Healthy, Move & Sleep Healthy, Feel Healthy and Stay Healthy. Many Woolworths Group initiatives shared in the reports showcase how actions align with both the Healthylife purpose – *Helping everyone to live their healthy life* – and the Woolworths Group purpose – *We create better experiences together for a better tomorrow.*

They focus on prevention measures, including how our environments influence our health. Woolworths Group creates many environments with its large national footprint, and this comes with a responsibility to ensure these enable good health and make it easier for us all to include healthy habits in our daily lives.

The reports are a useful summary reference for partners and policymakers. *The Living Healthy Report 2024* focuses on children's health, primarily those aged 5–14. How are our children faring, what is influencing their health, and what can we do to protect their future wellbeing?

Acknowledgement of country

Healthylife and Woolworths Group acknowledge the many Traditional Owners of the lands on which we operate, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We recognise their strengths and enduring connection to lands, waters and skies as the Custodians of the oldest continuing cultures on the planet. Woolworths Group supports the invitation set out in the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* to walk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are committed to actively contributing to Australia's reconciliation journey through listening and learning, empowering more diverse voices, caring deeply for our communities and working together for a better tomorrow.

Disclaimer

This report does not provide health or medical advice and does not consider your individual circumstances, health or dietary requirements. No representation is made about individual improvements to health. The information published is not intended as a substitute for health or medical advice. If you have any concerns or questions about your health, you should consult with your GP or other health professional.

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This report tells a story about Australian children's health, aged 5-14. Our environments are impacting our children's health; action is needed for good health in adulthood.



HERE'S WHAT'S INSIDE - AND WHY IT MATTERS.

Screen time challenges

Physical activity is declining and recreational screen time is increasing. Both trends are concerning, with support needed for parents.

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Cheaper to eat healthy

See how a healthy shop that meets the Australian Dietary Guidelines is cheaper than the average Australian household food shop.

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Changing healthcare

We increasingly seek information and healthcare online. Telehealth services can be accessible, and time and resource-efficient.

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Protecting our future generations' health.

Children born in the decade from 2023 are predicted to have a lower life expectancy than their parents, due partly to an unhealthy diet. To change this trajectory, we need to target risk factors in children to reduce chronic diseases in adulthood.

Approximately 5.5 million years of healthy life were lost in 2022 to injury, illness or premature death. Protecting our next generation's health, the 4.8 million children aged 0–14 living in Australia (as of 2022), is an investment in our future.

This report finds no shift from previous years towards Australian households meeting the Australian Dietary Guidelines. None of the core food group serving targets were met for adults 19–50 years or children 9–18 years. Discretionary foods are still the biggest contributor to total serves, at around 37% of spending. These purchasing patterns are concerning for families' health. Food Tracker powered by Healthylife is a free tool to help with purchasing a healthier shopping basket, and we are pleased to say it is gaining traction.

Promising news: our unique data reveals a healthy food shop is cheaper than the average household shop by 7%, with opportunities to reduce spend even further (Woolworths' supermarket average pricing).

Physical activity is declining and recreational screen time is increasing. Both trends are concerning. Around one-quarter of children weigh more than expected and this increases as they age, to around two-thirds of adults. We found that whilst nearly all 6–7 year-olds were getting the recommended hours of sleep on school nights, only 25% of those aged 12–13 were, a pattern not desirable to take into adulthood.

The number of young people experiencing mental ill-health has grown by 50% over the last 15 years and the incidence of social anxiety disorder

has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. 'FOMO' (fear of missing out) keeps many engaged with social media, even when they might prefer to disengage. It is pleasing to see increased awareness of neurodiversity, with diagnosis rates for neurodivergent conditions increasing. However, we seek further reductions in social stigma and increased support for parents.

The chronic conditions causing the greatest burden of disease for children are asthma then anxiety disorders. Telehealth use continues, with Healthylife's commencement in this space a way families can access health services. More information to support parents around correct use of prescription and over-the-counter medicines, health supplements, incorporating healthy lifestyle modifications and how to avoid detrimental ones, such as youth vaping, would be beneficial.

The environments we live, work and play in can make leading a healthy lifestyle challenging, with hundreds of unhealthy food and drink and gambling advertisements, simulated gambling in video games and social media influencing children's behaviour.

It is vital to ask about the environments we create and their impact on community health. Even small actions can lead to positive change. Woolworths Group, along with others, influence the determinants of health nationally. As Woolworths enters its 100th year in 2024, how the Group influences community health in the next 100 years will be critical to future generations.



EAT healthy

1 in 10

children aged 2–14 met the recommendations for vegetable serves

27%

of children aged 5–14 have higher-than-expected body weight

41%

of children aged 2–17 drink sugar-sweetened drinks at least once weekly

MOVE & SLEEP healthy

25%

of children aged 12–13 are meeting minimum sleep guidelines on school nights

26%

of children met the Australian physical activity guidelines of at least 60 minutes a day¹

32%

of children met the recommended screen-based activity guidelines

FEEL healthy

50%

of adult mental health conditions emerge before the age of 14

66%

of children aged 8–12 tended to worry mostly about issues affecting their families

7 in 10

presentations to paediatricians are for mental health

STAY healthy

#1

cause of disease burden in 2022 for children aged 5–14 was asthma

2 in 5

children aged 0–14 had one or more chronic conditions

11%

of children have hay fever – the most common children's condition

WOOLWORTHS GROUP STATS:

7%

cheaper to purchase a healthy food shop that meets the Australian Dietary Guidelines

135K

kids participated in sport via Woolworths-supported junior pathway programs

72K

children's books provided in 3 years via the Breakfast Library program BIG W supports

344K

people signed up to Food Tracker by Healthylife

¹ Based on the Australian physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines.

Our commitment to health.



Welcome to the third edition of the *Living Healthy Report*, brought to you by Healthylife supported by Woolworths Group.

The focus for this year is the generational change and challenges we see with children's health (5–14 years), our future generations and the bedrock for healthy communities. Though with these challenges, childhood is also the opportunity to lay the foundations for good health and wellbeing in adulthood, and Healthylife and the Woolworths Group are passionate about supporting children's health.

The Healthylife team wake up and think about health every day and deliver Healthylife's purpose, *to help everyone live their healthy life*. Along with this is the Woolworths Group health goal: *Make health easier for all Australians and New Zealanders*, and in 2023, a proud addition to the health commitments, a commitment specific to the health

of families and kids: *Inspire and empower the next generation to make healthier easier through fun and engaging activities, healthier products kids love and ideas for families.*

Since last year's report, Healthylife has been focused on making health more accessible by connecting customers to doctors via telehealth, increasing our range of quality health products, expanding the reach of same-day health solutions by working with Healthylife pharmacy and also extending the reach of our world first Food Tracker tool – which simplifies food, a major contributor to health outcomes.

We are on the way to achieving our Healthylife goal of 1 million Australians using the Food Tracker tool and engaging with our free online Health Programs by December 2024:

~344K people signed up
▲ from 180K

~130K Health program total completions

At Healthylife we are committed, proactive and passionate about improving health and are continuing to build a health business that people trust. Our Healthylife Advisory Board have listed their recommended 'Next steps' in each of the report's sections to advocate for improvements in health within the Woolworths Group and the wider community.

Healthylife and Woolworths Group can play an important role in our families' and children's health. Although many initiatives are already in place, there is more work that can be done.

Ananth Sarathy

Chief Executive Officer, Healthylife



Who is Healthylife and its Advisory Board?

Healthylife is a health expert- and evidence-led health business for health, wellness and pharmacy needs. We are part of Woolworths Group. Our purpose is to help everyone live their healthy life. We pride ourselves on delivering trusted products and services and easy-to-understand information. Our health team and Advisory Board ensure our initiatives are science-based.

To date, we have invested significantly in curating our product range and offering free health programs, free information and an automated nutrition tool, Food Tracker. Food Tracker makes it easier to understand a Woolworths supermarket shop's nutritional balance.

Since our last report, we have introduced telehealth service offerings with doctors and naturopaths. SuperPharmacy is now Healthylife Pharmacy, with brick-and-mortar stores rebranded, a new accessible logo and digital offerings moved to the Healthylife website.

The Healthylife team and Advisory Board advocate to government, industry, partners and the public to improve our health and wellbeing. We challenge ourselves and the Woolworths Group to keep doing better.

The Healthylife Advisory Board

All our Advisory Board members are qualified health professionals in their field, bringing many perspectives and experiences. They are:



Simone Austin
Chief Health Officer, Healthylife
Chair of Advisory Board and
Accredited Practising Dietitian



Stevie Wring
General Manager of Health
and Nutrition, Woolworths Group
Public Health Nutritionist and
Lifestyle Medicine Practitioner



Dr Moira Junge
Registered Health Psychologist
CEO, Sleep Health Foundation



Dr Dinesh Palipana
Emergency Department Doctor
Senior Medical School Lecturer
and Lawyer, person with a spinal
cord injury



Sarah Gray
Chief of Health Operations
and Innovation, Healthylife
Registered Pharmacist
and Nutritionist



Dr Rob McCartney
Chief Medical Officer,
Woolworths Group
Occupational and
Environmental Physician

Let's talk protecting kids' health.

With Woolworths Group celebrating its 100th birthday this year, now is the perfect time to think about how positive influences on future generations' health can be dialled up.

The estimate that children born in 2023 may have a shorter life expectancy than their parents due largely to an unhealthy diet is shocking. It is one of the key reasons for choosing children's health as this report's theme.

The odds of having a healthy lifestyle are stacked against us, and framing it as a matter of 'parental responsibility' alone is not a solution. We know that our environments impact our health significantly. The good news is that we can make changes to address many health challenges.

In my ideal world, we wouldn't have to 'opt in' to a healthy lifestyle as it would be happening all around us. It is easier said than done to coordinate government, industry and the whole community to make system-wide changes. However, we must try. Parents want their children to be healthy, and children want to enjoy good health.

The dietitian in me is especially pleased to see that our data shows a healthy shop that aligns with the Australian Dietary Guidelines can be more affordable than the current average purchased one, which doesn't. This highlights that the visibility, accessibility and desirability of healthy foods must increase. The report's insights, including that a healthy diet is more affordable, must be shared widely, as many people perceive that a healthy diet is more expensive than a less nourishing one.

Strategies to get children moving more, along with monitoring social media, gaming and screen time's impacts on sleep and mental wellbeing are necessary if we want healthy children in the future. A society where children embrace a healthy sleep routine, are active and stay away from unhealthy habits such as vaping, is a key goal.

Our 'Next steps' aim to provoke action. Healthylife, Woolworths Group and many other stakeholders have the opportunity and privilege to play a role in creating more supportive and enabling environments for children's and families' good health. Even small changes can make significant differences, particularly when executed nationally.

While reading, I invite you to consider what positive changes you can initiate, as healthy children are more likely to grow into healthy adults with increased years of healthy living.



Simone Austin
Chief Health Officer, Healthylife

IN MY IDEAL WORLD:

We wouldn't have to 'opt in' to a healthy lifestyle as it would be happening all around us.



#1

concern for parents is excessive screen time

55%

of children aged 11-16 recall seeing gambling advertisements on social media

37%

of the average food shop is spent on discretionary food



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Environments influence our health

We need to ensure environments support positive health outcomes.

Many factors lie outside the health system and individuals' control, underpinning why some Australians are more likely to engage in less healthy behaviours. These are the broader determinants of health: the social, environmental, structural, economic, cultural, biomedical, commercial and digital environments in which we live, work, play and age.

Research demonstrates the impacts of childhood environments: for example, a child's outcomes can vary depending on their social environments, including where they live and their family's circumstances. While a positive start in life helps children to reach their full potential, a poor start increases the chances of adverse outcomes.

Promoting equity of access to healthcare, healthy food, education and other determinants of health is a must if we want future generations to enjoy more years of good health.

The National Obesity Strategy's ambitions include 'creating healthy environments to make it easier to lead healthier lives'. The National Preventive Health Strategy says it will ensure that 'children grow up in communities that nurture their healthy development – providing the best start to life'.

Woolworths Group, along with many other stakeholders in the community, has a role in helping create environments that impact health positively. This report focuses on creating environments that support parents and children's health.



Air pollution

- Asthma (clean environments, e.g. schools, homes)



Green and public spaces

- Social connection
- Time spent outdoors
- Increased physical activity
- Mental wellbeing



Family situation

- Need for strong, cohesive family relationships and role models
- Economic security
- Safe family environment



Education

- Higher-skilled and better-paid jobs typically mean healthier food, better health insurance and healthcare access, and capacity for self-care
- Greater health literacy to make informed decisions



Health care

- Equity of access to quality health care and services



Commercial determinants

- Influence of marketing and advertising of products
- Product development, some beneficial and others detrimental to health
- Corporate social responsibility strategies



Digital health

- Telehealth and diagnostic tools
- Digital platforms and devices – services, advice and products



Food environments

- Closer proximity to grocery shops (less to fast food)
- Access to affordable, healthier food, community gardens
- Marketing and placement of unhealthy and healthy food



Transport, Walkability

- Public transport options
- 'Walkable' distance to destinations, e.g. schools, shops, recreation spaces
- Active travel, e.g. walking paths, cycling tracks



Cultural

- Cultural, religious and spiritual practices and beliefs



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Profile of children & families in Australia.

Delving into the ABS reported data on 30 June 2022 and the 2021 census, we paint a picture of the diverse profile of children and families living in Australia:



WHO?

4.8M

children aged 0–14 lived in Australia

6.4M

children are predicted to be living in Australia by 2048



51% boys

49% girls



WHERE DO THEY LIVE? Of these children aged 0–14:

72%

lived in Major cities

18%

lived in the lowest socioeconomic areas

7.9%

were born overseas

6.0%

were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

FAMILY MAKEUP According to the 2021 census, there are:

6.73M

families across Australia



39% Couples without children

36% Couples with children¹

10% One-parent families with dependent children

8% Couples with non-dependent children

6% One-parent families with non-dependent children

<2% Other

¹ Up to 14 years or dependent students aged 15–24.

Leading causes of disease burden in children

In 2020–21, around 44% of children aged 0–14 had at least one long-term chronic condition.

In 2022, the most common condition among children aged 5–14 was hay fever (allergic rhinitis). However, asthma was the leading cause of disease burden – approximately 8.7% of Australian children aged 0–14 have asthma as a long-term condition (lasting for six months or more). Anxiety disorders were the next-biggest contributor to the burden of disease.

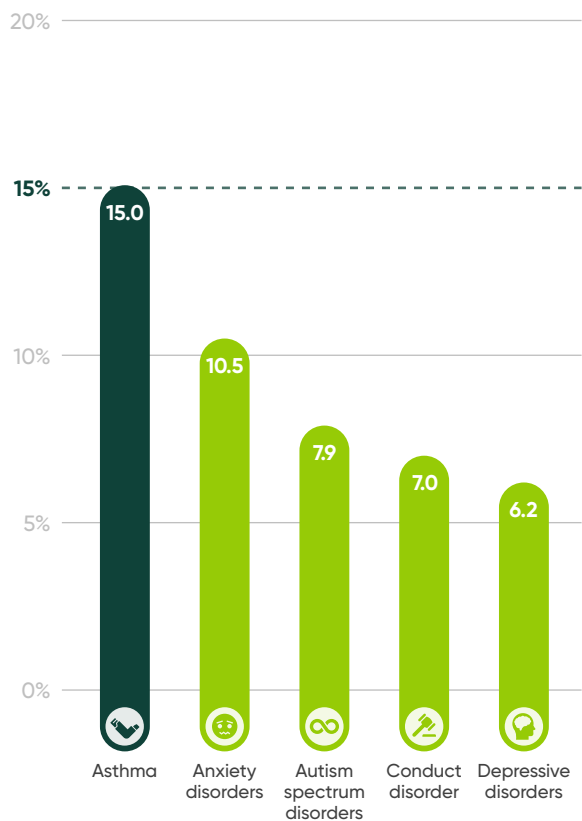


Health is a spectrum. The variety of health conditions in our children is broad, including diabetes, asthma, autism, coeliac disease and anxiety. In the rich tapestry of our society, this is normal. For each and every child, addressing risk factors and with appropriate health access, the future is bright."



Dr Dinesh Palipana
Emergency Department Doctor

Leading causes of total burden among children aged 5–14, 2022 (%)



Source: www.aihw.gov.au

Concerns around **body weight**

An Australian first shows modelling projections about the negative impact of higher-than-expected body weight on future generations' life expectancy. Queensland Health and Wellbeing suggests rates will need to at least halve to restore life expectancy to that enjoyed by earlier generations.

