Back to Basics

tips to help you feed the family for less

The information in this booklet aims to help you save money and make your food dollar go further. There are basic hints on how to spend less on items such as meat and snack foods. Simple tips on stocking your pantry and easy recipes to match will help you to provide a variety of appetising meals and snacks within your budget.

Produced by Public Health Community Nutrition Team, Nutrition Department

NSW Government
Health Central Coast Local Health District
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Tips for Saving Money on Food

1. Save by not spending too much on things like sweet biscuits, pies, sausage rolls, soft drinks and snack foods such as potato crisps. All these foods offer practically no nutrition and often lead to over eating and poor eating habits. They can also be quite expensive.

2. Try ‘no-name’ (generic) or ‘house’ brands. They can be good value, but always compare prices for the best buy.

3. Determine the best price by comparing unit prices of different brands e.g. price per 100grams. This is usually written on the shelf near the item.

4. Buy foods in plain packaging, e.g. herbs and spices packed in cellophane or cardboard containers are often cheaper than those in glass jars and ‘shaker’ type bottles.

5. Include cheaper cuts of meat. It is important to choose carefully as cheaper meats with lots of fat and bone are not good value. Quality mince is better value than fatty mince. For more information see pages 3-4 ‘How to spend less on meat’.

6. Eggs can replace meat occasionally. They are economical and a good source of protein. If using eggs instead of meat, allow two eggs per person.

7. Non-meat dishes based on legumes (dried beans and lentils) can be good money savers. Canned legumes are quick and easy to use however, they will cost more than those you cook yourself. See page 9 ‘How to cook legumes’.

8. Save time and money by cooking enough food for two nights e.g. cook enough mince for potato pie tonight and mince on toast tomorrow night.

9. Carefully chosen vegetables and fruit are good value (especially when they are in season). Don't buy more than needed and store correctly to avoid waste. Don’t buy potatoes that are ‘shooting’ or have a green appearance. See page 10 ‘How to store fresh vegetables’.

10. If there are teenagers with big appetites in your family, get ‘back to basics’ and fill hungry teenagers with bread, breakfast, cereal, pasta, fruit or left-over cooked vegetables. Forget the biscuits and fruit juice.

11. Make your own muffins, scones, slices etc. as this will be much cheaper than buying the already made versions. Besides, the children could help. Avoid recipes with lots of ingredients, especially if the leftover ingredients are not likely to be used.

12. Buying food in bulk amounts may save money. Before buying bulk amounts of food, make sure that you have storage space and the food will not spoil before you have time to use it. Why not ‘get together’ with other people, buy in bulk then share? Take care not use or prepare more food than you need just because you have bought larger amounts. Make sure that by spending a little more to buy in bulk, you haven’t left yourself short of money for other essentials.

13. Powdered milk is an economical alternative to fresh milk.

14. Check ‘Use By’ or ‘Best Before’ date to ensure food safety and avoid waste.
Stock Up the Food Cupboard

Try stocking up with some basic ingredients and foods so that you are always able to make quick and easy meals. You will be surprised at the variety of meals you can prepare with a good selection of basic ingredients and food items in the cupboard.

Back to Basics Shopping List

Give yourself time to stock up on the following basic ingredients and foodstuffs. Buying everything at once will probably cost too much. Some items will need to be refrigerated once they have been opened e.g. UHT (long life) milk and UHT custard. Margarine, cheese and eggs will need to be kept in the refrigerator. Processed cheddar cheeses that are found on the shelves in the supermarket, do not need to be kept in the refrigerator. As you use up ingredients, don’t forget to replace them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rice</th>
<th>Evaporated milk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legumes e.g. red lentils, chick peas</td>
<td>Powdered milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned tuna (or other canned fish)</td>
<td>Tomato sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned or packet soup</td>
<td>Sweet chilli sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomato paste</td>
<td>Soy Sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned chopped tomatoes</td>
<td>Worcestershire sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn kernels, canned</td>
<td>Barbeque sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain flour</td>
<td>Mixed herbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self raising flour</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custard powder</td>
<td>Stock cubes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn flour</td>
<td>Ginger, powdered or crushed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant pudding mix</td>
<td>Gravy mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned fruit</td>
<td>Salt &amp; Pepper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>Curry powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baked beans</td>
<td>Garlic, powdered or crushed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaghetti or macaroni (uncooked)</td>
<td>Small bottle of vinegar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 eggs</td>
<td>Small bottle of vegetable oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margarine</td>
<td>Long life milk and custard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wherever possible buy ‘salt reduced’ or ‘no added salt’ canned foods.

The recipes in this booklet will help you to make use of these basic foods.

There is no need to buy everything on the above shopping list. The list is meant to be a guide only. Some items you may not want or like. You may wish to add extra or different things.
How To Spend Less On Meat (and still feed your family well)

Meat is part of a healthy diet as it provides protein, vitamins and minerals. The term ‘meat’ includes red meat (beef, kangaroo, veal and lamb) and white meat (chicken, pork). As lean red meat is a very good source of iron, try to serve it at least three times a week. Try to include fish in your diet about three times a week. If fresh fish is too expensive, canned fish is great (salmon, tuna, sardines). Have canned fish on a sandwich, in a salad or make into fish cakes (p.19 for recipe)

The following ideas will help you save money on meat.

Include lean, cheaper cuts of meat in your menu plan. They have the same nutritional value as more expensive cuts.

It is important to choose lean meat with little or no bone. Why pay for something you can't eat! Be aware that cheaper grades of mince meat and most sausages can be very fatty.

Lean cuts of cheaper meat can be tough.

To make tough meats tender:

Marinate for 2-3 hours. This will flavour the meat and help to make it tender. See page 23 for marinade recipes. If you do not wish to make your own marinade, ‘ready to use’ ones are available from the supermarket.