Around 1 in 4 (~27%) Australian children aged 5–14 in 2017–18 experienced higher-than-expected body weight, and 7% lower, with similar numbers between boys and girls. Childhood nutrition is critical, as humans experience their biggest increase in weight as they transition from childhood to early adulthood. Children above their expected weight should be allowed to grow into

their weight as they increase in height, rather than focusing on weight loss. Primary school-aged children with higher-than-expected body weight are more likely to be bullied, with mental health concerns the most commonly reported health risk for these children, suggesting the stigma itself is the most significant health risk.

The National Obesity Strategy aims to reduce the number of children aged 2–17 above expected body weight by at least 5% by 2030. This aspirational target requires a societal approach that shifts away from blaming individuals and towards addressing causes and creating environments that make it easier to lead healthier lives.

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Eat healthy

Childhood years are food habit-forming years. Healthy food provides an important protective factor against chronic disease into adulthood.

7%

of children aged 2-17 drink sugar-sweetened drinks daily, the average being ~2.4 cups, or one 600ml bottle¹

7%

cheaper to purchase a healthy food shop than the average Australian household shop³

1 in 10

children aged 2-14 met the serve recommendations for vegetables²

3%

of the purchased Meat & alternatives food group serves are from legumes³

SO WHAT?

This number is too low. We need more legumes in the diet as they are nutritious and economical.

¹ ABS 2017-18 data shows for children aged 2-17.
² According to self-reported data from the ABS 2020-21 National Health Survey for children aged 2-14.
³ Adjusted Woolworths supermarket & Metro data.



ENCOURAGE KIDS
TO KEEP TRYING
A RANGE OF
DIFFERENT FOODS



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What are Australian Households purchasing and our children eating?

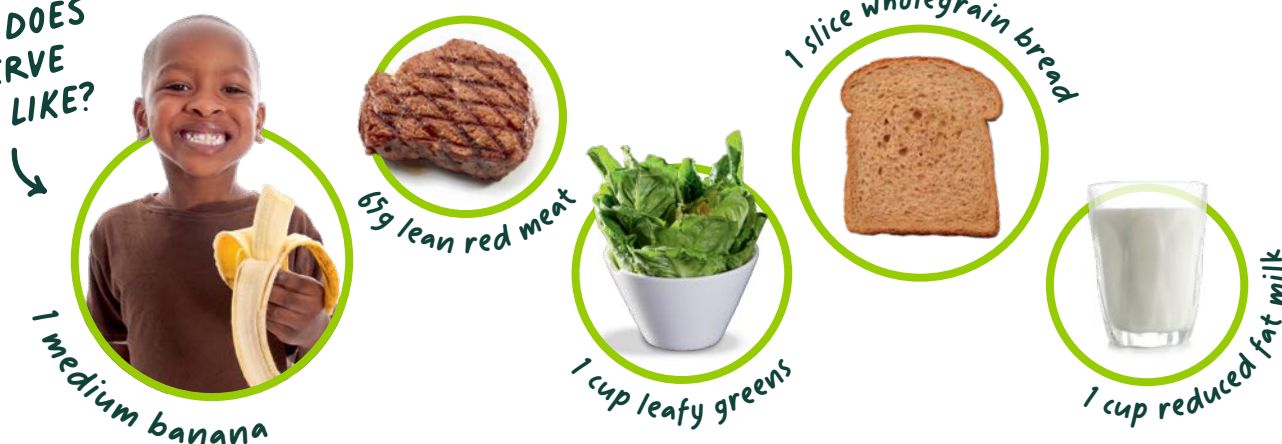
On a collective basis, currently, too few Australian adults and children follow the Australian Dietary Guidelines (ADGs). Our data shows that the food purchased by Australian households does not meet the recommended daily serves for any of the core food groups for the age groups below; we are closest for the Grain serves for females 9–11 years. Discretionary foods contribute more serves than any other food group, around one-third of total serves purchased, with little change across the 2020–2023 data, which is concerning.

Number of serves purchased compared to the Australian Dietary Guidelines

The below data shows the number of serves of the five food groups and Discretionary (sometimes) foods Australians purchased across all retail outlets for at-home eating from 2020–2023 compared to the Australian Dietary Guidelines' recommendations. See 'How we built this report' for the method used.

Food Group	Recommended serves per person per day		Purchased serves per person per day			
	9–11 years	19–50 years	2023	2022	2021	2020
 Vegetables & legumes	5	Male: 6 Female: 5	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.7
 Fruit	2	2	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6
 Meat & alternatives ¹	2.5	Male: 3 Female: 2.5	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.2
 Grains ¹	Male: 5 Female: 4	6	3.9	3.8	4.0	4.0
 Dairy & alternatives ¹	Male: 2.5 Female: 3	2.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7
 Discretionary (sometimes) foods	0–3 ²	0–3 ²	6.1	6.0	6.8	6.7

WHAT DOES A SERVE LOOK LIKE?



- 1 The ADGs define 'Grains' as grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties; 'Meat and meat alternatives' as lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds and meat alternatives; and 'Dairy and dairy alternatives' as milk, yoghurt, cheese and dairy alternatives (mostly reduced fat).
- 2 Additional serves for more active, taller or older children and adults from five food groups or discretionary foods.



We are no closer to hitting dietary targets in Australian households in four years

Australian household purchases are not moving closer to achieving the Australian Dietary Guidelines, shown by little change in the data from 2020–2023. The data shows the number of serves of the five core food groups and discretionary (sometimes) foods Australians purchase across all retail outlets for at-home eating (i.e. not cafés or restaurants) per the table opposite. We compared this to the recommended number of daily serves for children (9–11 years) and adults (19–50 years). We used aggregated Woolworths supermarket transaction data per the 'How we built this report' section.

It is not a matter of every Australian needing to tick off all the recommended serves daily; rather, it's a consistent balance over weeks and months and a population-wide statistic we must turn around. The [National Preventive Health Strategy 2021–2030](#) targets reducing the proportion of children's and adults' total energy intake from discretionary foods from >30% to <20% by 2030.

This year, we added the average cost per serve of each of the five food groups using Woolworths Supermarket average prices for the period 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023 and the average [ABS household of 2.5 people](#) (1.8 adults, 0.7 children). This allowed us to calculate the average food shop cost per household per week and the cost of a healthy household shop based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

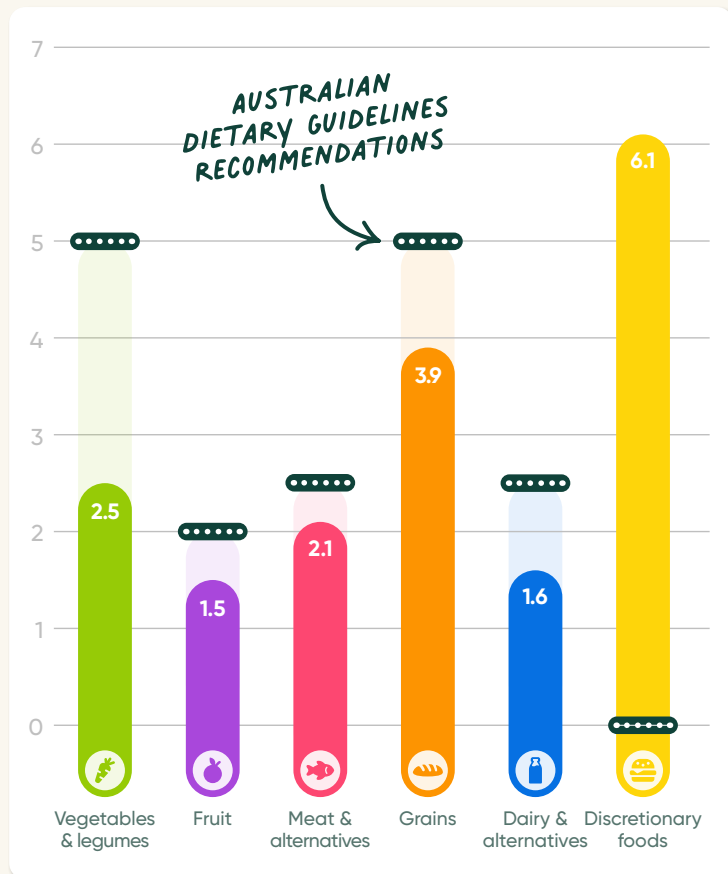


This data is concerning for the health of our children and families, as an unhealthy diet is a major contributor to the burden of disease. The trend needs to change, with healthier food available at home."



Simone Austin
Chief Health Officer,
Healthylife

Food group serves purchased by Australians for **at-home eating** (per person per day, 2023)



●●●●● ADG–recommended serves per person per day male 9–11 years.



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It is cheaper to shop healthy

In 2023 we found 58%¹ of Australians believed eating healthy food is expensive, so we investigated.

Looking across the total food spend for at-home eating, our data shows the average Australian household (ABS) spends \$233.63 per week but does not meet the Australian Dietary Guidelines. If Australian households aligned their shopping with the Dietary Guidelines, they would spend \$216.05 per week, a 7% saving. There is potential for further savings if seasonal produce is favoured, brands are varied and some lower-cost items from the same food group are swapped, e.g. legumes replace some meat. The shop was calculated using Woolworths average per-serve pricing, detailed in 'How we built this report'.



Vegetables & legumes

Vegetables, at an average of \$0.65/serve, cost less than discretionary foods, with frozen (\$0.50/serve) and canned (\$0.30/serve) vegetables providing opportunities for healthier, more affordable baskets.



Fruit

Fruit, at an average \$0.92/serve, is more expensive than discretionary food serves, however, 100% fruit juice, the top contributor to the category, is \$0.50/serve. A serve of fruit juice is 125ml, and whilst it can contribute to fruit serves, it is important to include mostly whole fruit such as bananas (on average, \$0.70/serve) and melons (\$0.30/serve).



Meat & alternatives

Legumes made it into the top 10 contributing foods of the Meat and meat alternatives category; however they make up only 3% of the total. With canned legumes, for example, kidney beans, economical at \$0.50/serve, and a diet low in legumes the leading dietary risk factor for chronic disease, there is significant potential to increase their contribution. This would positively impact a healthy basket's price and 'healthiness'.



Grains

Grains is the cheapest food group at \$0.31/serve, less than half of discretionary foods at \$0.78/serve. With a diet low in whole grains the second-ranking dietary risk factor for chronic disease, eating more could be an economical way to a healthier diet.



Dairy & alternatives

Dairy and alternatives are on par with discretionary foods at an average \$0.78/serve; however, milk, the top contributor, is only \$0.50/serve. Interestingly, plant-based milk was, on average, more than twice the cost of cow's milk, at \$1.20/serve.



Discretionary (sometimes) foods

Discretionary foods were on average 37% of total spend. The main contributors to discretionary food purchases included biscuits and ice cream, both with an average \$0.60/serve. Foods such as delicatessen meats, muesli bars, chips and dips were all more than \$0.78/serve.

A healthy family shop

We developed a healthy food shop, with all the food needed for a week to meet the Australian Dietary Guidelines for a family (male and female 19–50 years, female 8 years, male 14 years). See the 'Healthy weekly family shop' at the end of the report.

7%

cheaper to purchase a healthy food shop than the average Australian household shop

¹ IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2023 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2023, n=2000.



The need to shift to healthier eating patterns

This data shows that household purchases across all retail for at-home eating are not meeting the Australian Dietary Guidelines and are costing more than a healthy diet. Supermarkets are the main food source for most Australian households, making them key drivers for change.

The supermarket environment, including pricing, the amount of shelf space allocated to different products and the promotion of foods in high-traffic areas, influences what people buy. Woolworths Supermarkets are increasing healthier options across the store. For parents shopping with children, this is of particular importance. ‘Pester power’ is real, and shopping with children (and parents) who have impulsive behaviours can make it more difficult to shop for healthy food – especially if discretionary foods are placed in easy reach of children. The design of Woolworths Metro stores elevates healthier foods, with plenty of quick and easy dinner options highly visible near the front of store and healthy snack options incorporated in the overall snack range.

The National Obesity Strategy talks about a healthier food system as a strategy to improve health. It reports that **Australians said the most significant barrier to consuming healthier food and drinks was that ‘there are too many unhealthy and processed food and drinks available’.**

Making healthier products as visible and accessible as possible can assist families to shift their spending toward the five core food groups, exposing our children to more healthy foods in their household.

Cost of Weekly Household Food Shops

ADG ¹ Food Group	Cost per serve ¹	Healthy shop serves/week ²	Healthy shop cost/week	Average household shop serves/week	Average household shop cost/week
Vegetables & legumes	\$0.65	93.8	\$60.97	46.2	\$30.03
Fruit	\$0.92	35.0	\$32.20	27.3	\$25.12
Meat & alternatives	\$1.23	46.9	\$57.69	38.5	\$47.36
Grains	\$0.31	100.1	\$31.03	70.7	\$21.92
Dairy & alternatives	\$0.78	43.8	\$34.16	29.4	\$22.93
Discretionary (sometimes)	\$0.78	0	\$0.00	110.6	\$86.27
Total serves		319.6	\$216.05	323	\$233.63

Household based on ABS average household composition of 1.8 adults, 0.7 children (0.9 each of 19–50 male, 19–50 female, 0.7 of 9–11 male).

- 1 Costing based on Woolworths Supermarket average prices for the period 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023.
- 2 Healthy shop = serves per the Australian Dietary Guidelines.



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Top contributors to food groups

from Woolworths Supermarket 2023 data



Vegetables & legumes

1. Potatoes
2. Tomatoes
3. Canned vegetables
4. Carrots
5. Frozen vegetables
6. Lettuce
7. Brassica vegetables (e.g. broccoli)
8. Onions
9. Avocados
10. Tomato paste/pasta sauce



Fruit

1. Juices (100% fruit)
2. Bananas
3. Apples
4. Melons
5. Dried fruit
6. Grapes
7. Oranges & lemons
8. Strawberries
9. Mandarins
10. Canned fruit



Meat & alternatives

1. Poultry
2. Beef
3. Eggs
4. Hot food (e.g. roast chicken)
5. Nuts
6. Lamb
7. Pork
8. Seafood
9. Spreads (e.g. peanut butter)
10. Legumes



Grains

1. Bread
2. Breakfast cereal
3. Rice
4. Pasta
5. Flour
6. Noodles
7. Other bread (e.g. muffins, crumpets, fruit loaf)
8. Biscuits (savoury)
9. Mexican foods
10. Frozen pizza



Dairy & alternatives

1. Milk (dairy)
2. Cheese (dairy)
3. Longlife milk & soy drinks
4. Yoghurt (dairy)
5. Milk (flavoured)
6. Breakfast liquid
7. Cheese on pizza
8. Custard
9. Plant-based milk (fresh)
10. Cheese spreads



Discretionary (sometimes) foods

1. Biscuits
2. Ice cream
3. Butter & margarine
4. Chips
5. Chocolates
6. Sugar
7. Soft drinks
8. Frozen chips/wedges
9. Cream
10. Muesli bars

Based on Woolworths Supermarket data 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023, using Australian Dietary Guidelines food group serving sizes.



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Reasons for not eating healthy: **survey findings**

The annual Woolworths Food and Health Survey¹ monitors changes in consumers' food and health perceptions and behaviours. When looking at the data it shows:

- 58% of respondents believed that eating healthy food is expensive.
- Reasons for not eating healthy included lack of time, inspiration or knowledge and budget constraints.
- Only 25% of respondents thought that canned vegetables were nutritious, and 42% believed that frozen vegetables are as nutritious as fresh.
- 47% of respondents thought legumes were a source of protein, whilst only 29% thought they contributed to vegetable intake.
- New and young families are more likely to seek out value in supermarket own brand products and/or rely on supermarkets to help them choose healthier products.

These insights show families could benefit from strategies to support healthier eating, such as:

- Healthy options and signage in high-traffic areas, and healthier recipes aligning with product promotions.
- Promoting canned vegetables and legumes as nutritious and affordable foods.
- Using available tools, e.g. Woolworths unit price filter, to help with cost.
- Using Food Tracker tool by Healthylife to assist with a healthy shop.

Insights from **2023 purchasing data:**

- An increase in ready-to-eat refrigerated and freezer meals year-on-year, particularly in single-serve meals aimed at the health and fitness area, and children's meals. One reason for the increase is that more options are available.
- Microwave rice increased by 20% (rice overall +4.3%).
- A positive increase in wholewheat pasta by 21% (pasta overall +6.5%).
- Strawberries (28%) and blueberries (40%) saw significant purchase increases as production grew, reducing average prices.
- Despite prices increasing, eggs overtook hot food as the third-highest contributor to the Meat and Alternatives food group.
- Potato chips (crisps) decreased by ~6%.
- Children's product sales (e.g. pouch yoghurts) increased 14% from 2022–2023, while the cheese snack category increased by 6.7%.

¹ IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2023 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2023, n=2000.





Woolworths Group helps families develop healthier eating habits

Woolworths Group has implemented a range of initiatives that support healthier eating for children and families, with some outlined below, and recognising there is always room to do more.

Food Tracker by Healthylife

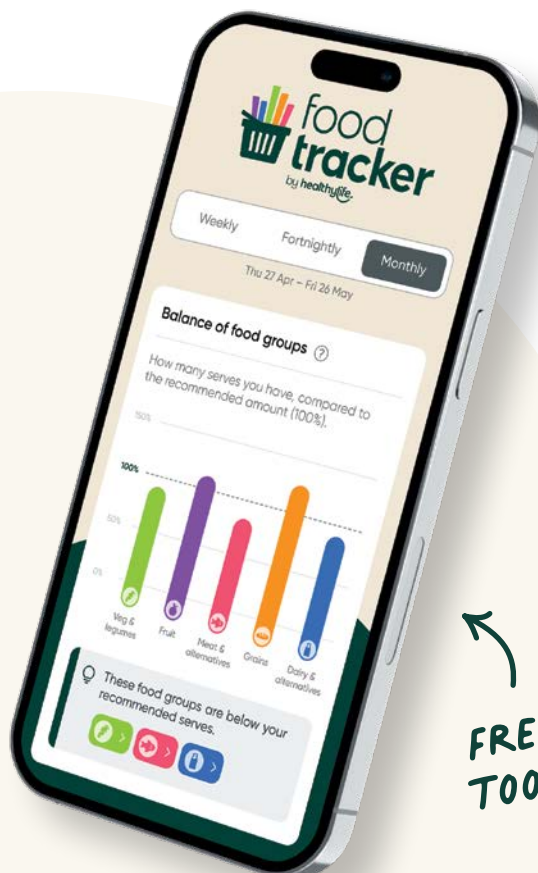
Healthylife's free Food Tracker tool has more than 344,000 Australians signed up. It shows how many serves of each food group a customer has purchased, compared to the Australian Dietary Guidelines' recommended amount for their household. Shoppers link their Everyday Rewards (EDR) card first, then scan their card when they shop and have their shop analysed. Food Tracker can be accessed on the Woolworths app, EDR app and Healthylife website.

Food Tracker has shown promising results, with active users buying more core foods than our control (non-Food Tracker users). Serves of the Grains and Vegetables food groups have increased by over 10% on average per household, Fruit by 8.3%, Dairy & alternatives by 9.6%, Meat & alternatives by 10.6% and Discretionary foods by 8.3%. This gave an overall small but important ratio increase of core foods vs discretionary foods of 0.3%.

Note: Active Food Tracker users are those who signed in at least three times in the first 13 weeks of their signup. We compared the pre-signup 12 weeks and post-signup 12 weeks shopping baskets vs control.

A new release of Food Tracker went live in October 2023, comprising numerous enhanced features customers requested, including new and clearer charts, nutrient tracking, personalised goal setting and reward badges as you hit targets, making healthier changes fun for the whole family.

The most popular feature has been the Healthier Options suggestions, showing a similar product with a higher Health Star Rating (HSR) than one recently purchased. Around 8,700 Food Tracker users have purchased 17,000 Healthier Options.



FREE TOOL!



Your recommendations of healthier products take away the guesswork and the tiresome reading of labels."

Virginia G
Food Tracker user



With the food swaps, I can always see it in the Food Tracker so that if I'm in store, I can easily refer back to it."

Breanna N
Food Tracker user



160 MILLION
PIECES OF FRUIT
GIVEN AWAY!

Free Fruit for Kids benefits health

Since 2015, Woolworths Supermarkets have offered the Free Fruit for Kids program, where children can have a free piece of fruit to eat while in-store. The program has given away more than 160 million pieces of fruit since it started across Australia and New Zealand.

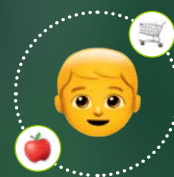
How does providing this healthy snack for kids benefit the community? An analysis¹ was conducted and found that Free Fruit for Kids had an impact beyond the shopping experience. It:

- Encourages healthy behaviours for children (choosing fruit is linked to an increased sense of autonomy, improved social behaviour, developing tastes and food preferences, and learning the benefits of a healthy diet).
- Reduces stress for parents (kids are usually happy eating fruit whilst shopping, reduced food waste at home when kids have tried fruit in-store).
- Improves overall family health (reduced discretionary food purchases).
- Provides an improved work environment for Woolworths store teams (improved child behaviour in-store, calm children, relaxed parents).



THE IMPACT

The analysis found the SROI¹ ratio to be 1:3.93, meaning every \$1 invested in Free Fruit for Kids creates \$3.93 of value. The health benefits persist beyond simply eating a piece of fruit.



¹ Free Fruit for Kids Social Return on Investment, report by HTANALYSTS, June 2023.



CAREFLIGHT AND WOOLWORTHS NIGHTCLIFF

To extend Free Fruit for Kids into the community, Woolworths Nightcliff in the Northern Territory partnered with Careflight to provide free fruit to children in remote regions. Careflight is an aeromedical charity, so while providing health care to remote communities, it also distributes free fruit, with Woolworths Supermarkets supplying, on average, 135kg weekly. Careflight team members report children bringing their parents into the clinic to get their fruit, which incentivises them to come into the clinic to check their health. The same initiative has been rolled out with a local Woolworths Supermarket and Royal Flying Doctors Service in QLD.



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Fresh Food Kids Discovery Tour

E-DISCOVERY TOURS

The Woolworths Fresh Food Kids e-Discovery Tours continue to educate Aussie kids on where their fresh food comes from. In FY23, 71,000 primary school and early learning centre students experienced the program. We conducted a Kids' Fresh Food Knowledge survey¹ in 2021 and found we could support children further with their understanding of produce. For example, kids know the names of common fruits and vegetables but less than half of those surveyed could name a leek or a beetroot. With 96% of the 6-14 year-olds reporting eating, along with watching TV, as their favourite activity, the e-discovery program hopes to inspire them to enjoy eating fresh produce.

RAISING 'GOOD EATERS'

Knowing how diet contributes to chronic disease risk highlights the importance of initiatives to raise children to be good eaters, growing up with positive eating attitudes and behaviours. Strategies to consider in health promotion and education for children around food include:

- Parents and caregivers choosing what and when to feed and children decide how much to eat, encouraging children to listen to their appetite and stop when full.
- Creating opportunities for exposure to new foods without pressure to eat them.
- Not labelling foods as good or bad, or discretionary (sometimes) foods as 'treats'.
- Role modelling: kids will learn to eat what their role models eat over time.
- Letting children choose, grow and help prepare food, fuelling their curiosity and knowledge.
- Building trust by not hiding vegetables in dishes and allowing kids to politely pick them out.
- Talking about food advertising strategies used with children, such as toy offers or free vouchers.



Healthier checkouts

Woolworths Supermarkets has changed its checkouts and aisle ends to help make it easier for customers to discover healthier food options when shopping in-store. Kids' confectionery has been removed from checkouts in all Woolworths Supermarkets and 80% of the space at checkouts has been dedicated to healthier choices with a Health Star Rating of 3.5 or above. Healthier choices have also been made available on the front and back of food aisles in Australia.

Online Fresh Food Kids Inspiration

Hundreds of Fresh Food Kids recipes are available on Woolworths' website and app. These recipes meet guidelines developed by Woolworths Group's Health & Nutrition team. In 2023, there were over 300,000 visits to Fresh Food Kids recipes. Customers are loving these recipes: Easy Meatballs, Teriyaki Chicken & Rice, Bolognese Pot Pies with Cheesy Mash, Nacho Potatoes and Sushi Rice Paper Rolls.

The Fresh Food Kids hub on the Woolworths website includes recipes, tips and programs to inspire the next generation of Fresh Food Kids. This includes the Pick Fresh Play Fresh Program partnerships with Cricket Australia, Netball Australia and Surfing Australia. Pick Fresh encourages kids to pick fresh food, which allows them to play at their best so they can follow in their sporting heroes' footsteps.



We often unconsciously privilege discretionary foods by referring to them as 'treats'. Instead, emphasise the delicious flavours, smells and vibrant colours of fresh produce to make them highly desired."



Simone Austin
Chief Health Officer, Healthylife

¹ House of Brands, Kids' Fresh Food Knowledge August 2021 Quantitative Report commissioned by Woolworths Australia, n=1004.



Using Health Star Ratings

Health Star Rating is a front-of-pack labelling system that rates the overall nutritional profile of packaged foods and can help shoppers easily compare the nutrition of similar products, typically in the same part of the shop.

Woolworths displays HSR on 100% of intended² own brand products and encourages manufacturers to consider applying it to their products. Woolworths also uses HSR in catalogues, product advertising and online. The more widely HSR is displayed, the easier it is for customers to make informed, healthier choices when shopping in-store or online. Research¹ commissioned by Woolworths found 53% of customers use HSR when making a healthier choice, and 40% use it when choosing products for their children, such as lunch box items.

Healthier Options and the HSR product filter available on Woolworths' website and app help customers discover healthier alternatives when researching or shopping online. HSR is also displayed on online product pages for packaged foods where the manufacturer has provided it. Woolworths-commissioned research¹ shows 49% of Australians who shop online were aware of these online HSR tools and of those aware, 8 in 10 claim to use them. Shoppers want to see more products displaying HSR, including online.

- 1 Fiftyfive5, Trade Partner Sustainability Council Report Wave 2, November 2023, n=1085.
- 2 Foods intended to carry the HSR system.

MORE BEANS, PLEASE!

With a diet low in legumes (beans, pulses) being the number-one dietary risk factor for chronic disease, a goal to double world consumption by 2028 makes sense. Barriers to eating more legumes include not knowing ways to prepare them, thinking they are time-consuming to prepare and that the family won't like them. Incorporating legumes into meals families already cook is one simple solution and could include:

 Can of lentils added to bolognese	
 Kidney beans in tacos and burritos	
 Soup mix into vegetable or chicken soup	
 Can of chickpeas added to a salad or stirfry	
 Lunchbox snacks of roasted chickpeas, edamame beans	



MyMahi Healthy Eating lessons

Woolworths New Zealand collaborated with MyMahi to develop healthy eating lessons for rangatahi (youths) across Aotearoa. The Hauora Kai/Healthy Eating series is tailored for secondary students in whānau (family) groups or health classes and covers the fundamentals of nutrition. As nutrition is critically important to learning and development, we were pleased to sponsor the lessons. Since the healthy eating lessons were released more than 600 teachers and mentors have accessed them, reaching more than 10,000 students.



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What's the go with school lunches and lunch boxes?

Around 30% of children's daily food intake occurs at school, mostly from their lunch boxes. Around 80% of Australian school lunches are of poor nutritional quality, with research estimating that 40% of the energy kids consume at school comes from unhealthy food, with most children eating very few or no vegetables, protein-rich foods or dairy during school hours. Preparing a lunch box can be stressful for parents. Healthylife has developed a free healthy lunch box program with tips and simple ideas. Woolworths Fresh Food Kids lunch box recipes provide inspiration.

School lunch programs

Lunch programs can reach children irrespective of economic circumstances, reduce the stigma for children not having lunch or eating different foods from their peers, develop skills in food preparation and provide nutritious options for over a decade of their lives. Another source of food at school is the canteen. A study of NSW students in 2019 found two-thirds of purchases from school canteens were high in saturated fat, total sugar and salt.

Woolworths at Work has developed initiatives to support schools better, such as webinars and helpful resources. They support many of Australia's largest Early Childhood Education providers by supplying their grocery and everyday business supply needs. They also provide tailored meal plans developed in partnership with Nutrition Australia, aiming to establish healthy eating habits from an early age.



Promoting healthy lunch boxes to nourish young minds while avoiding shaming is important to foster a positive relationship with food. A healthy lunch box varies based on individual needs and situations."



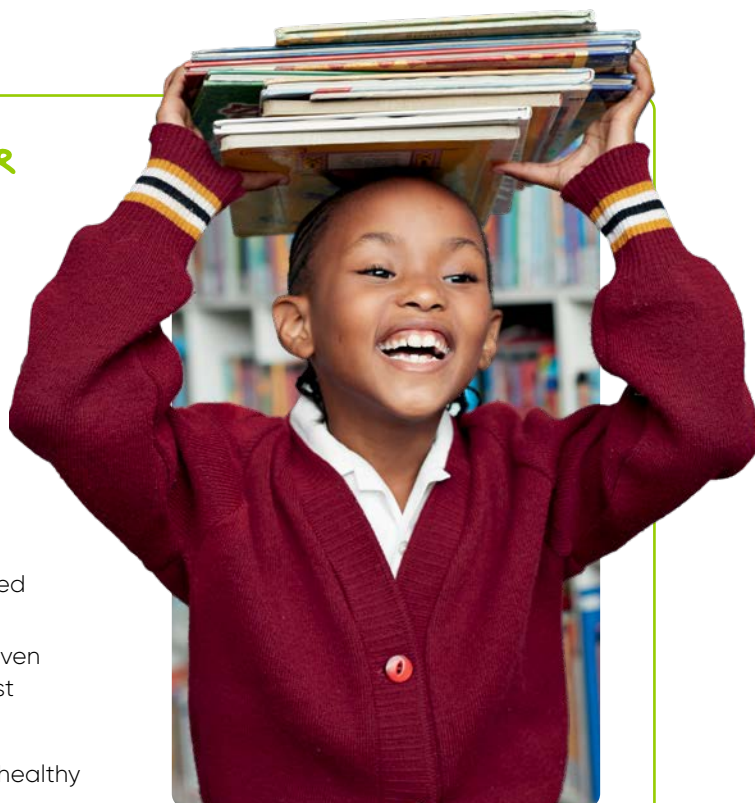
Stevie Wring
General Manager
of Health
and Nutrition,
Woolworths Group

DIETS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

An Australian study of children aged 8–15 found diet to influence academic achievement. The thought is that fruits and vegetables influence neurological activity, promoting better cognitive function. The study showed that:

- Eating two pieces of fruit every day was associated with achieving higher writing scores than those who ate fruit only three to four times a week.
- Drinking sugar-sweetened drinks was associated with lower test scores, particularly in reading.
- Eating more vegetables in the evening meal seven nights per week was associated with higher test scores in spelling and writing.

These findings reinforce the importance of making healthy food available for children.



Insight into lunch boxes: Woolworths' lunch box research

Woolworths Supermarkets engaged¹ 1,061 parents responsible for packing their kids' (5–12 years) lunch boxes for a research program on lunch boxes in 2023. Parents reported the Vegetables & legumes food group and protein-rich foods to be the least included in lunch boxes and the most difficult to include. The research found that 8 in 10 parents feel they pack a healthy lunch box every day, or at least 3–4 times a week, and that 41% of parents always or mostly check HSR.

TOP 3 CHALLENGES to packing a healthier lunch box

- 52% cost of healthy food
- 43% having enough options on hand
- 40% fussy eaters

TOP 3 PRIORITIES to packing a healthier lunch box

- 78% give children enough energy to fuel their day
- 51% eat more fruit and veg
- 47% gets eaten and doesn't come home

TOP 3 SUPPORTS parents would like for packing a healthier lunch box

- 54% healthy recipes
- 53% healthier packaged snacks or products
- 43% healthier lunch box lists online

"Understanding the challenges to packing lunch boxes is important. Do we need better ways to communicate how the ADGs translate into packing a lunch box, with practical resources for parents?" – Stevie Wring, General Manager of Health and Nutrition, Woolworths Group

1 Woolworths & Life Ed Lunchbox Survey Sep 2023, n=1061.

RISING RATES OF FOOD ALLERGIES

Australia has one of the highest rates of food allergies in the world, and the number of children with a food allergy has increased, resulting in long waiting lists to see specialists. Around 1 in 10 babies develop a food allergy before their first birthday and 4–8% of children have a food allergy. Eggs, milk, peanuts and tree nuts are the most common causes of food allergy in children. Many children grow out of food allergies, particularly to cow's milk, eggs, wheat and soy, while approximately 75% will have persistent allergies to peanuts, tree nuts, sesame and seafood.

Woolworths has Dietary and Lifestyle Filters on the website and app to help customers identify products suitable for their individual needs and preferences, including allergies and intolerances. We are also progressively rolling out dietary tags across recipes on the Woolworths website.



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Food security hits kids hardest

The [Foodbank Hunger Report 2023](#) revealed over 3.7 million households (36%) across Australia had experienced moderate to severe food insecurity in the 12 months before the survey. This included reducing their food's quality, variety and desirability and, in more severe cases, disrupting eating patterns. This is a 10% increase from the 2022 report. The [Foodbank 2022 report](#) showed that households that ran out of food, the hardest hit, were those with children. An estimated 1.3 million children were living in households experiencing food insecurity during that time.

Woolworths Group provided 34 million meals to people facing food insecurity in the 2022–23 financial year. We also provided \$9.5 million in corporate and customer donations to support the distribution of this surplus food to thousands of local food relief agencies via its partnerships with Foodbank, Fare Share and OzHarvest.