Cooking meat slowly by moist cookery methods; Casserole, stew or use slow cooker.

Tougher cuts of meat tenderize well if cooked in a pressure cooker.

Examples of cheaper cuts of meat and ways to cook them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meat Cut</th>
<th>Cooking Method or Suitable Dish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Round, skirt and blade steak</td>
<td>Cut into thin strips across the grain, stir fry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cross cut blade steak can be barbequed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Casserole, stew or cook in slow cooker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuck steak, gravy beef</td>
<td>Casserole, stew or cook in slow cooker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamb shank</td>
<td>Use in soup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bake or cook in slow cooker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean mince</td>
<td>Rissoles and meat loaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tacos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potato pie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Don't buy more meat than you need

It is not necessary to eat large amounts of meat. 100 grams of lean, raw meat (red or white meat) is enough for one person. This is about the same as one medium rissole or one lean lamb chump chop. Ask for what you want at the supermarket or butchers. Try not to buy more than you need. Butchers will be able to sell you just the amount you ask for. Some supermarkets will also be able to package the amount of meat that you require. If you do have to buy more meat than you need for a meal, resist the temptation of giving bigger serves. Freeze the extra for another meal.

Make meat go further by ‘extending’ it with other foods

When making rissoles or meat loaf by you could add:
- Mashed or chopped cooked vegetables.
- Cooked rice
- Grated raw vegetables such as potato, pumpkin, sweet potato, carrot, zucchini.
- Mashed legumes such as kidney beans, soy beans, butter beans and lentils. Cook them yourself or buy canned.

Use about \( \frac{1}{4} \) vegetable, legumes or rice to \( \frac{3}{4} \) mince for rissoles or meat loaf.

When cooking stews and casseroles you could add any (or all) of the following:
- Cooked rice or barley
- Chopped vegetables
- Any type of pasta (wholemeal pasta would be the best choice)
- Legumes such as green and red lentils, kidney beans, lima beans, soybeans and chick peas. All legumes (except the red lentils) must be cooked before adding to the meat. The red lentils may be added raw to stews and casseroles. Add about one tablespoon of uncooked red lentils per serve. See page 9 ‘How to cook legumes’. Canned legumes can be used. They will be a little more expensive but do save time and effort.

Don’t add too much of these foods or the flavour and texture of the meat will be lost. Try adding about \( \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{2} \) cup to each cup of meat.

Buying larger amounts of meat may save money e.g. buying 2 kg. of mince may be cheaper than buying 1 kg. of mince

Before buying larger quantities of meat ask yourself:
- Do I have enough freezer space to store extra meat?
- Do I have suitable containers in which to freeze the meat (in meal size amounts)?
- If I buy this larger amount of meat will I have enough money for other food items?
- Will I be tempted to serve larger amounts of meat (than needed) just because I have it?

Don’t waste leftover cooked meat

- make a curry
- add to soup
- fill a taco
- make a pie
- make meat fritters or meat pancakes
- add to an omelette or scrambled egg
- add to stir fry vegetables
- top a pizza

Having a ‘non- meat’ meal a couple of times a week not only provides variety but can be a money saver. ‘Non- meat’ meals should be based on legumes or eggs or cheese or tofu. See recipe section for ideas.
Breast milk or formula is all baby needs in the first six months. Breast milk is perfect for baby. It is fast, available and cheap. Try breast feeding, it is best for baby, best for you. Breast fed or formula fed, baby does not need to be given solid food until they are around six months of age.

A six month old baby is able to have a range of food - cereal, fruit and vegetables, red and white meat and fish. Fish can be fresh or canned. If using canned fish such as salmon or tuna, buy ‘no added salt’ in spring water. If this is not possible, drain off the liquid.

It is important to include foods that contain iron. Iron rich foods include, iron fortified cereal, red meat (beef, lamb and kangaroo). White meat such as chicken, fish, cooked plain tofu and legumes also provide iron but they not as good as red meat.

First food should be soft. It can be pureed, mashed or chopped into small pieces depending on the chewing and swallowing ability of your baby. Learning to eat solid food is a skill and baby will improve with practice. If you do puree baby’s first foods, don’t puree food for too long. It is important that baby experiences different textures and soft finger foods in order to learn independent eating skills.

Commercial baby foods can be expensive. They are convenient and give Mum or Dad (or Grandma) a rest, but, if used all the time they don’t always provide a good variety of taste and texture.

Preparing food for baby is not too hard and saves money. You could cook extra family food to puree, mash or chop then cover and refrigerate for next day. If family food is unsuitable or if you prefer to cook just for baby, why not prepare enough for a number of meals. This saves time, effort and cooking costs. Food for freezing can be put into freezer bags or plastic food containers with lids. Pureed food can be frozen in ice cube containers (cover before placing in the freezer) Frozen food does not lose food value. Mashed potato does not freeze well although, mixing it with equal quantities of mashed pumpkin or mashed sweet potato, seems to work.

To puree food, use a food processor, blender, mouli or push through a mesh strainer. Vegetables and fruit are easy to puree. Meat is more of a challenge but is a good source of iron and should be included. To puree the meat from a stew or casserole, mix with a small amount of the ‘gravy’. If you don’t have a processor or blender, chop meat very finely then mash well. Mixing the meat with the vegetables may make it easier for baby to manage. Raw lean steak can be frozen then grated and cooked when needed. Cooked lean steak can also be frozen then grated when needed. Cooked fresh fish (no bones) or canned fish mash easily. All meats for baby should be well cooked. They should not be served rare or medium rare.

How much food does baby need? Baby will let you know when they have had enough or if they don’t like a food (two days are hardly ever the same!). New food may have to be offered over and over before baby likes it and baby may never like some foods so don’t stress too much.