Involvement also included other projects, for example, the [Lomandra Community Project](#), based in Leumeah in south-western Sydney's Macarthur region. The Lomandra School set it up to ensure students had access to nutritious food to positively influence

their academic performance. It now has an onsite pantry, which every week distributes 5,000 kg of food and essentials, provided by Woolworths local stores, Woolworths Group's partners and food rescue organisations to more than 2,000 people.

In remote First Nations communities, the Woolworths Group wholesale business, [Australian Grocery Wholesalers](#), works with Community Enterprise Queensland to provide essential goods and services to remote communities in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area and remote Indigenous communities.

SO WHAT?

With more than enough food being produced, food insecurity is solvable by reducing inequity and improving affordability and access to food.



Australians want children protected from unhealthy food marketing

[Australian kids](#) are exposed to [hundreds](#) of unhealthy food advertisements on TV and products harmful to health (unhealthy food, energy drinks, alcohol and gambling), with more each year online.

[Research](#) has shown that food marketing generates positive beliefs about the foods advertised. It influences children's food preferences, consumption and purchase requests. Branding and marketing have been reported to be key influencing factors for energy drink consumption in young people. Public support for change is high, with [7 in 10 Australians wanting the government to protect children from unhealthy food marketing](#).

National Preventive Health Strategy (NPHS) 2030 targets include:

- Further reducing children's exposure to unhealthy food and drink marketing, branding and sponsorships across all forms of media.
- Restricting promotion of unhealthy food and drinks at point-of-sale and end-of-aisles in prominent food retail environments and increased promotion of healthy food options.

Woolworths Supermarkets Australia adheres to [Australian Association of National Advertisers](#)

(AANA) advertising Codes, including the Children's Advertising Code. These outline protections for children under 15 years of age.

In December 2023 a new [code](#) was published that applies to any advertising that targets children, irrespective of whether the advertised product is a children's product. New additions included prohibiting the promotion of unhealthy body image and direct advertising of highly caffeinated energy drinks to children.

Woolworths Group also has a commitment related to its own brand products: to only use characters, graphics and activities that could be perceived as primarily appealing to children on healthier product packaging by 2025.

DID YOU KNOW?

Teenagers in the digital environment see up to 100 online promotions every week with 38% of YouTube ads for food and beverages, the majority of which are unhealthy.

Next steps.

In light of the data available and information discussed, the **Advisory Board** poses the following considerations for action:

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES NEED SUPPORT TO EAT MORE HEALTHY (CORE FOOD GROUPS) AND LESS DISCRETIONARY FOOD – HOW?

- Promoting a healthy shop (meets ADGs) can be cheaper than the average purchased shop
- Showcase what a healthy shop looks like – sample family shop included at the end of the report
- Focus on increasing the number of serves of vegetables purchased (e.g. fresh, frozen, and canned) and the benefits of increasing by half a serve per person per day
- Increase accessibility of healthy (core) foods and reduce discretionary throughout the community (noting that product promotion and visibility influence purchasing), e.g. in supermarkets, convenience stores, canteens, restaurants and vending machines
- Promote legumes as a nutritious, low-cost vegetable and meat alternative
- Increase visibility of Food Tracker by Healthylife
- Improving children's and families' cooking skills
- Children's nutrition included in national health strategies, with implementation funded
- Support measures to provide sufficient income to create healthy households
- Improve equity of access to healthy food
- Address challenges to healthy school lunches and food offered at school
- Investigate further the impact of unhealthy food and drink advertising visible to children
- Greater community access to free drinking water, e.g. clean, working drinking fountains
- Showcase the social return on investment benefits to community health, to increase organisations' and business's contributions, e.g. benefits of providing free fruit for children and families.



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Children need the right balance of physical activity, inactivity and sleep in a 24-hour period for good health. Being active doesn't have to be organised and formal; it can be any movement throughout the day.

1 in 4 kids

met the Australian physical activity guidelines of at least 60 minutes per day

88%

of kids aged 6-11 are getting their recommended hours of sleep on school nights

Woolworths Group Stats

135,000

kids participate in Woolworths sponsored grassroots sports programs each year

20,000

families engaged in on-ground nutrition activations at sporting events¹

¹ At Woolworths pick fresh play fresh on-ground activations sporting events in 2023.



DEVELOP A LOVE
FOR BEING ACTIVE
OUTDOORS IN
CHILDHOOD



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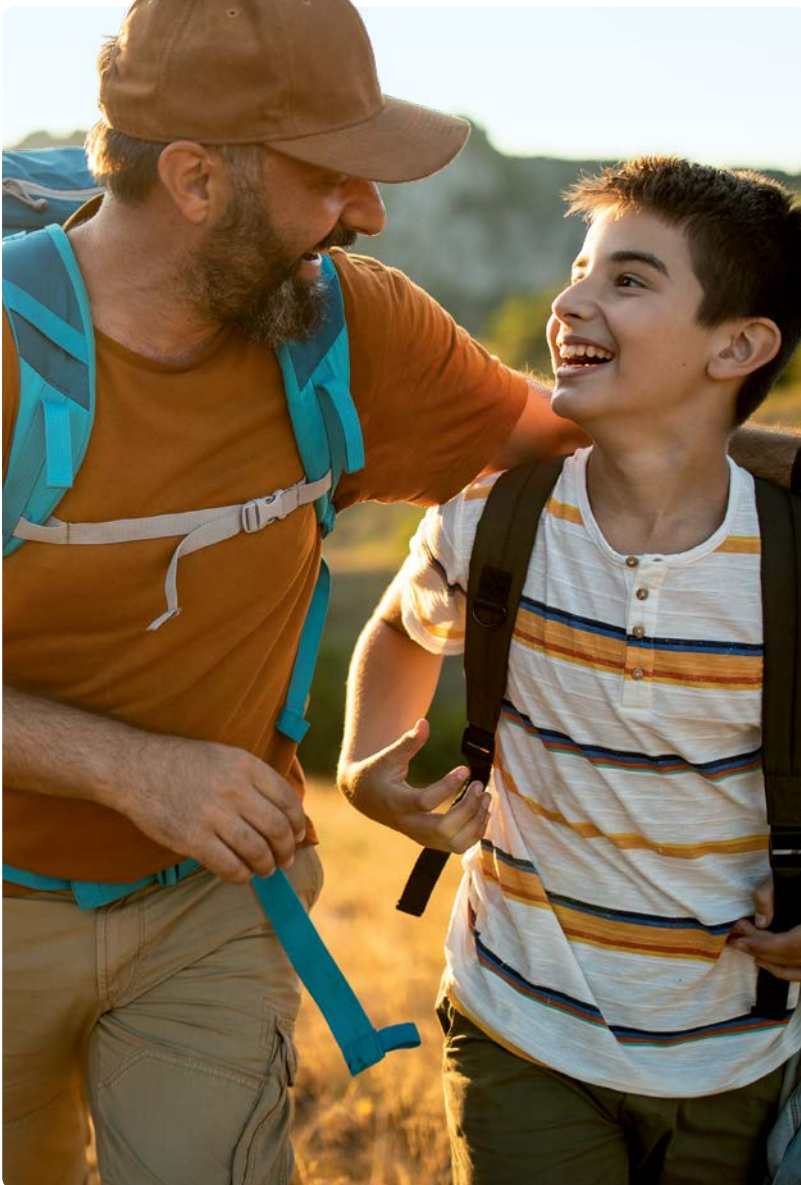
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Harmony for health: **sleep and activity** balance

Regular physical activity benefits physical health, lowering the risk of disease and improving fitness and sleep. It also enhances aspects of children's cognition and mental wellbeing, including reducing symptoms of mild anxiety and depression.

Sporting activities provide opportunities for enjoyment, developing social, teamwork and motor skills, and better self-esteem and confidence. Research has also shown significant improvements in communication, cooperation and social interaction for those children with disability who participate in physical activity. Being physically active is also important from a health economics viewpoint. In 2018–19, physical activity had a net positive impact on the health system of \$321 million.



Children are encouraged to live an active lifestyle with a balance of physical and sedentary activities to support their healthy development. Active outings like bushwalking or taking the dog to the park can be great ways to combine movement and fun."



Sarah Gray
Chief of Health Operations and Innovation, HealthyLife





DID YOU KNOW?


According to a Royal Children's Hospital poll, excessive screen time is parents' number-one health concern.

What are the guidelines for physical activity and sedentary behaviour?

Australian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines recommendations

The **Australian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines**, also known as the **Australian 24-hour Movement Guidelines** for children aged 5–17, recommend:

 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	
1 hour per day: moderate to vigorous, mainly aerobic activity	✓
Several hours per day: light activity	✓
3 days per week: vigorous activity	✓
 STRENGTH	
At least 3 days a week	✓
 SEDENTARY RECREATIONAL SCREEN TIME	
No more than 2 hours per day	✓
 SLEEP	
5–13 years: 9–11 hours	✓
14–17 years: 8–10 hours	✓

Learn more 

Source: health.gov.au/topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/physical-activity-and-exercise-guidelines-for-all-australians?utm_source=health.gov.au&utm_medium=callout-auto-custom&utm_campaign=digital_transformation

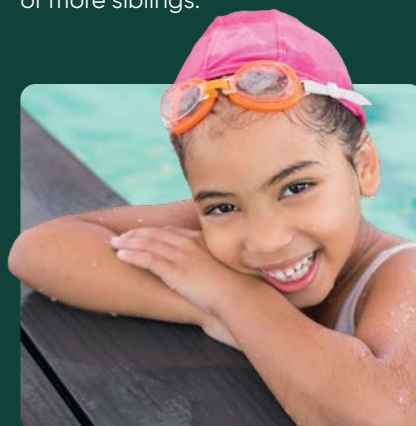
HOW MUCH DO OUR CHILDREN MOVE?

The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children reported in 2018 that only 1 in 4 children (26%) engaged in 60 minutes of daily physical activity, per the Australian Physical Activity Guideline and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines. This is similar to the AIHW's 23% finding from its 2011–12 report on children aged 5–14.

The 2018 AusPlay survey found that 47% of children (aged 0–14) participated in organised sport-related activities outside of school hours at least once a week. Swimming was the most popular, with just under 1.7 million children participating in organised swimming activities at least once in 2018.

The next most popular organised activities were soccer (15%), recreational dance (10%), gymnastics (10%) and Australian Rules Football (8.1%). The number of children involved in swimming lessons reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, however, it has since increased to above pre-pandemic levels. A national plan to ensure the children who missed those critical years reach safe swimming skills is important.

Children are less likely to participate if they are from a low-income family, are from a remote or regional area, speak a language other than English at home, or have three or more siblings.



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ENABLERS FOR MOVEMENT INTO ADULTHOOD

Many factors influence participation and non-participation in sports. These factors vary from person to person and across life courses.

Factors that support sports participation include:

- Parent and family support and participation
- Peer interaction
- Positive environment
- Venue and open space accessibility
- Participating in a wide range of physical activities rather than specialising in one
- Regular participation in sports at least once a week.

Factors that increase drop out of sports participation include:

- Excessive travel
- Expense
- Inconvenient times
- Low levels of perception of competence
- An environment that is 'too competitive'.

Outdoor play to stimulate joy

Exposure to the outdoors in childhood stimulates joy and a greater propensity to want to spend time outdoors in adulthood. Research has shown a strong association between physical activity and outdoor play, with sleep benefits in children.

According to a Royal Children's Hospital poll, fewer than half (45%) of Australian children play outdoors most days, despite most (80%) of parents wanting them to spend more time outside. The poll reported safety, supervision, weather and lack of parental time as common barriers to outdoor play.

SO WHAT?

The most common type of play was on digital devices, with 54% of children playing inside on a digital device or screen most days.

Most parents polled said they enjoyed playing with their children. However, 61% often find it hard or boring, and many want assistance in knowing how to play. Investment in outdoor environments and strategies to support parents in playing with their children may help children to enjoy the outdoors more.

BIG W supports active play with affordable sporting equipment. Skipping ropes start at \$2, with 44,400 sold in the 2023 financial year.





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Woolworths Group sports sponsorship

As one of the largest supporters of grassroots sports across Australia, Woolworths continues to encourage and support Australian kids to become more active and inspire healthy eating habits through sport.

As a long-standing partner of Cricket Australia, Netball Australia and Surfing Australia, Woolworths is the naming rights partner to their junior sports pathways programs. These partnerships create a connection point to local communities and encourage children to pick fresh food for themselves. 135,000+ kids participate via Woolworths Cricket Blast, Woolworths NetSetGO and Woolworths Surfgrams per year. Additionally, there were 800,000+ opportunities to play through school programmes of Woolworths Cricket Blast run by Cricket Australia (summer 2022–23).



Pick fresh play fresh health education

A multi-channel approach to reach the whole family including broadcast, social media, on-ground activations and a purpose-built online platform to engage and educate kids on eating fresh food. Sporting stars, kids' heroes and Woolworths' owned media ecosystem were used to supercharge program participation.

In 2023, Woolworths Group partnered with Surfing Australia to 'gamify' the [online engagement platform](#) and focused on educating kids on the power of picking fresh to help create behaviour change around healthy eating. It reached over 2.5 million people and generated more than 130,000 total engagements from kids and families. A Hub was created for netball fans to complement the engagement platform with surfing.

On-ground activations at sporting events also engaged over 20,000 families in learning about nutrition. This included giving away hundreds of kilos of fresh fruit and making thousands of healthy smoothies for fans to enjoy while they watched their heroes play.



Community support

Woolworths Supermarkets continued its Pick Fresh Play Fresh Netball Grants. Clubs use these funds to improve facilities and/or subsidise registration fees, allowing more kids to participate. Clubs have reported that grants have allowed them to provide facilities for all abilities, add BBQ areas, maintain courts and have dietitians come to the club and talk to players.

To ensure underprivileged communities, with a focus on First Nations communities, have opportunities to get active through surfing, Woolworths continues to support Surfing Australia's 'Surf for Life' program. [With evidence showing](#) surfing's possible mental health benefits for children, such as assisting with anxiety, hyperactivity and inattention symptoms, it is pleasing to see children surfing.

The Woolworths Community Cricket Fund involved 500 programs giving 14,500 kids from various backgrounds (who would otherwise have missed out) the opportunity to play Woolworths Cricket Blast. The programs included 'all abilities' cricket, remote areas and those impacted by natural disasters. A large portion of these kids are female, from culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We encourage more businesses to be involved in supporting kids' sports.

Sedentary activities: we must reduce screen time

Sedentary time for children is often discussed with reducing screen time in mind. However, sedentary activities also include activities we encourage, such as reading, playing board games and travelling. We need a better balance of active and sedentary pastimes.

Screen time and children

The majority of Australian children (68%) across all age groups are unfortunately exceeding the current national recommended guidelines for screen-based activity time, with numbers growing, while physical activity is declining.

A Royal Children's Hospital poll found excessive screen time was parents' number-one health concern, followed by cyberbullying and bullying. Parents also report that 31% of children spend too much time playing on screen-based devices, and nearly 62% report family conflict due to using screen-based devices.

On average, in the AIHW Health of children survey, children aged 5–14 spent around 2 hours each day sitting or lying down for screen-based activities, with only 3.5 minutes of this being for homework. A 2017 Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne Australian Child Health Poll asked parents a series of questions about the use of all screen-based media in their households related to children aged between one month and 18 years.

Cost increases for families to keep kids connected with devices such as mobile phones, computers and gaming consoles is also a concern. In 2016, the estimated technology cost was \$37 per child; in 2021, it was \$106. If this rate of increase continues, parents will face a monthly spend of over \$300 per child by 2026.

The type of screen time (passive or active), its duration and how it is used all influence children's health outcomes. Not all screen time is bad; access to technology at home can lead to higher reading scores, for example. The Footprints in Time survey looked at Indigenous children and found computer and internet access to be positively associated with higher literacy and numeracy.

There is sufficient evidence to show that excessive screen time in children, especially young children, is associated with negative impacts on body weight, cognitive and motor function, social and psychological wellbeing and family functioning. Support is needed for parents in managing children's screen time as much of their learning and recreational activities are on screen-based devices. Tools to create your own Family Media Plan are available.

The report found:



78% of parents reported spending at least 3 hours per day using a screen. High parental screen use time is associated with high child use time

Children with lower-income parents report more screen time than those of higher-income parents



Screen use for children increases with age, with primary school children averaging at-home use of 4.6 hours on a weekday and 4.5 hours on a weekend



26% reported having problems sleeping relating to their screen use

Children's screen time and gaming

According to the Australia Plays 2023 report, an estimated 21 million Australians (81%) play video games. This is up from 17 million (67%) in 2021. Approximately 94% of Australian households have at least one device on which screen-based games are played.