By about 12 months most babies will be eating family food. Cooking separate meals can be costly and tiring. Baby should still be having 500mls of milk each day. Up to two years of age, give full cream milk. Once baby is two, fat reduced (1-2% fat, not skim) may be used as long as their appetite is good and they are growing normally. You can start teaching baby to drink from a cup at about six months.
• **Don’t bother buying fruit juices and Vitamin C syrups.** They are costly and not necessary. Formula or breast milk provides Vitamin C. Once baby is having solid food, a variety of fruit and vegies will provide Vitamin C. The best advice is to not bother with juice.

Fresh fruit is preferable to juice, it contains fibre, encourages chewing and is cheap.

• **Fluid intake is important both in summer and in winter.** Water is a cheap thirst quencher and won’t cause tooth decay. Children should be encouraged to drink water. Juice, cordial or soft drink can be high in sugar. Water is the best thirst quencher. Choose tap water.

• **Finger foods can be offered at six months.** Finger food ideas include:

  - Large pieces of fruit that are easily held by baby and cannot be pushed completely into baby’s mouth.
  - Fruit chunks tied (plum pudding style) in clean, loosely woven cotton cloth. This will give baby something to hold on to. Frozen fruit given this way is great for teething babies.
  - Partly cooked carrot grated or chunks depending on baby’s chewing and swallowing ability.
  - Grated cheese.
  - Plain biscuits (not too often).

**Reduce the chance of choking by making sure baby is calm and sitting still.**

Make sure there is no food left in baby’s mouth before putting baby or toddler back to play, crawl or into bed. Foods that could choke baby easily include nuts, lollies, popcorn, whole peas, whole grapes, whole cherry tomatoes, small pieces of raw apple and raw carrot and whole cocktail frankfurts. Remove seeds and tough skin from fruit. Remove gristle, bones and skin from meat and chicken.

**NO MATTER HOW SAFE YOU THINK THE FOOD IS – ALWAYS SUPERVISE!**

• **Toddlers have small stomachs so mid meals (snacks) are important to help to satisfy hunger and promote good health.** Choose foods that are low in fat, sugar and salt. Good choices include breads, dairy food, fruit, vegetables, breakfast cereals. Choose food that your child can manage. Mid meal snacks don’t have to be expensive. Snacks such as potato crisps, sticky health food bars and sweet biscuits have very little food value, are costly and contribute to tooth decay. They will not develop good eating habits.

• **When you go out, take food with you.** Bought food costs much more than food from home. You will have to organise yourself but it will be worth it. A banana is a great mid meal snack or lunch food. It comes in its own wrapping and doesn’t need to be warmed. You will need an insulated food container as well as a ‘freezer brick’ if food needs to be kept cold.

• **Don’t spend money on bottled water, bottle your own.** Most tap water contains fluoride to help prevent tooth decay.

  *If you think your baby or toddler may need extra vitamins or minerals or if you are worried about your child’s eating habits, talk to your Doctor, Child Health Nurse or a Dietitian.*
Children are often hungry between main meals. This is especially so for most teenagers.

Trying to satisfy the ‘between meal munchies’ with foods such as biscuits and potato crisps is an expensive exercise without much nutrition. These foods are often high in fat or sugar or salt (or all three). Biscuits aren’t very filling so it is easy to eat too many. Not good for health or the budget.

Bread is a much better option than biscuits (for people of all ages). It is cheap, wholesome and filling. Bread freezes well. Bread can be toasted, made into sandwiches. Bread can be dried and used instead of crackers. Flat breads such as wraps, Lebanese bread and pita bread dry well. Just place the bread on shelves in a low temperature oven and bake until it becomes crisp. Bread includes all varieties (white, white high fibre, wholemeal, wholegrain, raisin, pita, Lebanese) plus foods like scones, finger buns, muffins and pikelets.

**Other mid meal ideas include**

- cans of creamed corn, baked beans, spaghetti
- soup - homemade, ‘cup of soup’ packet and canned (look for ‘no added’ or ‘reduced’ salt)
- cooked pasta with a sprinkle of grated cheese. Could be eaten hot or cold.
- quick cook noodles (look for low fat, low salt varieties)
- cold cooked rice with milk.
- salad vegetables
- fruit - fresh and canned
- raw vegetables
- cooked vegetables e.g. potato
- breakfast cereal - dry or with milk or with a spread e.g. Weetbix™ with peanut butter
- a bowl of porridge - instant porridge is good for the quick snack. Traditional rolled oats is cheaper and will cook in less than ten minutes.
- muffins and scones - bought or homemade
- dairy foods e.g. custard (bought or homemade), yoghurt, milk, cheese
- plain biscuits e.g. Wheat meal™
- rice cakes & spread

Mid meals (or snacks) provide an opportunity to have more fruit and vegetables, to have dairy food for Calcium and to get more fibre from breads and cereals.

*Most children get hungry in between main meals. No matter what the age of the child, be it toddler or teenager, it is important that these between meal foods contribute to good nutrition.*

Plan regular eating times. Avoid continuous ‘grazing’ throughout the day as this can contribute to over eating and tooth decay.

*Poor snack food choices can lead to poor eating habits.*

*P.S. Good choices are important for adults too!*
Packed Lunches and School Lunch Boxes

Whatever food is packed into the lunch box, it is important that -

- The food is nutritious and there is enough to satisfy hunger.
- The food looks good and is appealing so it is more likely to be eaten.
- The food ‘travels’ well. Soft foods that may break up could be packed frozen e.g. Scones.
- The food won’t go ‘off’. Sandwiches with ‘risky’ spreads like meat and curried egg can be frozen. Most sandwiches can be frozen (not salad). To keep lunch foods cold why not freeze milk drinks or water in suitable containers. They should thaw by lunchtime. Small ‘freezer bricks’ and insulated lunchboxes or bags are also a good idea.