Approximately 4 million (21%) of Australia's gamers are aged 1–17. Around 4 in 5 Australian children play some form of video game each week, averaging 106 minutes per day. The COVID-19 pandemic and children's access to personal gaming devices are thought to be key contributors to this increase.

In BIG W during 2023, sporting equipment purchases remained stable, while video games saw increased purchases, mainly driven by promotion of the PlayStation 5 (PS5) game consoles and software.



Gaming's health effects on children

Gaming may have positive social effects on young gamers, including social engagement, collaboration and relationship-building among players, high levels of family closeness and greater emotional stability. Research has also shown other benefits, including to mood, sense of competency, autonomy, self-esteem, resilience and improved cognitive skills. Emerging research suggests how young people play and who they play with may be more important than what game they play.



As gaming adds to total screen time, excessive gaming may negatively influence health by taking away from physical activity and other healthy behaviours."



Dr Rob McCartney
Chief Medical Officer,
Woolworths Group

Breakfast Library Program

Woolworths Group supports children's reading by having a substantial range of children's books available in BIG W stores, and by partnering with the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation to deliver the Breakfast Library program. To date, over the three-year partnership, BIG W has helped provide over 514,000 breakfast meals and over 72,000 high-quality age-appropriate books for children, encouraging their love of reading, helping to develop literacy skills and giving them a healthy start to the day. In 2023, we supported 31 schools. To participate in the program, each school provides a statement of need, and schools are also verified using the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA).



Reading and children's health

Reading, a sedentary activity, has many benefits for health, mental wellbeing and cognitive performance. It inspires creativity, increases empathy and reduces stress. Research suggests 12 hours per week to be the optimal amount of reading for pleasure for a young child to see benefits. Around 1 in 3 students are not mastering the reading skills needed. Children from lower socio-economic families, regional and rural areas, and indigenous students tend to face bigger barriers to reading success.

In BIG W during 2023, purchases and the product range of board games, including jigsaws, rose, while books remained stable. Books such as First Readers are available all year round, with book prices starting from \$1.75. During 2023, 10,627,675 children's books were purchased from BIG W, supporting children reading.

SO WHAT?

Strategies to awaken the joy of reading in children are important to support parents and educators to have children reading into adulthood. Children who read for pleasure tend to have less screen time and sleep longer.



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Sleep: critical to healthy growth

Getting consistent quality and quantity of sleep is essential to healthy growth, mental and cognitive development and immune protection for children. Sleep is a critical pillar of health and wellbeing, along with a healthy diet and exercise, and we need society to embrace restorative sleep, recognising it as a cornerstone of a thriving society and a priority in preventive health strategies.

The social, health and economic costs of inadequate sleep in Australia are estimated to be more than \$26 billion per year (including health system costs and lost productivity), with another \$40 billion of non-financial costs (such as years of life lost to premature death and years of healthy living lost to disability).

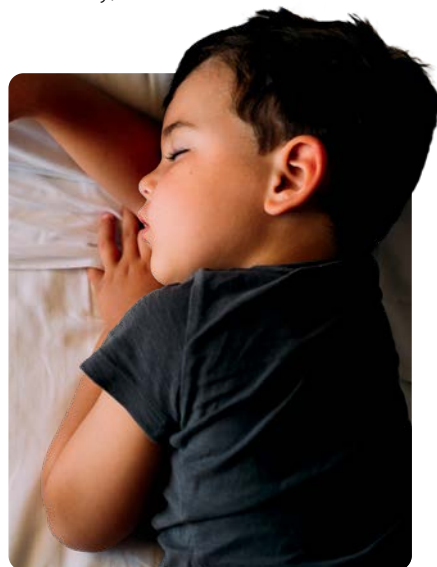
How much are children sleeping?

The Australian Department of Health recommends uninterrupted sleep for children:

- Aged 5–13: 9–11 hours
- Aged 14–17: 8–10 hours

On school days, nearly all children aged 6–7 and 88% of those aged 6–11 were getting the recommended hours of sleep, compared to only 25% of children aged 12–13 and 50% of those aged 16–17.

Children and adolescents not meeting the minimum sleep guidelines, according to the *Growing Up in Australia* report, were more likely to show symptoms of poor mental health (including anxiety, depression and unhappiness), be late for or absent from school, spend more time (more than five hours per week) on homework and have internet access in the bedroom or spend more time on the internet.



What can be done to improve children's sleep?

Poor sleep health increases the risk of developing chronic health conditions. With nearly two-thirds of adults reporting one or more sleep problems, education and awareness are critical.

Children's sleep can be affected adversely by reduced physical activity, increased screen time, medical and mental health conditions, genetics, sleep habits, environments and other factors, such as highly caffeinated energy drinks. Parents and families need support with behavioural sleep strategies and creating environments that align with the natural light/dark cycle, supporting a routine of consistent quality and quantity of sleep that can be continued into adulthood. Strategies can include:

- Accessing resources, e.g. Sleep with Kip
- Establishing a regular physical activity routine
- Reducing stimulation in general before bed:
 - Reducing light from electronic devices and house lighting (turn lights off or dim)
 - Making homes quieter by turning the volume down
 - Keeping rooms cooler by turning heaters off or down in the pre-bed period and using fans when hot.



Exposure to the many commercially driven products that promise results is generally a 'band-aid' approach. For example, children should only take sleep aids like melatonin under the advice of a qualified healthcare professional."



Dr Moira Junge
Registered Health Psychologist



DID YOU KNOW?

Healthylife has developed a free, Get more sleep program with handy information to help families get a good night's sleep.

Next steps.

In light of the data available and information discussed, the **Advisory Board** poses the following considerations for action:

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

- Invest in prevention: Physical activity has a return on investment of \$3–4 per dollar invested
- Include physical activity for relevant children of existing programs such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme, with accredited exercise professionals
- Consider walkability and ease of being active when planning and maintaining communities (e.g. footpaths for children and families to walk to shops and schools, playgrounds, ovals, parks, tennis courts, skateparks, pools)
- Develop strategies to give children a love of the outdoors (e.g. by including children in planning playgrounds, advertising campaigns around family outdoor recreational activities such as bushwalking, exploring and camping)
- Increase children's sports participation by:
 - Creating and funding advertising campaigns to showcase sport as fun
 - Subsidising sports registrations and swimming lessons with a target on children aged 7–12 who missed swimming lessons in lockdowns
- Continue and increase partnerships with healthy commercial businesses to sponsor children's sport.

SLEEP HEALTH:

- Recognise sleep as a cornerstone for a healthy, thriving society
- Fund the recommendations of the Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness in Australia (Federal Government) with funding for:
 - Research on the effects of digital devices and electronic media on sleep health, especially among children and adolescents
 - Sleep education for health professionals and the general community
- Regulate imports of melatonin supplements for kids, and educate health professionals and parents on sleep hygiene and behavioural strategies before recommending supplements
- Reduce stimulation (sound and lighting) at home and in the community (e.g. shops, street lighting) to assist sleep health.

SCREEN TIME:

- Promote resources to support families in managing screen time
- Health promotion messaging via screen mediums children use
- Promote reading as an activity to help reduce screen time and to improve literacy skills.



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Feel healthy

Childhood is a foundational time to learn and embed skills that promote mental wellbeing, which is essential for children to feel good about themselves, build healthy relationships and enjoy life.

50%.

of adult mental health conditions emerge before the age of 14

**7^{out}
of 10**

of the most common presentations to paediatricians are for mental health

25-50%.

of adult mental illnesses can be prevented by early intervention during childhood and adolescence

55%.

of Australian children aged 11-16 recall seeing gambling advertisements on social media

MENTAL
WELLBEING IS
A FOUNDATION
FOR GOOD HEALTH



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Our children's mental wellbeing

The number of young people experiencing mental ill-health has grown **by 50%** over the last 15 years.

Data on COVID's mental health impacts found children's mental wellbeing had deteriorated, particularly during lockdowns. In 2020–2022, the [Australian Psychological Society](#) noted that among kids aged 6–12, the experience of Social Anxiety Disorder had increased by 45%, and peer relationship difficulties increased by 39%. It's estimated that mental ill-health costs Australia \$43–51 billion per year.

HEALTHYLIFE WELLBEING APPROACH

Healthylife takes a wellbeing approach with guidelines for 'Our Approach to how we talk about mental health and wellbeing'. We use the term 'mental wellbeing' most often to encourage positive connotations and the use of wellbeing language. We refer to mental health and mental illness or ill health only when talking about mental health conditions.

Australia's first [National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021](#) recognises that early intervention and prevention will have the most impact, supporting children early when they show signs of struggling rather than waiting until they are unwell. Child and family hubs across Australia provide families with access to a wide range of supports and services that can help identify emerging issues.

DID YOU KNOW?

7 out of 10 of the most common presentations to paediatricians are for mental health.

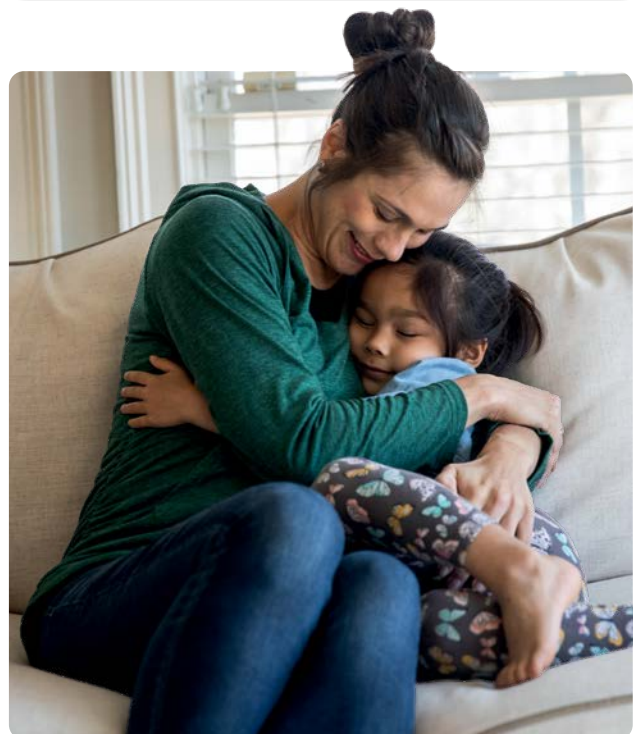


Seven out of the 10 of the most common presentations to paediatricians are for mental health. Cost, waiting lists and unclear referral pathways can be barriers to accessing services. Our children need early intervention and more equitable access to mental health services if we wish to reduce the incidence and severity of mental health issues in adulthood.

Organisations such as [Murdoch Children's Research Institute](#) have partnered with education businesses to deliver entertaining [mental health and wellbeing online programs](#) for young people with social media influencers and sports stars.

DID YOU KNOW?

Half of adult mental health conditions emerge before the age of 14, and an estimated 25–50% can be prevented through early intervention during childhood and adolescence.



What do children worry about?

Children aged 8–12 tend to worry mostly about issues affecting their families. For example, 2 in 3 children aged 10–11 worry about a family member becoming seriously ill or injured and over half worry about family members fighting.

Children were also concerned about the transition to secondary school, not doing well at school, the environment, terrorism and war, and drug and alcohol use. Girls worry more about appearance and fitting in with friends.



DID YOU KNOW?

Whilst access to GPs is similar for all kids, research shows that access to specialists (e.g. paediatricians) favours higher income families.



FAMILIES AND MENTAL WELLBEING

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of Australian children live in families where one or both parents have mental illness, which gives them a 60% greater risk of experiencing mental health struggles compared to other children.

Factors contributing to mental illness include genetics, adverse childhood experiences (such as violence, abuse and neglect) and other issues that cause household dysfunction. Empowering and supporting families who may be struggling are effective ways to promote children's mental wellbeing.

There are also economic benefits to investing in parental support, with one report finding the return on investment of parenting programs for the prevention of childhood anxiety disorders was \$2.40 for every \$1 invested.

All parents need support sometimes, both formal and informal. Practical, emotional and personal support can improve parents' and children's wellbeing.

Woolworths Group supporting team members

Woolworths Group offers a range of supports for team members and their families, for example Workplace Employee Assistance Programs through Sonder, with 24/7 team support tools and 13YARN. There is also a program to support team members to stay connected whilst on parental leave, financial assistance services, paid domestic violence leave, team discounts and a complimentary membership to the Everyday Extra program for additional benefits.

Over 2,500 team members are Mental Health First Aiders, having completed training with a target to maintain at least two per store. Healthylife also provides hundreds of health articles and free health programs that can support parents and their families with their health.

Woolworths Group's ambition is to be a truly inclusive workplace, and its inclusion strategy focuses on five key pillars: gender equity, First Nations, disability, cultural and LGBTQ+ inclusion. By working with the team, it is creating more inclusive workplaces for the next generation.



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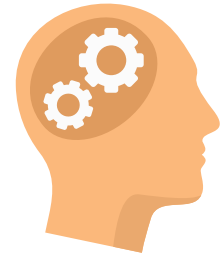
Outlook

Support for neurodiversity

Discussions around neurodiversity have become more common in the last few years. 'Neurodiversity' is a non-medical term to recognise the unique and different ways in which different people's brains develop. The most common phrases are 'neurodivergent' and 'neurotypical'.

Neurotypical refers to individuals whose brains function and process information in ways considered within the expected range in line with societal norms. On the other hand, neurodivergent individuals have brains that function differently from what is traditionally considered typical. This doesn't mean there is something wrong. **However, diversity in brain function is associated with various developmental conditions and experiences. This diversity includes conditions such as autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), dyslexia and more.**

Neurodivergent condition diagnoses are rising in all age groups. This is thought to be due to increased awareness and reduced stigma. ADHD is one of the neurodivergent conditions once thought of as a childhood issue, but most children with ADHD continue to experience symptoms into adulthood.



Due to social expectations and a lack of support and understanding, neurodivergent children may be particularly susceptible to mental health problems – especially in environments where differences are not understood and respected. This can be exhausting and contribute to increased anxiety."



Dr Moira Junge
Registered Health Psychologist

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and children

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder can impact a person's ability to control their thoughts, words, actions and emotions. As a result, a person with ADHD can struggle to concentrate, and this can negatively impact self-confidence and self-esteem. They also have various strengths, such as generating novel ideas, hyperfocus and an adventurous mindset.

DID YOU KNOW?

Around 6–8% of children in Australia have ADHD. The gender ratio is around 2–3 boys for every girl. However, in adulthood, it is equally prevalent in men and women.

Lifestyle changes around diet, exercise and sleep can improve health and wellbeing, along with cognitive behavioural therapy that can teach coping strategies and skills to self-regulate more successfully. These changes are important for reducing the risk of conditions such as substance abuse, anxiety and depression, which can co-occur. Among children with ADHD, around two-thirds have co-occurring mental health conditions. Early identification, parental support and specific skill development to support children with ADHD are essential.





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Autism spectrum disorder in children

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder. It is often characterised by difficulty with social interactions and communication, and restricted and repetitive behaviours and interests. An autistic person may also have a range of strengths, with excellent attention to detail and being logical and systematic.

Around 205,000 Australians have ASD, including 115,200 aged 5–20. Of the 205,000, there are 3.5 times more males than females, and according to 2015 figures, 88% were identified as also having a disability. Numbers are growing, most likely due to heightened awareness and increased diagnosis.

Diagnosis is usually around the age of 2–3. Research shows that early diagnosis and treatment are important so individuals can receive support early in life. A late diagnosis can impact a person’s mental wellness, education, development and social life. For example, of students with autism spectrum disorders who were attending a school or educational institution, 92% were found 'having difficulty', typically with fitting in socially, learning and communicating.

DID YOU KNOW?

Select Woolworths Supermarkets have a designated low-sensory Quiet Hour to reduce anxiety and sensory stress for customers with specific needs, such as those with autism. This includes lower lights, music turned down and turning off oven buzzers.



Social media: Use with caution

Despite many young people recognising the negative impact social media can have on them, fear of missing out and pressure to keep up to date with current events keeps them online, according to the Headspace National Youth Mental Health Survey 2023.

Social media can have a positive impact and has given young people an opportunity to find a voice, connect with others, enjoy a creative outlet, learn new things and find information, with 41% reporting it to be empowering. The amount of information available, however, can be overwhelming, according to 58% of respondents. Social media can also lead to unhelpful comparisons. Companies and governments must also be responsible and put in place mechanisms to ensure users have a safe and healthy experience.



Screen time and limiting screen time shouldn't be experienced by children within a reward/punishment paradigm. Rather, it should be explained as being necessary for balance and better health, so there's more time to sleep, move and eat well."