Ideas for a Packed Lunch

Sandwiches: breads include white (especially white high fibre), wholemeal, wholegrain, pita, lavash, Lebanese, pocket, wraps, rye, bread rolls and fruit bread. Suitable spreads include vegemite, cheese, cheese, lean cold meat, canned salmon or tuna, baked beans, spaghetti, creamed corn, egg, grated carrot with sultanas, salad and peanut butter (if allowed).

Vegetables: pack vegetables such as carrot sticks, capsicum pieces or cold cooked vegetables e.g. jacket potato. You could pack a mixed salad (tomato, lettuce, cucumber etc.) or bean salad. To keep salads cold, use insulated lunch containers as well as a ‘freezer brick’ or a suitable container of frozen water or milk. You may also need to pack some bread to go with the salad.

Vegetable Slices: These make a pleasant change from sandwiches. They will need to be packed carefully and kept cold. See recipe section for Zucchini and Vegetable slice recipes.

Canned food: Spaghetti, baked beans, sweet corn, salmon and tuna. Cans with ring pull lids would be the easiest to open. Be careful of sharp edges. Don’t forget to pack a spoon. To save money you could buy larger cans of these foods and place suitable amounts into smaller plastic containers with firmly fitting or screw top lids. This could also be done if cans are not allowed at school.

Cold pasta and rice dishes: Keep cold with frozen water, milk drink or ‘freezer brick’.

Scones, rice cakes or pikelets: With cheese, fruit and a milk drink could replace sandwiches.

Drinks: Water is the best and cheapest thirst quencher. Small tetra boxes of long life milks do not need to be kept cold but can be frozen and packed in with lunch. Babies and toddlers up to two years should have full cream milk. Reduced fat milk (1-2% fat) can be given to children over the age of two. For children five years and older choose mostly reduced fat or skim milk.

Fruit: If possible, pack fresh fruit. Small tubs of fruit in fruit juice are suitable for a change. To save money, put canned or stewed fruit in a screw top plastic container yourself. Fresh fruit is preferable to juice. It is more nutritious and cheaper than juice. There is no fibre in most juices. Even ‘no added sugar’ juice contains quite a bit of sugar and it is easy to drink too much juice.

Treats: such as chips, chocolate, sticky fruit straps, muesli bars, sweet biscuits, doughnuts and soft drinks are high in sugar or fat or salt (or the lot). Often costly, these foods can contribute to tooth decay, unwanted weight gain and they provide very little or no nutrition.

Treats like these are not meant to be eaten every day, they are sometimes foods!!
How To

How to cook legumes
Legumes include red kidney beans, haricot beans, soy beans, cannelloni beans, chick peas, brown lentils and red lentils. Red lentils are the only legumes that do not have to be soaked and cooked before adding to other food. Uncooked red lentils can be added to soups, stews and casseroles and will cook in about 20 minutes. Legumes nearly double their bulk when cooked.

1. Soak legumes (except red lentils) over night or for about four hours. Use three cups of cold water to one cup of legumes. If soaking overnight, cover and place in the refrigerator.
2. Drain off the soaking water and cover the legumes with fresh water.
3. Bring to the boil and boil with lid off until tender (about 45 minutes). Drain and use.

Why not cook extra and freeze for next time.

How to cook rice
Allow between ¼ and ⅓ cup of uncooked rice per person. Rice triples in bulk when cooked so, one cup of uncooked rice swells up to make about three cups of cooked rice.

Boiling Method:
1. Choose a saucepan large enough to hold about six cups of water for every cup of uncooked rice. Bring water to the boil.
2. When water is boiling, add rice. Stir until water comes back to the boil.
3. Boil with the lid off until rice is tender. Test by taking out a grain of rice and ‘squishing’ it (don’t burn yourself!). Rice should be tender but firm. Drain and use.

Absorption Method:
1. Place rice into large saucepan. Cover rice with water. Water should be at least five centimetres (about two inches) over the top of the rice.
2. Leave lid off. Bring to the boil.
3. When boiling, turn heat down so that water is just simmering. Place lid on.
4. Cook until rice is tender (about 20 minutes, brown rice will take a little longer).

Any leftover cooked rice can be frozen.

How to cook barley
Boil the same as you would boil rice. Cook until tender, about 20-30 minutes. Drain and serve. Barley doubles in bulk when cooked. Allow about ⅓ cup of uncooked barley per person.

Any leftover could be frozen.

How to cook pasta
Pasta (macaroni, spaghetti, noodles) swells up when cooked. One cup of uncooked macaroni becomes two cups of cooked macaroni. Allow ¼ and ⅓ of a cup of uncooked pasta per person.
1. Choose a saucepan large enough to hold about four cups of water for every 1 ½ cups of uncooked pasta. Bring water to the boil.
2. When water boils, add the pasta. Stir until it comes back to the boil.
3. Boil, lid off until just tender (about 15 - 20 minutes). Small wholemeal pasta shapes usually cook in about 5 – 10 minutes. Wholemeal spaghetti may take up to 20 minutes.
4. Test to see if pasta is cooked by squashing or cutting a piece. Pasta should be tender but firm. Drain and serve.

When cooked, wholemeal pasta does not bulk up as much as white pasta.

Leftover cooked pasta can be frozen. Mix pasta with a little oil or margarine or pasta sauce before freezing to help prevent it being ‘gluggy’ when thawed.
**How to make a fruit smoothie**
1. You will need milk and fruit. Full cream milk is recommended for frail older people. Milk can be fresh, long life, evaporated or powdered. Choose fresh fruit that can be mashed easily e.g. Banana or soft canned fruit. Small tubs of fruit puree can be used (they are a bit more expensive). Frozen fruit is also suitable.
2. Allow about half a cup of milk and about a quarter of a cup of fruit per person. If you have yoghurt, add about two dessertspoons. For frail older people, add ice cream as well.
3. Mix ingredients in a blender or food processor. If you don’t have either, just mash the fruit well, add milk then mix with a rotary beater, or a whisk or a fork.

**How to freeze raw meat**
1. Freeze meat in meal size amounts. Wrap tightly (to squeeze air out) in Gladwrap™ or special freezer bags. Make the packages as flat as possible for quick freezing. Write date and name of meat on each package.
2. When packing in freezer, make sure there is space around each package of meat to allow cold air to circulate. This helps meat to freeze as quickly as possible.
3. Keep in freezer for about three months. Freezer instructions will give freezing times.

**How to store raw meat in the refrigerator**
1. Store raw meat on the bottom shelf so that no raw meat juices drip onto other food.
2. Most raw meat can be stored in the refrigerator for up to three days.
3. Refrigerate raw chicken, fish and any type of minced meat for two days only before cooking or freezing.
4. Meat that has been vacuum sealed can be stored for 4 – 6 weeks in the refrigerator. Make sure that the wrapping is not broken. Check the ‘best by’ or ‘use before’ date and if wanting to keep past these dates, freeze.

**How to store fresh vegetables and fruit**
1. Potatoes and onions - take out of plastic bag and store in a cool dark place.
2. Leafy and root vegetables such as spinach, lettuce and carrots should be left in a vented (small holes) plastic bag in the refrigerator to prevent wilting and softening.
3. Pumpkin pieces can be stored in the crisper section of the refrigerator. There is no need to wrap although wrapping in plastic wrap or placing in a plastic bag will help prevent surface of pumpkin drying out. Removing the seeds may help pumpkin last longer.
4. Tomatoes can be placed straight into the crisper.
5. In hot weather, fruit will keep longer if stored in the fridge. Always cover cut fruit before placing in fridge. If bananas are put in the fridge the skin goes brown but the inside is fine.

**How to store leftovers or cooked food in the refrigerator**
1. So that food cools quickly, place in flat containers with tightly fitting lid and place in fridge so cold air can circulate around each container (also important when freezing food)
2. It is OK to put small amounts of hot food into modern refrigerators. If you do prefer to cool food first, don't leave food out of fridge for more than one hour or bacteria may start to cause food spoilage.

*Correct storage prevents waste and helps to keep food safe for eating.*
Food Safety & Hygiene

If present in large enough numbers, some bacteria can cause food poisoning.

Foods in which bacteria grow most readily are **HIGH RISK** foods. They include raw chicken, raw fish and other sea food, eggs, meat, dairy products, cooked rice and cooked pasta (especially if in a creamy sauce). High risk foods also include processed foods that contain eggs, beans, nuts or other protein rich foods including quiche and soy bean products.

Choosing, storing, handling and cooking high risk foods correctly will help to keep the food safe for eating. It is particularly important to take care when preparing food for the elderly, infants, young children, pregnant women and the sick.

**Cleanliness helps prevent the spread of bacteria so**

- Wash hands with soap and warm running water for about 20 seconds then dry properly
  - before preparing food
  - after going to the toilet
  - after smoking
  - after handling garbage
  - after touching pets

- Change tea towels at least daily and make sure that dishcloths are clean.

- Clean work areas by washing with hot water and detergent then wipe over with hot water.

- Cover food to protect from flies, dust and pets.

**Bacteria is already present on some high risk food so**

- All meat to be served to young children, the sick and the elderly should be well cooked.

- Always cook chicken well. Cooked chicken juices should be clear, not pink or red.

- Cook all minced meat for at least 20 minutes.

- Don’t keep raw chicken, fish or mince meat in the refrigerator more than two days before cooking. Other meat e.g. steak, can be kept for three days before cooking. Freeze if wanting to keep longer.

**Bacteria is easily spread from food to food so**

- Wash and dry hands properly after touching raw meat, chicken or fish.

- The chopping board and knife used for cutting up raw meat, chicken or fish should be washed thoroughly in hot soapy water then rinsed with hot water.

- Make sure that raw meat or meat juices don’t touch or get on cooked and ready to eat foods. Store raw meat, chicken and fish on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so juices do not drip onto other food. Some refrigerators have a special meat container or compartment.
Bacteria grow best at a temperature between 5°C - 60°C, the ‘Danger Zone. Room temperature is in the Danger Zone, so

- Keep food steaming hot or cold. Refrigerators should keep food at or below 5°C
- If it will take more than one hour to get from the shops to home, take an esky or other insulated container to keep high risk foods cool. This is especially important in summer. Wrapping meat, chicken etc. in lots of newspaper will help to keep it cool.
- Pack school or work lunches in an insulated lunch box plus a freezer brick or frozen drink.
- Don’t buy hot, high risk foods such as chicken, meat pies or other takeaway foods if it will be more than one hour before you will be home and eating the food.
- Don’t leave mealtime leftover food on the bench or table for more than one hour before storing properly in the refrigerator or freezer.
- Put large amounts of hot food into smaller flat containers for quick cooling. Food does not have to be cold before refrigerating or freezing.
- Thaw fish, meat and chicken in refrigerator. Leaving these foods on the kitchen bench to thaw is *not* a good idea. Meat and chicken can be thawed in the microwave but must be cooked once thawed as parts (or all) will be warm and in the danger zone. Frozen cooked high risk foods such as casserole, should also be thawed in the refrigerator and used within about 24 hours. Do not refreeze leftovers.
- It is not advisable to thaw frozen raw chicken, meat and fish then refreeze. Once cooked, freezing again is OK.
- Reheat food until it is steaming hot as quickly as possible. Only reheat food once.
- Boiling high risk food that has been left out of the refrigerator for more than three hours will *not* make it safe to eat. Boiling may destroy the bacteria but not the poisons (toxins) bacteria have produced.
- If necessary, defrost refrigerator and freezer regularly so that food cools better. Frost should not be allowed to build up. More than one centimetre or ½ an inch would be too thick.
- High risk food will still go ‘off” in the refrigerator if kept too long. After three days in the refrigerator, it is wise to throw high risk food away. Food that has gone ‘off” may not look or smell bad. Writing ‘date opened’ on some foods can be a useful reminder.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEEP IT HOT OR KEEP IT COLD</th>
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<td>and</td>
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<td>IF IN DOUBT - THROW IT OUT!</td>
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The Value of Vegetables