Dr Moira Junge
Registered Health Psychologist

Access challenges for children with disability

Disability relates to a person's ability to participate in a range of activities. It is more than the presence or absence of mental and physical health conditions. The prevalence of disability among children has remained relatively stable. Since 2003, 10% of children aged 5–14 have had a disability, compared with 9.6% in 2018. Among the 7.6% (~356,000) of Australian children 0–14 with a disability, there are more boys (9.6%) than girls (5.7%).

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability Final Report notes that the proportion of children aged 0–18 with psychological disability has increased notably, from 16% of those with disability in 2008 to 28% in 2018.

Children with disability may have additional healthcare needs with specific conditions. For example, the number of children with asthma is twice as high among those with a disability (18%) compared with no reported disability (~9%).

Children with special health care needs are generally more prevalent among one-parent families, children on a health care card, or in rural areas, compared to the average. People with disability generally report a lower quality of health and experience challenges accessing health services and education.

A combination of these factors, among others, contribute to children with disability's reduced life expectancy, quality of life and higher-than-average rates of preventable disease.



With the right village in the right environment, children with disability can live a full and bright life."



Dr Dinesh Palipana
Emergency Department Doctor

SO WHAT?

To give children with disability the best chance of good health from the very beginning, parents and caregivers need a team of healthcare providers who understand, nurture and care for not just the child but also their family. The right services can mobilise resources to support children to optimise lives.



MINI WOOLIES HELPS KIDS IN SCHOOLS

The Mini Woolies program simulates a Woolworths supermarket experience on a smaller scale. The sites are designed as a learning tool for specialist schools and post-school providers that support young people with disabilities. The program has launched in over 50 locations and has engaged close to 5,000 students with disabilities around Australia and New Zealand.

Students actively participate in hands-on learning activities that promote literacy and numeracy skills, such as preparing shopping lists, counting stock and money handling, and communication and interpersonal skills. These are life skills that help support greater confidence and independence, enabling students to understand what it is to be a customer and a team member.



mini woolies
A Woolworths Group initiative



First Nations: nurturing strengths in the face of challenges

In 2019, ABS data showed that 6% of children aged 0–14 living in Australia were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, making up over one-third of the Indigenous population. This is a notably younger age composition than the non-Indigenous population, which may be attributed in part to higher birth rates and lower life expectancies.

Emphasising holistic well-being, **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 5–17 are leading the way in physical activity, with 60% of Indigenous children surpassing the physical activity guidelines.**

Notably, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children exhibit lower rates of type 1 diabetes; however, they have a higher prevalence of asthma than non-Indigenous children.

Footprints in Time – The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC) sheds light on the health of Indigenous children, revealing insightful nuances:

- While children aged 6–7 face a heightened risk of social and emotional difficulties, it is important to note that, on average, Indigenous children have higher prosocial scores. These scores measure traits like consideration, sharing and being helpful and kind, which underscore the community’s emphasis on these positive attributes.

- In terms of dietary habits, Indigenous children have a higher per-person consumption of soft drinks compared to non-Indigenous children, with an elevated rate of dental problems, particularly among children around six years of age. This aligns with consistent findings that sugar consumption strongly predicts tooth decay, emphasising the need for targeted health interventions.
- Addressing sleep patterns, Indigenous children aged 5–8 experience nearly twice the prevalence of sleep disturbances compared to non-Indigenous children. It’s crucial to recognise that these sleep disturbances are strongly linked to the number of stressful life events, highlighting the importance of holistic approaches that consider both physical and social-emotional wellbeing.

Stars Foundation

Woolworths Group is proud to partner with The Stars Foundation, which provides a holistic mentoring program that supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls and young women in identifying their goals and reaching their full potential.

The Stars Foundation improves health, education and employment outcomes for 2,900+ First Nations girls and young women in 53+ primary and secondary schools across Australia.

All programs prioritise holistic well-being and address healthy habits for life, including nutrition, self-care, personal hygiene, sports and fitness.

Students who participate in the Stars Programs enjoy various physical activities, including yoga, dance, taekwondo, kayaking, swimming, cricket, netball and Australia rules football.

All programs focus on the importance of a nutritious diet and support students in shopping for and preparing healthy meals, with the opportunity to maintain a veggie patch. Regular healthy cook-ups occur with girls and young women actively choosing ingredients

and preparing food. Students in the Stars programs show significant improvements in physical activity and general fitness levels and have increased awareness about the lifetime impact of maintaining good health.



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Gambling and games: a harmful combination

Video gaming and gambling, although separate activities, have many similarities in appearance, interactive features and elements of chance – and Australians are increasingly concerned about children’s exposure to them. Research has suggested a link between video games that simulate gambling, and gambling proper. **Games that include monetised gambling-like features may normalise and encourage monetary gambling, especially among children.** This can potentially harm relationships as well as financial, social and psychological wellbeing, including an increased likelihood of being diagnosed with depression.

Of the Australian children playing online games, 34% make in-game purchases (most prevalent in males and children aged 14–16). The Growing Up in Australia Study concerningly found young people at age 16–17 who played simulated gambling games had a 40% higher probability of real-money gambling.

It is pleasing to see action being taken, with updates to the Guidelines for the Classification of Computer Games 2023 around ‘loot boxes’ and games with simulated gambling. Further mitigation is required, including public information campaigns to educate parents, teachers and children about the elements of simulated gambling and understanding that these activities are gambling, along with problem gambling’s negative health impacts.

Another emerging area of concern is the exposure of children to bullying while playing video games. Approximately 17%, or 200,000 children who play multiplayer games online experience in-game bullying, with the incidence highest amongst children aged 11–12, at 22%. Players can turn off in-game chat and report the bullying to game moderators or providers, who can take action to limit toxic behaviour to retain players. Further exploring how young people learn and develop strategies to deal with in-game bullying would be useful.

Gambling advertising

55% of Australian children aged 11–16 recall seeing gambling advertisements on social media. Research has demonstrated that the promotion of gambling, particularly within sports, may have a significant impact on positively shaping young people’s attitudes towards gambling.

1 in 6 children aged 16–17 (1 in 4 boys, 1 in 7 girls) report having gambled in the past year and are more likely to have engaged in other risky behaviours such as smoking and drinking alcohol. Boys who had either been the victim or perpetrator of bullying at school were more likely to report having gambled.



By assisting children in moderating their gaming, we can decrease the risk of problematic gambling in adulthood with its associated health and social impacts.”













Dr Rob McCartney
Chief Medical Officer,
Woolworths Group



GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Strategies to assist parents to prevent in-game gambling and bullying include:

	Delayed device ownership in children	
	Discussions with children regarding cybersecurity	
	Establishing household rules surrounding gaming	
	Locating computers and consoles in open areas of the home	
	Monitoring for signs of problematic gaming in children	


Further resources are available to assist parents at [eSafetyCommissioner](#)

Further resources are available to assist parents at [eSafetyCommissioner](#)

Next steps.

In light of the data available and information discussed, the **Advisory Board** poses the following considerations for action:

MENTAL WELLBEING:

- Build mental fitness skills in our kids to help them become the first generation to thrive and look after their mental wellbeing. To achieve this, we need to:
 - Understand mental wellbeing as a foundation for good physical health and wellbeing
 - Devise a mental wellness model with a proactive prevention focus and support for early intervention when children are struggling
 - Coordinate approaches to mental wellbeing support in schools
 - Increase mental wellbeing support for families to reduce family conflict
 - Raise awareness and reduce stigma around children with disability, including neurodiverse conditions
 - Follow in the Victorian Government's footsteps and announce a Federal Minister for Children (kids aged 5–12).

SOCIAL MEDIA, GAMING AND GAMBLING:

- Regulate social media, including continual review and refinement
- Companies and governments to create safe and healthy social media experiences for users
- Explore how young people can be supported to develop strategies to deal with in-game bullying
- Enforce video game design guidelines to reduce similarities to for-money gambling and ban loot boxes
- Public information campaigns about the elements and risks of simulated gambling
- Restrict gambling advertisements in spaces and times frequented by children.



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Stay healthy.

Staying healthy requires actively looking after our health, to help increase our years of healthy living and reduce our risk of chronic disease. Parents and caregivers play an important part in role-modelling healthy behaviours, and making decisions about healthcare.

8%.

of children aged 5-14 suffer from asthma, which is the leading cause of total disease burden among children

50%.

of parents feel significant pressure to be able to afford their children's healthcare needs

~11%.

of children aged 0-14 have hay fever; it is their most commonly suffered condition

24%.

of children aged 6-14 had experienced dental caries (cavities) in their permanent teeth



HEALTHYLIFE
OFFERS
TELEHEALTH
365 DAYS A YEAR



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Helping children **stay healthy**

Staying healthy may include seeking support from health professionals, accessing health information and using both pharmacy and complementary medicines. Similarly, individuals seeking to change unhealthy habits may also require assistance.

Families feeling the expense of healthy children

The Choosi Cost of Kids Report February 2023 looked at the cost of raising children. It found that:

54% of parents had incurred significant additional unexpected costs from hospitals or specialists for their children

50% of parents feel significant pressure to be able to afford their children's healthcare needs

The report found the greatest unexpected costs of starting a family and raising children were replacing clothing and footwear, as children grow out of them quickly. BIG W provides affordable clothing options. Another report found healthcare costs have increased from \$92 per month in 2016 to \$112 in 2021.





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Asthma's disease burden

Asthma is a common respiratory condition that is the leading cause of disease burden for Australian children aged 5–14. The AIHW's 2020 *Australia's Children* report found asthma's prevalence has remained stable for many years, with an estimated 8.7% of Australian children aged 0–14 diagnosed.

Children with a disability are twice as likely (18%) to suffer from asthma compared with children with no reported disability (8.9%). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, according to self-reported 2012–13 data, had higher rates than non-Indigenous children (15% compared to 9.3%).

Over 40% of hospitalisations for asthma were among children aged 0–14, with a rate of 225 per 100,000. On a positive note, hospitalisation rates have nearly halved in the last decade. Nearly half (48.8%) of children under 18 had used asthma-related medication in the two weeks before the 2020–21 National Health Survey.



DID YOU KNOW?

The National Asthma Council Australia recommends that people with asthma have a written action plan that includes instructions on what to do when asthma symptoms worsen.

Children with asthma may have impaired airway development, which can cause deficits that persist into adulthood. According to the ABS, more than 3 in 5 children aged under 18 have an action plan. Action plans reduce school absences, hospital and GP visits and medication use, and improve lung function.



Hay fever (allergic rhinitis)

Around 15% of Australians and 11% of children experience hay fever. It is the most common condition for children aged 5–14. However, asthma was the most significant contributor to the overall burden of disease.

There is no cure for hay fever, so treatment aims to manage symptoms. Corticosteroid nose sprays (for appropriate ages) and antihistamines are common treatments available both over-the-counter and as prescription medicines. Reducing a child's exposure to hay fever triggers is advised, for example by removing soft toys from their bedroom and washing them regularly, showering after playing outside if itchy, and monitoring pollen forecasts and outdoor play on high-pollen days.

MEDICATIONS FOR CHILDREN

Children will often need to take over-the-counter or prescribed medicines to help them feel better, manage pain or treat an ongoing health condition. As we hope and would expect, the AIHW shows in 2020–21 the lowest rate of dispensed prescriptions was for young people aged 0–14, with 2.9 million prescriptions for girls and 4.0 million for boys out of a total of 314.8 million prescriptions under the PBS (Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme) and RPBS (Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme).

Reducing the need for children to commence prescription medication as they enter adulthood due to lifestyle-related diseases requires a greater emphasis on disease prevention, incorporating use of lifestyle medicine as part of healthcare (i.e. adoption of healthy lifestyle recommendations by health professionals). **Healthylife offers a range of free health programs focused on preventive health and hundreds of articles with a lifestyle focus written by health professionals.**

In addition to prescription medications, over-the-counter medicines are available from pharmacies, supermarkets and health food outlets. The highest-selling over-the-counter medicines are vitamin and mineral supplements, herbal medicines, homoeopathic preparations and probiotics. Analgesics (pain relief) were the second largest selling group, followed by cold and flu treatments.

Children process ingredients differently, so their medicines often differ from adult equivalents. Therefore, there are more restrictions on children's medications. Dosage recommendations must be followed carefully for age, size and health condition.

Information for parents about using medications is important. For example, analgesics are commonly used pain medications available over the counter. A Royal Children's Hospital Poll found 4 in 5 parents misunderstood the role of analgesic medication in treating fever. Medicine is not recommended simply to lower a fever; however, it can be helpful to keep the child comfortable from other symptoms, such as a sore throat, that could be occurring simultaneously. Access to advice on the signs and symptoms that suggest a child is unwell and needs medical attention, and when and why to use paracetamol, for example, could help avoid paracetamol overdose.



“

We recommend always engaging with a healthcare professional around medications and supplements, particularly for children. There can be age restrictions and specific warnings on what needs to be avoided, particularly with certain medical conditions.”



Sarah Gray
Chief of Health Operations and Innovation, Healthylife





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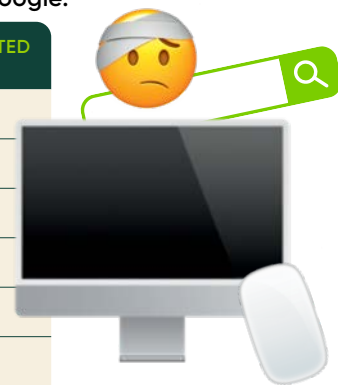
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What are people Googling for kids' health online?

Parents seek health information online for their children and value easy-to-access sources they trust. Information can help them understand medical conditions and actively participate in healthcare. Finding reliable sources can be tricky, so Healthylife has an article to help people [find credible online health information](#).

Here are some of the trending children's health-related search terms on Google:

RISING (01/01/2023–30/11/2023, AUSTRALIA)	% CHANGE (% INCREASE COMPARES SELECTED DATE RANGE VS PREVIOUS PERIOD)
Heavy metal detox for kids	300%
Sleep patches for kids	300%
Signs of ADHD in children	180%
Signs of sepsis in children	170%
Viral rashes in children	140%
Magnesium for children	120%



Dental health and decay

Dental diseases are the most common chronic diseases globally and even though prevention has improved, problems persist. The AIHW found that 24% of children aged 6–14 had experienced dental caries (cavities) in their permanent teeth, with an estimated 11% experiencing untreated decay. Good dental health is harder to access for people with disability, and cost can be a barrier to seeking treatment. One of the reasons the World Health Organisation introduced its Guideline on sugars intake for adults and children was to help address dental caries in children. It recommends reducing free sugars. These are sugars added to foods and drinks and sugars naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juice and fruit juice concentrates.

Food Tracker by Healthylife is a great tool to show people where sugars are found in their shopping, with healthier options also shown to assist with making a switch.

'Crowding out' sugary sweetened drinks to make water the most visible, accessible and chosen option in the community may also be helpful, e.g. more water fountains for free water in public spaces, water more visible than sugary drinks at points of purchase.



Supplements for children: What do they need?

Most of the time, children can get the nutrients they need from the food they eat. Sometimes, children have specific reasons to require a supplement, for example, to assist growth and development, but parents should not feel compelled to use supplements as an 'insurance policy'.

Addressing deficiencies

There are cases where supplements may be required:

- Vitamin B12, e.g. if following a vegan diet
- Vitamin D in winter, e.g. for children living in Adelaide, Hobart or Melbourne
- Calcium, e.g. for dairy intolerances or allergies
- Iron, e.g. for growth spurts, following a vegan or vegetarian diet, with coeliac disease or gastrointestinal blood loss, or with heavy periods
- Multivitamins, e.g. for neurodiverse children with limited diets.

"Advice from a health professional is recommended to establish if a supplement (including herbal) will be of benefit and identify the most appropriate variety (if needed). This will ensure age appropriateness (for example, by considering swallowing and choking risks) and correct dosage. A professional will also check for interactions with medications or other supplements and allergens." – **Sarah Gray, Chief of Health Operations and Innovation, Healthylife**

Why the controversy on gummies?

Children's gummy vitamin ranges (chewable pastilles that come in various colours, flavours and shapes) are helpful for those who have difficulty swallowing tablets. However, they have attracted considerable attention, including discussion on whether they are needed, their sugar content and their potential to cause tooth decay. Overconsumption can lead to digestive symptoms, including diarrhoea and bloating. As they resemble confectionery, there is also the potential for children to eat excessive amounts; this is a serious risk for gummies with fat-soluble vitamins that can be toxic in large doses.

Healthylife's expert team assesses products to ensure they are suitable before we agree to stock them. In gummies' case, this assessment includes:

- Ensuring they are correctly labelled as either food (FSANZ) or medicine (TGA) and that any claims made are adequately substantiated.
- Monitoring added sugar content per serve in gummies classified as food.

CHILDREN'S VITAMINS AND NUTRITIONALS AT HEALTHYLIFE

At Healthylife, Children's Vitamins & Nutritionals ranges are growing (up 34% from 2022 to 2023). We have seen a trend shift in the kids' ranges from gummies and synthetic vitamins to sugar-free powdered food-based supplements such as those with powdered fruit and vegetables. These have added to the total kids' food range, growing 197% from 2022 to 2023.