Vegetables are good for you. Cooked or raw, fresh or frozen, vegetables provide vitamins, minerals and fibre and, they are low fat. Vegetables are colourful and can be cooked or served in many ways (see recipe section for ideas).

Eating five different vegetables every day would be great especially if you can manage ½ cup of each. Of course, this amount will vary with age and appetite but remember, some is always better than none. Five serves may seem like a lot but you can count salad vegetables and canned vegetables such as baked beans (or other legumes), mushrooms, sweet corn etc. Half a cup is a serve of vegetable and one cup is a serve of salad.

While variety is important, children may be hard to convince. All you can do is keep trying. Eventually your child is probably going to eat more than mashed potato!

And, remember, you are never too old to start eating lots of vegetables and enjoying the health benefits. Why not start by trying this easy recipe.
SWEET POTATO AND BUTTER BEAN SOUP

Recipe serves 4  Preparation time: 20 mins

Ingredients:
1 orange flesh sweet potato, grated (enough to fill 2 cups)
1 onion, chopped finely or grated (optional)
1 tablespoon oil
400g can of chopped tomatoes
400g can of butter beans (no need to drain)
1 teaspoon of turmeric (optional)
2 cups chicken stock (packet of ‘ready to use’ or make from stock cubes or stock powder)

Method:
1. Combine all ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to boil, turn heat down, lid on, simmer (boil gently) for 15 - 20 minutes. Stir occasionally.
2. Serve with bread.

Ideas & Hints:
- Pumpkin could replace sweet potato.
- Other vegetables could be added e.g. canned or frozen corn kernels, frozen peas, extra legumes such as red kidney beans and chick peas.

MINESTRONE SOUP

(A meal in itself)

Recipe serves 6  Preparation time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:
2 carrots, peeled and chopped or thinly sliced
2 potatoes, peeled and chopped into small pieces
2 onions, chopped
1 cup barley or rice
½ cup split peas (optional)
1 cup macaroni (try wholemeal)
1 can red kidney beans or lima beans or baked beans (no need to drain)
6 cups water

Method:
Place all ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to the boil. Turn heat down and simmer gently for 20 minutes (add more water if soup gets too thick). Serve with bread, bread rolls, scones or toast.

Ideas & Hints:
- Any vegetables are suitable including sweet potato, pumpkin, frozen corn, frozen peas and chopped up spinach.
TOMATO & BEAN SOUP

Recipe serves 4 - 6  Preparation time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

440g can tomato soup
440g can tomatoes (chopped or crushed)
440g can baked beans
1½ cups water
1 small chopped onion
½ teaspoon mixed herbs

Method:

Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan and heat through. Serve with bread or toast.

Ideas & Hints:

❖ Left-over cooked macaroni, rice or barley would go well added to this soup.
❖ An extra can of legumes such as red kidney beans or soy beans could be added
❖ In summer, this soup could be served cold.

You can view a practical demonstration of this Tomato and Bean Soup recipe by scanning this QR code with your smart phone or tablet.
(You will need the free ‘QR Code Reader’ App)

Or go to http://youtu.be/jJ-TbWBcpcY
BREAD BASED MEALS

Bread can be used as a basis for quick easy meals. Choose whole- meal, whole- grain or high fibre varieties if possible.

Ideas

1. *Toasted Sandwiches (Breville/jaffle type)*

There are lots of filling possibilities. Choose fillings that don't need a lot of cooking e.g. left-over cooked meat and cooked vegetables, tomato and cheese, sardines with finely chopped onion, baked beans, canned spaghetti, sweet corn and mushrooms.

2. *Hamburgers are popular and fun.*

The burger could be mince rissoles, lentil patties or fish cakes. Have lots of salad in or with your hamburger. Try not to buy cheapest quality mince as it is can be very fatty and not good value.

3. *Bread parcels*

These can be served alone, with salad or with vegetables. They are really easy to make using ‘flat’ bread instead of pastry. Suitable ‘flat’ breads include lavash, wraps and Lebanese bread. If Lebanese bread is used, it is best slit in half so it is not too thick to roll up. Place some filling onto the centre of the bread you are using then, wrap the filling up in the bread making a parcel. Place parcels onto a greased tray and place in a moderate oven (180°C) for about 10 minutes. Suitable fillings include cooked mince meat or other left-over cooked meat, baked beans, spaghetti, left-over cooked vegetables with cheese, canned stew.

4. *Bread pizza bases.*

English muffins, lavash, wraps, or Lebanese bread could be used. If using Lebanese bread, it could be split or left as is. Brush the pizza base with tomato paste then top with your choice of topping. Place into a moderate oven (180°C) for 10 - 15 minutes. Try to include vegetables in the topping e.g. Chopped cooked sweet potato, grated zucchini, and drained cooked/canned legumes including baked beans.

5. ‘Something’ on toast

Scrambled eggs, mince, left over curry, sweet corn, spaghetti, baked beans, canned mushrooms, and leftover vegetables with cheese.