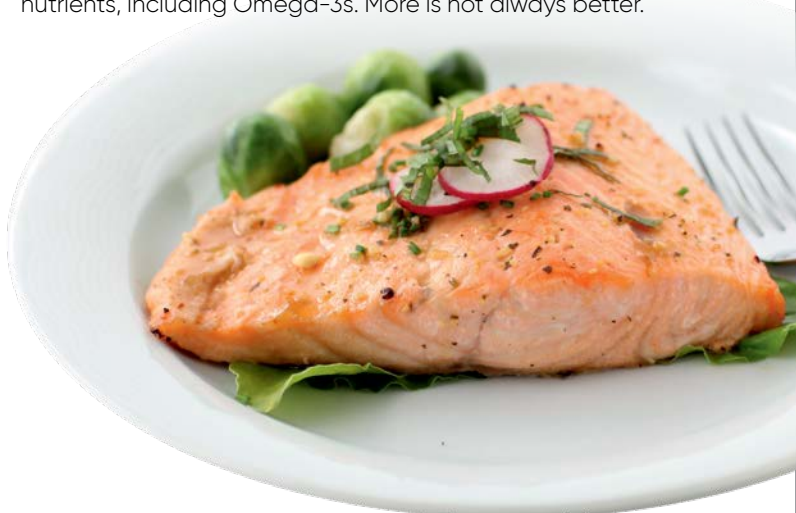
Chewables and powdered dairy and dairy alternative supplement drinks have also been part of the food growth category increases.

Omega-3 fatty acids for children

Omega-3 fatty acids are a group of polyunsaturated fats important for brain and heart health. A study of Australian children found 50% of children aged 2-16 were not getting enough dietary Omega-3 fatty acids. The Heart Foundation recommends eating oily fish (such as anchovies, herring, mackerel, salmon and sardines) as the best way to meet Omega-3 requirements.

One serve (100g) of fish plus the equivalent of two small cans of tuna a week will provide a child up to age 14 years with an adequate Omega-3 intake. Omega-3 is also present in other foods, such as red meat, and can be taken in supplement form.

There are upper-limit recommendations for many nutrients, including Omega-3s. More is not always better.





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Probiotics for children

Research indicates probiotics are safe for healthy children. However, this research is limited, and caution should be exercised. Probiotics are microorganisms that are intended to have health benefits when consumed. They are found in some foods and dietary supplements. Current research suggests probiotics could help manage allergies, relieve eczema symptoms and reduce the frequency and duration of diarrhoea. Further research is needed to identify what strains, doses and timings are most effective for which conditions.



HOW TO CHOOSE A SUPPLEMENT

Choosing suitable supplements can be tricky. Here are some of Healthylife's tips as a guide to what to look for when choosing Omega-3 and probiotic supplements:

When choosing Omega-3 supplements, look for:

- **EPA and DHA ratio:** These are fatty acids within Omega-3. EPA is related to reducing inflammation and DHA plays a role in brain and cell function. Individual needs will determine the appropriate ratio.
- **Quality and sustainability:** Look for certifications from the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) or a similar organisation that certifies sustainable fisheries. Check that it has been independently tested to be free from contaminants such as pesticides, lead, mercury and industrial chemicals.
- **Form and freshness:** Whether you prefer a capsule, liquid or gummy, check the use by date. A 'fishy' odour may suggest rancidity.

When choosing probiotic supplements, look for:

- **Strain and claim:** Look for the word 'probiotic', the name of the specific strain, the number of CFU (colony forming units) and a health claim on the pack. These might include words like 'helps with diarrhoea' or 'supports the immune system'. Match a strain with the health claim that addresses your health need.
- **Form:** Probiotics can come as capsules, pills, powders or liquids. Some require refrigeration, others do not, but be sure to store them in a cool, moisture-free environment (i.e. not your bathroom).
- **Food for thought:** Live bacteria can also be found in fermented foods, but not all fermented foods are probiotic, as they may not have clinical trials proving health benefits for the bacteria they contain.

HEALTHYLIFE PRODUCT MISSION

At Healthylife, we have a **product commitment that aligns with our mission that spans everything we sell, including foods, vitamins and supplements.** We follow a strict approval process:

- Products are selected by our team of experienced buyers and our in-house team of nutritionists, dietitians, pharmacists and naturopaths review our range to help us stock healthier products
- Criteria to align food products with the Australian Dietary Guidelines principles
- Seek products without artificial colours, preservatives or additives

- Guidelines around personal care, beauty and cosmetic products
- Products abide by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and Food Standards Australia New Zealand Standards with evidence to back up claims
- We aim to work with suppliers who are transparent with their product labelling, claims and ingredient lists
- Our products cater for a wide range of health and wellness needs.



Telehealth increases access to health services

Telehealth involves receiving healthcare via telephone or video. It can also allow for remote monitoring and, in the future, even technology like self-scanning ultrasound capabilities for pregnant mothers living rurally. Telehealth services can be important in providing confidential, convenient and low-friction access to health information.

Providers delivered 118.2 million telehealth services to 18 million patients in Australia between March 2020 and 31 July 2022. At the time, more than 95,000 healthcare practitioners used telehealth services.

Telehealth can be highly time and resource-efficient, reducing children's time away from school and parents' time away from work, reducing trips to healthcare providers and increasing access to general and specialist professionals and services.

ABS data shows that 7% of people who needed to see a GP in 2022–23 delayed or did not see one due to cost, while 29.6% reported waiting longer

than they felt acceptable for a GP appointment. Telehealth services can address both cost and waiting time challenges.

A Royal Children's Hospital poll in 2021 found strong evidence that parents see telehealth as a desirable way to access health care for their children, with 27% of Australian children attending a telehealth appointment (mostly with a GP) in the year prior. A strong majority (92%) of parents would use it again. Despite wide uptake, some parents hold concerns, including that care provided may not be as good, data and security worries, and difficulties using technology.

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) provides telehealth resources for GPs and patients and the Medical Board of Australia produces telehealth guidelines. The RACGP recommends that GPs offer a comprehensive service, using strategies to reduce the risk of missing or omitting important information.



Healthylife's telehealth service offering

In 2023, Healthylife commenced offering telehealth services (via Medmate) to Australians. Doctors are available for medical advice by phone or video for extended hours with short wait times. The convenient service is not designed to replace a GP service, and patients are recommended to have a regular GP. The service is for acute care when a patient cannot access their regular GP, such as after hours, over public holidays when GPs may not be open or when you need a service quickly; Healthylife telehealth is available 365 days a year.



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Vaping: action underway

The number of Australian children living in smoke-free homes has continued to increase; however, the number of people vaping (using e-cigarettes) is growing, particularly among youths and young adults. This trend is a concern due to vaping's harmful health effects on the user and the risks of exposing children and non-smokers. In 2023, 14.5% of Australians aged 14–17 vaped. Some 21% of vapes contain nicotine despite this being illegal in Australia, and 100% of e-liquids have inaccurate labels.

Young people will be better protected with a \$737 million Federal Government investment, stronger controls being imposed progressively on the importation, manufacture, supply, advertising and commercial possession of vapes and a pathway to prescribe vapes implemented by TGA and customs legislation.

Other investments include the Western Australian government releasing new initiatives aimed at stamping out vaping in schools. These include education programs, resources and tool kits, and students found vaping are not allowed to attend certain school events. Action is essential to discourage our children from engaging in vaping; not only can it be harmful in itself, but it is also a 'gateway' to nicotine addiction and tobacco cigarette smoking.

There is welcome news: tobacco sales continue to decline. Woolworths Group has seen a 10% year-on-year decrease in the volume of tobacco sold. Responsible tobacco retailing is taken seriously, and responsible retailing is part of the sustainability development goals. As part of the New Zealand Government's Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 Action Plan, Woolworths Supermarkets in New Zealand will not apply for licences to sell cigarettes and are readying to cease retailing these by 1 July 2024.



Developing health literacy in children

Health literacy benefits from starting in childhood. Health education is part of the curriculum in Australian schools, and research has shown that delivery can be complex. Adolescence is the ideal stage to educate and empower individuals to make informed health decisions. However, health information and messaging can be difficult to understand. With reports that 1 in 3 Australian children cannot read well, learning about health may be hindered.

SO WHAT?

Whilst most health literacy focuses on personal health, the World Health Organisation highlights the need to develop interventions that focus on educating to increase knowledge, understanding and capacity to act on health's social, economic and environmental determinants, with sustained funding across government and other sectors.





Healthylife health information

Healthylife offers free health programs suitable for parents and caregivers. They include health professional advice and aim for small, achievable health gains. Many are suitable for the whole family, including lunch boxes, eating more vegetables, moving more, managing mild anxiety, and sleeping. We have now had 130,000 health program completions. Onsite, there are hundreds of free online articles from various health professionals.

Healthy Harold and Life Ed

Woolworths continues to be a proud partner in helping Life Ed educate children across Australia, including the Life Ed Thrive Children's Fund, which supports children and schools in rural, remote, and low socio-economic areas to access life lessons and nutrition education. In 2022–23, this has enabled regions such as the Wheatbelt Region of Western Australia, East Arnhem

Land in the Northern Territory and Kangaroo Island off South Australia's coast to access the program. It has reached more than 12,000 kids since its inception in 2021.

Life Ed also delivers three nutrition primary school modules that look at personal hygiene, healthy eating, physical activity, sleep, staying safe, making friends, seeking support and exploring health messaging, and advertising influences. We know education plays an important role in living a healthier life, and Healthy Harold helps deliver this in schools.

Woolworths Junior Landcare Grants

Woolworths Junior Landcare Grants Program awarded over 1,100 project grants of up to \$1,000 each, engaging close to 105,000 children in primary schools and early learning centres countrywide. The program included First Nations Perspectives projects, with 323 grants awarded to schools focusing on First Nations education and perspectives. The program helps our future environmental champions.

Next steps.

In light of the data available and information discussed, the **Advisory Board** poses the following considerations for action:

HEALTH INFORMATION:

- Organisations to work together to use each others' reach to amplify evidence-based health information to target audiences
- Make accurate, evidence-based information for parents and caregivers about children's health, medications and supplements more readily available, e.g. at point of sale:
 - Include key topics such as the use of analgesics and vitamin and mineral supplements, understanding supplement labels
 - Relevant lifestyle modifications that could be made
- Increase education for parents and caregivers on how to identify and understand reliable health information
- Increase training and support to enable health professionals to incorporate lifestyle medicine strategies into their practices
- Expand programs that increase health literacy, going beyond personal health to include the broader determinants of health to create health-supporting environments.

HEALTH SERVICES:

- Encourage children with asthma who would benefit to have asthma plans and support lifestyle modifications in addition to medications to manage asthma
- Increase children's access to dental health services
- Promote telehealth services that are convenient and accessible when a regular GP is not available.

VAPING:

- Continue enforcement of regulations around vapes, including illegal selling and reducing access to children
- Educate adults and children about vaping's dangers.



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What Woolworths Group is doing for children's health

Woolworths Group is committed to helping Australian children live healthy lives. It recognises that there is always room to improve and live the purpose, to *create better experiences together for a better tomorrow*, and to align with its health commitments.

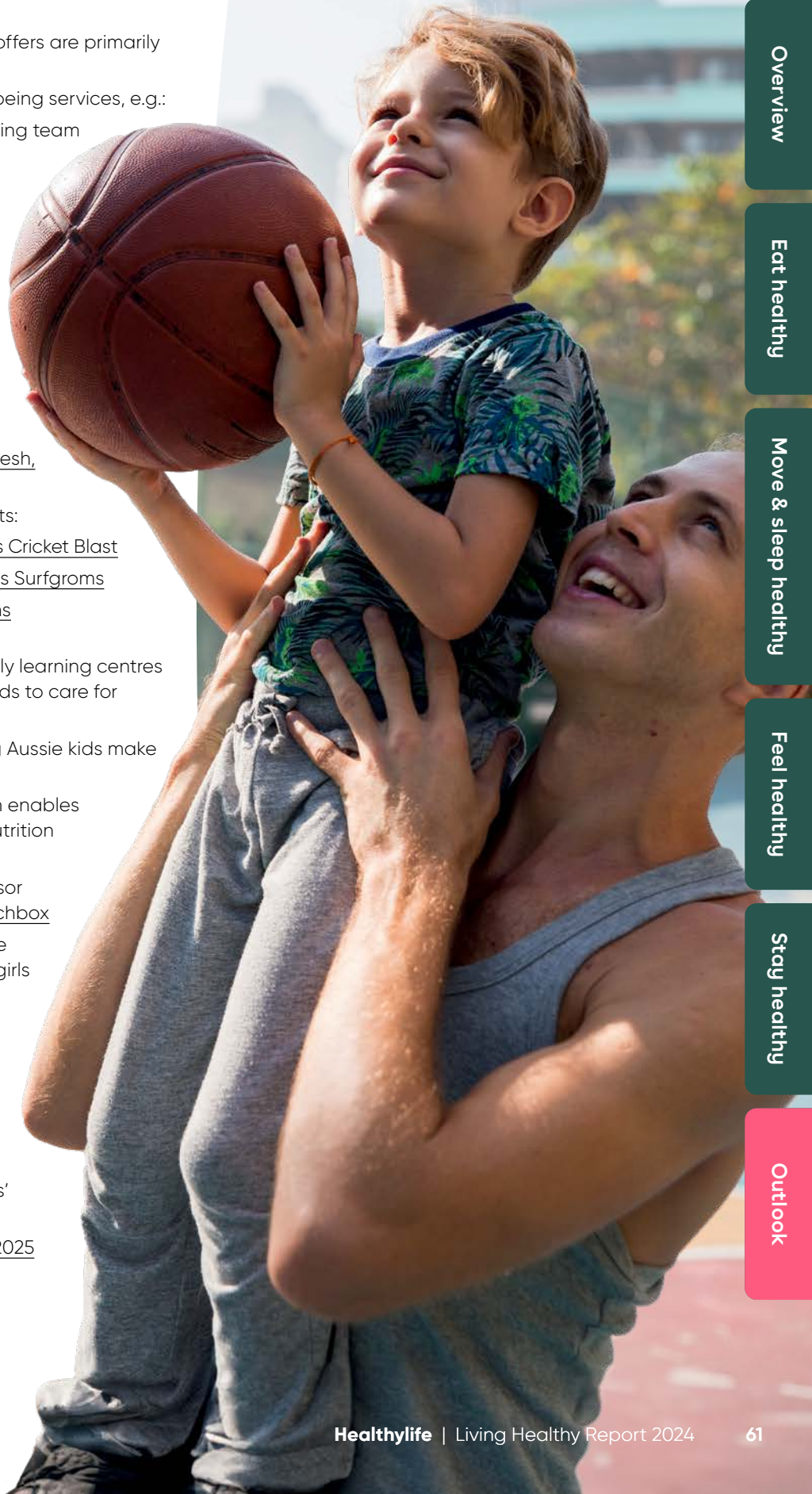
Make health easier for all Australians and New Zealanders is one of the commitments. In 2023, a specific call out to families and children, *Inspire and empower the next generation to make healthier easier through fun and engaging activities, healthier products that kids love and ideas for families* was added. The next steps are to add holistic health initiatives and metrics to gauge progress. Below are some of the health initiatives happening in the business and comments regarding health from some of the leaders.

Initiatives supporting family and children's health

Healthylife and the wider Woolworths Group employ a range of healthcare professionals, including medical practitioners, dietitians, nutritionists, pharmacists, naturopaths, psychologists and more.