*All of these bread based meal ideas could be served with salad or extra vegetables.*
CURRIED TUNA & EGG

Recipe serves 4-6
Preparation time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

425g can of tuna or salmon
1 small onion finely chopped
1 teaspoon curry powder
445g can of cream of chicken soup (concentrated type, not the ready to eat type)
4 hard boiled eggs, chopped or sliced

Method:

1. Drain tuna and place into saucepan large enough to hold all the ingredients.
2. Add chopped onion, curry powder, concentrated soup and mix well.
3. Bring to boil, turn heat down and simmer curry gently until heated through.
4. Dish up, sprinkle with egg. Serve with bread, toast, rice, pasta or boiled potatoes. Extra vegetables or salad would be good.

Ideas & Hints:

❖ Use chopped celery instead of (or as well as) onion.
❖ Chicken can be used instead of tuna.
❖ Extra vegetables could be added. Try frozen corn and peas or legumes such as butter beans or chick peas. Drain legumes well before adding. Add cooked legumes or frozen peas when gently heating curry.
❖ If serving with rice, allow ¼ cup uncooked rice per person (see page 9 ‘How to Cook Rice’).
❖ Barley can be served instead of rice (see page 9 ‘How to cook Barley’)
❖ If serving with pasta, allow about ½ cup of uncooked pasta per person (see page 9 ‘How to Cook Pasta’). Wholemeal pasta will increase the fibre and iron content of the meal. Small wholemeal pasta shapes usually cook in about 5 – 10 minutes. Wholemeal spaghetti may take up to 20 minutes. When cooked, wholemeal pasta does not bulk up as much as white pasta.
CURRIED VEGETABLES

Recipe serves 4 - 6 Preparation time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

5 cups chopped vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned or leftovers).
3 teaspoons curry powder
3 tablespoons gravy mix
1½ cups rice

Method:

1. Put rice on to cook.
2. While rice is cooking cut vegetables into chunks or slices. Potato is best if chunked.
3. Put all vegetables into the saucepan. Sprinkle with gravy mix and curry powder.
4. Now add two cups of water and stir.
5. Bring curry to the boil, turn the heat down, place lid on and cook gently for 5-10 minutes or until vegetables are tender and thoroughly heated. Stir occasionally.
6. Do a taste test and add more curry if needed. Only add one extra teaspoon of curry powder at a time. If liquid is not thick enough add extra gravy mix. You will need to mix the gravy powder with a little cold water before adding to curry. If too thick, add more water.
7. Serve with rice.

Ideas & Hints:

- Allow about ¼ cup of uncooked rice per person (see page 9 ‘How to Cook Rice’).
- Barley can be served instead of rice (see page 9 ‘How to cook Barley’).
- A can of baked beans or red kidney beans will make curry go further and improve food value.
- Any cooked meat, chicken or fish could be added – a good way to use up ‘leftovers’.
- If serving more than four people add extra vegetables and cook more rice. Allow about one cup of vegetables per person. Add extra curry powder and gravy mix if necessary.
- If you don't like curry, leave it out.
- Serve with pasta instead of rice. Wholemeal pasta will increase the fibre and iron content of the meal. Small wholemeal pasta shapes usually cook in about 5 – 10 minutes. Wholemeal spaghetti may take up to 20 minutes. When cooked, wholemeal pasta does not bulk up as much as white pasta.
FISH CAKES

Recipe serves 4 - 6  
Preparation time: 35 minutes

Ingredients:

- 5 medium potatoes
- 400 - 600g can salmon or tuna
- 2 eggs, beaten
- pepper to taste (optional)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 cup breadcrumbs or two crushed breakfast biscuits e.g.; Weetbix™, Vitabrits™
- Oil for frying

Method:

1. Cook potato until soft then mash. No need to add milk or margarine.
2. Drain fish then mash. Mash bones too as they contain calcium.
3. Mix potato, fish, onion, egg and pepper together.
4. For each fish cake, roll about two tablespoons of the fish mix in breadcrumbs or crushed breakfast biscuit. Flatten fish cake slightly.
5. Heat a small amount of oil in a frypan. Cook fish cakes for five minutes on each side using moderate heat.
6. Serve with vegetables or salad.

Ideas & Hints:

- A little curry powder is a flavour change you might enjoy. Just add about two teaspoons of curry powder to the mix.
- Any left-over fish cakes make a tasty sandwich filling especially with a little pickles or sauce.
FRIED RICE

Recipe serves 4-6  Preparation time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

2 cups rice (brown or white)
⅓ cup oil
2 medium onions or 4 shallots, chopped
4 eggs, hard boiled
1 cup corn kernels, frozen or canned
1 cup frozen peas
1 large carrot, finely chopped or grated
1 tablespoon soy sauce

Method:

1. Cook rice until tender (see page 9 ‘How to cook rice’)  
2. While rice is cooking, heat oil in frypan or frying pan. Partly cook onion then add all other vegetables. Place lid on and cook gently until vegetables are cooked.  
3. Mix vegetables through the drained rice then add the soy sauce. Reheat if necessary.  
4. Serve then garnish with sliced or chopped hard boiled egg.

Ideas & Hints:

❖ If you have extra people add ⅓ cup rice and ½ cup vegetables per person. You could also cook more eggs.  
❖ The vegetables listed in the recipe are suggestions only. You may like to use different or extra vegetables. Chop or grate vegetables so that they stir fry easily.  
❖ Barley can be used instead of rice (see page 9 ‘How to cook barley).  
❖ Add salmon, tuna or chopped up left-over cooked meat.  
❖ Add a can of mixed beans (drained) for extra nutrition especially if a non-meat meal.  
❖ Instead of mixing rice and vegetables together, the rice could be served separately.  
❖ If using canned vegetables, buy reduced salt or no added salt varieties if possible.
SPICY CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS

Recipe serves 4 - 6  Preparation time: 30 - 45 minutes

Ingredients:
Chicken drumsticks, 1 or 2 for each person to be served
About ½ cup Hoy Sin sauce or Teriyaki sauce
½ cup tomato sauce

Method:

1. Place drumsticks in a baking dish, cover with the combined sauces.
2. Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for about 30 - 40 minutes.
   The chicken juices near the bone should be clear, not still pink.