- [Food Tracker](#) by Healthylife
- Free Healthylife [Health Programs](#)
- Healthylife expert advice [health articles](#)
- [Telehealth](#) offerings to consult GPs
- [Fresh Food Kids](#):
 - Free Fruit for Kids
 - Fresh Food Kids [e-Discovery Tours](#)
 - Fresh Food Kids [Recipes](#)
- [Making healthier easier](#):
 - [Australia's healthiest own brands](#)
 - [Healthier products on seasonal Prices Dropped and Low Price](#)
 - [Odd Bunch](#)
 - [Healthier recipes](#) and ideas
- [Online product filters](#) for allergens, dietary preferences and HSR
- [Healthier Options](#)
- [Healthier checkouts](#)
- Working with government, for example through the [Healthy Food Partnership](#) and Health Star Rating system, to support Australians to eat healthier foods
- Australian Grocery Wholesale supporting food security and affordability in remote and vulnerable communities
- [Everyday Rewards](#) program in Australia includes:
 - [Member Prices](#): members have access to lower prices
 - Offers on fruit and vegetables

- Regularly prioritising healthier recipes in weekly category offers for fruit, vegetables, seafood and poultry
- Woolworths Team member offers are primarily focused on fresh ranges
- Woolworths Team member wellbeing services, e.g.:
 - 'I am here' team website linking team to services
 - Sonder for 24/7 financial, medical safety, psychological or physical support for team members and their families
 - Parental leave support program
- Mini Woolies providing educational experiences for young people with disabilities
- Pick Fresh, Play Fresh and Pick Fresh, Play Fresh interactive hub
- Partnerships with children's sports:
 - Cricket Australia: Woolworths Cricket Blast
 - Surfing Australia: Woolworths Surfgrams
 - Netball Australia: Woolworths NetSetGO program
- Junior Landcare Grants with early learning centres and primary schools to inspire kids to care for the environment
- Life Ed platinum partner, helping Aussie kids make healthier food choices through:
 - Thrive Children's Fund, which enables remote schools to access nutrition education with Life Ed
 - Woolworths is a major sponsor of Australia's Healthiest Lunchbox
- Stars Foundation: supporting the holistic program for Indigenous girls and young women
- Breakfast Library Program: Breakfast library program for kids in need
- BIG W Partnership with Children's hospitals through customer fundraising
- Toys for Joy: recycling customers' old toys
- Woolworths Sustainability Plan 2025 and Sustainability Report.



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Our Woolworths Group Leaders on health.

Some of the Woolworths Group leaders share what they're passionate about when it comes to health:



ANANTH SARATHY

Chief Executive Officer, Healthylife

The Healthylife team wake up every day and think about health and how we can deliver Healthylife's purpose, to help everyone live their healthy life."



ALEX HOLT

Chief Sustainability Officer, Woolworths Group

We are committed to making healthier easier for our customers and their families. Our team of nutritionists and dietitians partner across the business to support initiatives that encourage children and their families to eat healthier and be active."



CARYN KATSIKOGIANIS

Chief People Officer, Woolworths Group

We are deeply committed to the safety, health and wellbeing of our 200,000 team members and ensuring they have access to resources and support that meet their needs and assist them in making safer and healthier decisions."



NATALIE DAVIS

Managing Director, Woolworths Group

We are committed to making healthier choices more affordable and easier for our customers and their families. Customers have responded strongly to our Odd Bunch range at 20% lower prices than conventional produce, healthier products on our promotional ends and healthier snacks at our checkouts."



GUY BRENT

Managing Director, Woolworths Food Company

We are deeply committed to improving the health credentials of our own brand products and proud that Woolworths has been ranked Australia's healthiest own brands for the fifth year in a row. Our Macro Wholefoods brand is the number-one recallable brand Australians think of when it comes to healthy food."



ANNETTE KARANTONI

Managing Director Primary Connect and Chief Supply Officer, Woolworths Group

As a mother, leader of a great team and a Board Member of the Corporate Mental Health Alliance Association (CMHAA), I'm passionate about protecting future generations' wellbeing. By promoting mentally healthy workplaces now, we invest in a brighter, more resilient future for our children and our communities."



FAYE ILHAN

Managing Director, idX

We continue to make healthier easier and more inspiring online. Families are loving our healthier recipes, including our Fresh Food Kids lunch box collection. We are excited to do more in this space."



DANIEL HAKE

Managing Director, BIG W

At BIG W, we want to make it affordable for families to be active and spend quality time together. We have our own entry-level brand, Circuit activewear, and fitness equipment and great value camping and outdoor gear, to support wellbeing with value, every day."



JUSTIN NOLAN

Director, Woolworths Metro

We are focused on making it easy for Aussies to feed themselves quickly and well, with our wide variety of fresh, healthy and great value dinner and healthier snacking offers front and centre in our stores."



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Resource guide

Healthylife health resources:

- Health programs created by health experts to help you make small, achievable changes to live a healthy life
- Health articles
- Food Tracker by Healthylife
- Telehealth appointments.

Woolworths resources:

- Woolworths Making Healthier Easier Hub
- Woolworths healthier recipes
- Woolworths Sustainability Plan 2025 and Sustainability Report
- Pick Fresh Play Fresh hub.

School lunch resources:


The good news is that healthy lunch box and school canteen resources and initiatives are available. Woolworths Group's healthier lunch box resources include:

- Healthylife's free Healthy lunch box program and plenty of ideas around healthy lunch boxes
- A healthier lunch box aisle is available on the Woolworths website and app to find healthier lunch box options
- Woolworths online lunch box recipes
- Woolworths at work schools landing page with resources to assist tuckshops.

Want to find out more?

For the latest information, visit the Healthylife website:

www.healthylife.com.au

Browse now 

GO, GO, GO!



Healthy weekly family shop



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This shop¹ provides the Australian Dietary Guidelines', recommended number of serves for two adults and two children for one week.

Product selection considered foods that our data shows are being purchased and contributing most to the Australian Dietary Guidelines' recommended serves for each food group. It includes a variety of foods available at Woolworths Supermarkets including legumes, wholegrains, fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruits, and numerous own brand products. We realise that not every family will be able to afford a healthy weekly shop. Note: Where legumes are included in the vegetable category, they will also give credit for Meat & alternatives serves, therefore, they do not need to be purchased twice.



Vegetables & legumes:

ADG² total recommended serves: 147

	Number of ADG ² serves	Product info
Potato, white, loose	10.2	1.16kg
Sweetcorn, canned, no added salt	11.2	425g x 2 cans
Broccoli, loose	8.0	735g
White cabbage, loose	8.8	735g
Cos lettuce, twin pack	9.8	735g
Carrot, loose	10.9	1kg
Pumpkin	12.5	1.1kg
Four bean mix, canned	5.6	420g can
Brown lentils, canned	5.6	420g can
Diced tomatoes, canned, in tomato juice	8.8	400g can
Onion, brown, loose	8.3	1kg
Tomatoes, loose	10.9	820g
Frozen mixed vegetables, pre-packaged	11.2	1kg pack
Frozen peas, pre-packaged	12.3	500g peas x 2 packs
Baked beans, canned	5.5	420g can
Avocado	4.2	1
Salad, leafy mix, pre-packed	3.8	200g pack
Total serves	147.6	

¹ Based on a weekly shop for two adults 19–50 years (male and female), a 14 year-old child (male) and an 8 year-old child (female).

² ADG = Australian Dietary Guidelines.



Fruit:

ADG² total recommended serves: 52.5

	Number of ADG ² serves	Product info
Apple	10.0	1.5kg
Banana	13.4	2kg
Mandarins	6.7	1kg
Watermelon	5.0	750g
Pears	6.7	1kg bag
Frozen mixed berries	3.6	500g bag
Sultanas	8.0	240g, 6 pack
Total serves	53.4	



Meat & alternatives:

ADG² total recommended serves: 66.5

	Number of ADG ² serves	Product info
Beef mince, lean	5.7	500g pack
Lamb roast	16.4	1.3kg roast
Tuna, canned in vegetable oil	4.3	425g can
Chicken breast	4.7	500g pack
Eggs	5.1	700g carton
Cashews	6.7	200g pack
Peanuts, roasted, unsalted	12.5	375g pack
Four bean mix, canned	5.6	420g x 2 cans
Baked beans, canned	2.8	420g, 1 can
Brown lentils, canned	2.8	400g, 1 can
Total serves	66.6	



Grains:

ADG² total recommended serves: 161

	Number of ADG ² serves	Product info
Wheat biscuits	37.3	1.12kg box
Wholemeal bread	32.5	650g x 2 loaves
Rolled oats	33.7	750g pack
Wholegrain wraps	9.0	360g pack
Wholemeal pasta, spaghetti	16.2	500g pack
Dry water cracker biscuit	3.6	125g box
White rice, long grain	29.5	1kg pack
Total serves	161.8	



Dairy & alternatives:

ADG² total recommended serves: 70

	Number of ADG ² serves	Product info
Cheddar cheese, full fat	12.5	500g block
Cheddar cheese, reduced fat	12.5	500g slices
Milk, full cream	11.4	3L bottle
Milk, reduced fat	11.4	3L bottle
Yoghurt, full fat plain	9.0	900g x 2 tubs
Yoghurt, reduced fat, flavoured (vanilla)	8.8	1kg x 2 tubs
Ricotta cheese, light	3.1	375g tub
Total serves	68.7	

Fats/oils

ADG² total recommended serves: 63

	Number of ADG ² serves	Product info
Extra virgin olive oil	71.4	1 x 500g bottle
Total serves	71.4	

- 1 Based on a weekly shop for two adults 19–50 years (male and female), a 14 year-old child (male) and an 8 year-old child (female).
- 2 ADG = Australian Dietary Guidelines.



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How we built this report.

The Advisory Board gathered information from many sources to understand our collective state of health, with a focus on children's health aged 5–14 years. We focused on 'pillars' for good health and divided the report into four: eat, move & sleep, feel and stay healthy.

Based on this information, we outlined what we believe would be effective 'Next steps' and called for actions we can collectively be part of to support our next generation's health.

Food and drink purchasing and costing data analysis

We used Woolworths Supermarket aggregated transaction data 2020–2023, together with Woolworths market share, ABS household composition, the *Australian Health Survey* database 2011–2012 and a newly developed database on food group serves that the Food Tracker tool uses, to analyse Australian food and drink purchases for at-home eating across all retail outlets.

We compared the number of serves purchased to the Australian Dietary Guidelines' (ADGs') recommended number of food group and discretionary serves for aged Adults 19–50 years and children aged 5–14 years.

This year, we also calculated a Woolworths Supermarket average cost per serve for each of the ADG food groups and discretionary foods, from 1 November 2022 to 30 October 2023. Based on the average number of serves purchased, we calculated the weekly cost of the ABS average Australian household (2.5 people: 1.8 adults and 0.7 children) and compared this to the average cost of a 'healthy' shop recommended by the current ADGs. The number of serves were based on male/female 19–50 years old and a 9–11 year-old male.

To understand what a healthy family weekly shop would look like, we calculated ADG requirements for 2 adults (19–50 years male and female) and 2 children (female 8 years, male 14 years), and matched these with foods available at Woolworths Supermarkets.

We also identified emerging trends and the largest grocery contributors to each food group and discretionary foods, based on Woolworths Supermarkets transaction data from 1 November 2022–30 October 2023.

Calculation process

The process to calculate the average per-person and household serves purchased was:

- 1. Analyse** Woolworths' aggregated food and drink transaction data of over 935 million total transactions in the years 2020–2023 (~18 million weekly transactions). No individual transaction data was used and bulk purchases were excluded (300+ serves grains, 100+ serves other food groups).
- 2. Group** purchases into five core food groups and discretionary foods¹.
- 3. Adjust** Woolworths' data to account for food purchased at other outlets.

¹ The database used to calculate the number of serves was prepared using an approach consistent with published data files available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Food Standards Australia and New Zealand used in the 2011–2013 Australian National Nutrition Survey. The Food Tracker tool uses the same database.

- 4. Adjust** data per household to calculate the number of serves per person per day of the five core food groups and discretionary foods.
- 5. Compare** the number of serves of each food group and discretionary foods per person to the recommended serves based on the ADGs.
- 6. To calculate the average cost per serve:** For each food group we picked the top segments that contribute 90% (to exclude segments that are less relevant to the food group) of the total serves and calculated their weighted average cost per serve.

Woolworths Group Annual Food & Health Survey 2023

We reviewed data from the Woolworths Group Annual *Food and Health Survey 2023* insights. The survey involved 2,000 Australians aged 18–80 years recruited from IPSOS + partners research panel, Australia-wide, metro and regional areas in June 2023.

Other data sources

The report draws on data and expertise from many sources, including sales data, to see how we are purchasing from different businesses across Woolworths Group, along with other organisations, such as published academic research and government data.



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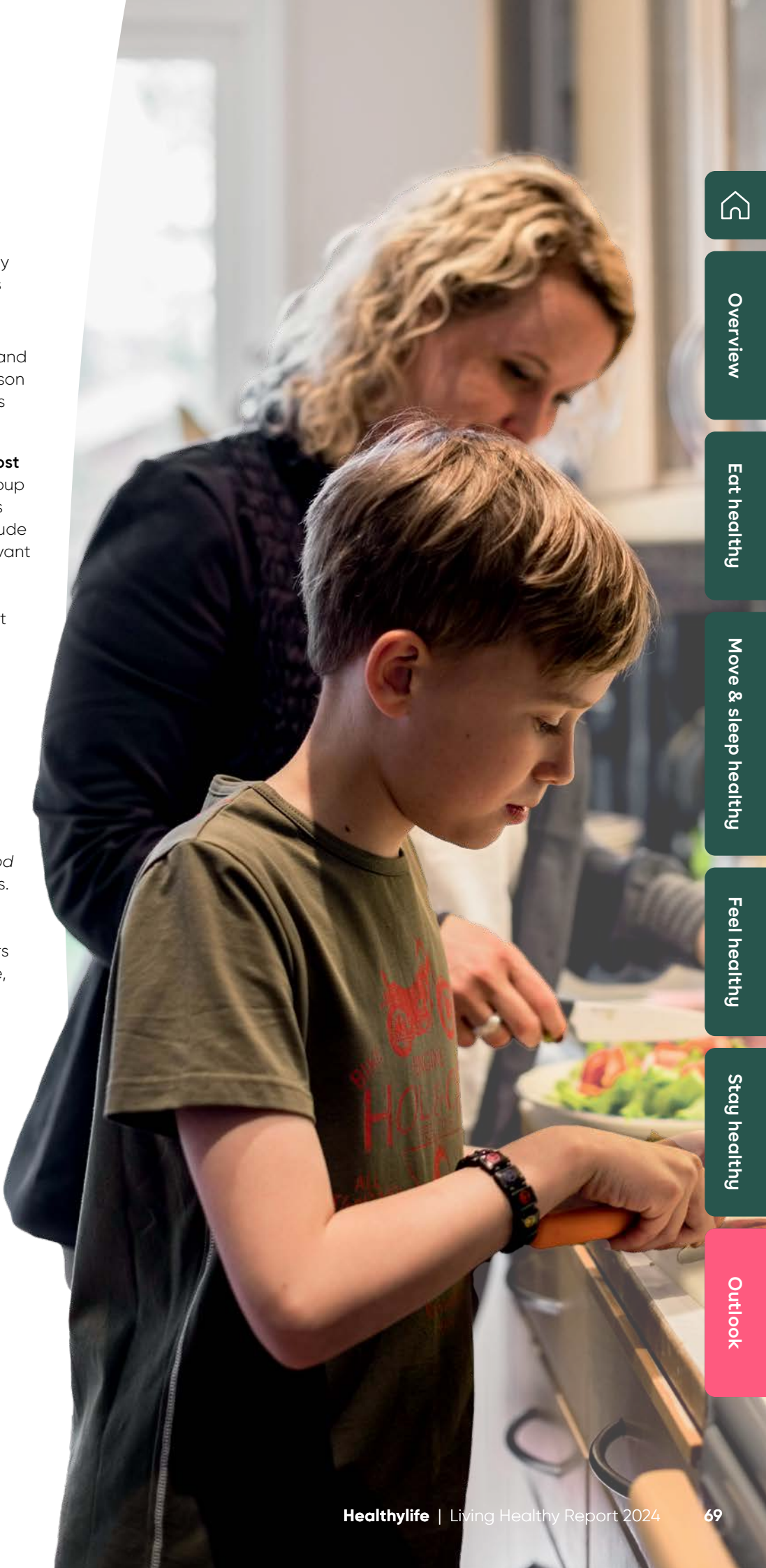
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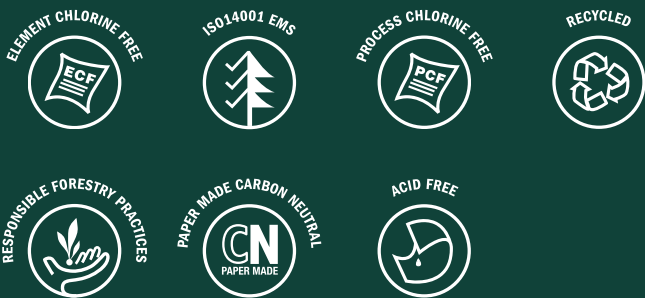
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ADG	Australian Dietary Guidelines
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Burden of Disease	The loss of healthy life through premature death or living with ill health; the quantified impact of a disease or injury on a population
Chronic Disease	A long-lasting condition with persistent effects that can impact quality of life
Core food	Foods from the Australian Dietary Guidelines' five food groups
Discretionary food	Foods that do not fit into the five core food groups because they are not necessary for a healthy diet and are often high in saturated fat and added sugars, added salt or alcohol and low in fibre. These foods are often 'energy dense' and 'nutrient poor'
HSR	Health Star Rating
Non-communicable diseases	Chronic diseases not spread by infection

View the reference guide online



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Want to get in touch?

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