Ideas & Hints:

❖ Chicken thigh fillets can be used instead of drumsticks. Remove visible fat.
❖ Turn chicken over half way through the cooking time so that sauce can flavour meat evenly
   Serve with vegetables, salad and rice or pasta.

APRICOT BEEF

Recipe serves 4 – 6  Preparation time: 1 – 1 ½ hours

Ingredients:
500 grams round steak trimmed of all visible fat.
1 onion, chopped
1 teaspoon curry powder
2 teaspoons brown sugar
200 ml apricot nectar
100ml water
2 tablespoons tomato sauce
2 teaspoons vinegar (optional)
100 g dried apricots, chopped
2 carrots, diced or sliced
¼ cup red lentils

Method:

1. Combine all ingredients and place into a large saucepan. Bring to the boil, turn heat down and simmer gently, lid on until tender. Stir from time to time and add more liquid if necessary.

Ideas and Hints:

❖ Lamb could be used instead of beef. Cooking time would probably be shorter.
❖ Serve with vegetables or salad and rice or pasta.
HAWAIIAN CHICKEN and PASTA

Recipe serves 4 - 6  Preparation time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:
3 cups macaroni (or other pasta).
220g can tomato soup concentrate (not the ready to eat type and buy reduced salt if available)
450g can pineapple pieces
1 small chopped capsicum
1 small cooked chicken

Method:
1. Cook macaroni in boiling water.
2. Remove and discard skin and any visible fat from the chicken.
3. Cut chicken meat into chunks.
4. Place undiluted soup, pineapple pieces plus the juice, capsicum, cooked pasta and chicken meat into a saucepan.
5. Bring to the boil, turn heat down. Place lid on and simmer gently for five minutes.

Ideas & Hints:
- Use chopped celery or carrot strips instead of (or as well as) capsicum.
- Cooked chicken pieces such as thigh fillets could be used instead of a whole chicken.
- Other cooked meat is suitable. Canned fish is also suitable.
- Add extra vegetables such as frozen peas and corn or a small can of drained legumes such as butter beans or chick peas.
- If using canned vegetables, buy ‘reduced salt’ or ‘no added salt’ if available.
- If you don’t have or like tomato soup, use a different type.
- Wholemeal macaroni (or other pasta) will provide extra iron and fibre to this dish. Small wholemeal pasta shapes usually cook in about 5 – 10 minutes. Wholemeal spaghetti may take up to 20 minutes. When cooked, wholemeal pasta does not bulk up as much as white pasta.

You can view a practical demonstration of this Hawaiian Chicken and Pasta recipe by scanning this QR code with your smartphone or tablet. 
(You will need the free ‘QR Code Reader’ App)

[QR Code Image]

Or go to http://youtu.be/5qxA4NH6J_I
Marinades can be used to flavour meat and help make tough cuts of meat more tender. Plan ahead and leave tough meat in the marinade for at least four hours or overnight. Meat, chicken or fish soaking in marinade should be covered and placed in the refrigerator.

The amount of marinade in recipes is enough for amount of meat needed to serve four people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orange Marinade</th>
<th>Sweet and Sour Marinade</th>
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<tr>
<td>4 tablespoons of brown sugar</td>
<td>2 tablespoons brown sugar</td>
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<tr>
<td>¼ cup vinegar</td>
<td>2 teaspoons crushed garlic</td>
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<tr>
<td>¼ cup orange juice</td>
<td>2 tablespoons hot water</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Golden Marinade</th>
<th>Sauce Medley Marinade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 tablespoon brown sugar</td>
<td>4 tablespoons tomato sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 teaspoon crushed garlic</td>
<td>2 tablespoons of barbeque sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 teaspoons vinegar</td>
<td>2 tablespoons soy sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ cup pineapple juice</td>
<td>2 teaspoons sweet chilli sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ cup soy sauce</td>
<td>2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barbecue Marinade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 tablespoons tomato sauce</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce</td>
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<td>2 tablespoons jam</td>
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<tr>
<td>½ teaspoon mustard (optional)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 teaspoon vinegar</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>squeeze of lemon juice (optional)</td>
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The amounts of these ingredients do not have to be really accurate. A bit of guess work will do. Leave out any of the sauces you don't like or don't have and replace them with something else.

If you don't want to make any of the marinades in this book, make up your own recipe. Any of the sauces in your cupboard can be mixed together to make a marinade e.g. tomato sauce, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, barbeque sauce. You could add a little fruit juice or vinegar to the sauces if you like.

If you don’t want to make your own marinade, commercial ‘ready to use’ marinades are available at the supermarket.

*Left over marinade should be thrown away as it will contain raw meat juices and this is a food safety problem.*
MINCE RISSOLES

Recipe serves 4 - 6  Preparation time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

400g good quality mince
1 medium onion, chopped
1 large potato, peeled and grated (optional)
2 eggs, beaten
2 teaspoons curry powder (optional)
2 tablespoons of tomato or barbecue sauce
1 cup of rolled oats or crushed Weetbix™ (or any other breakfast biscuit)

Method:

1. Mix all the ingredients together.
2. Make individual rissoles and flatten slightly.
3. Cook rissoles in a lightly greased (use a little oil), moderately hot electric frypan or frying pan for about eight minutes on each side (depending on thickness).

Ideas & Hints:

- If you are already baking, why not bake the rissoles as well. Put them in a lightly greased baking dish then place in a moderate oven (180°C) for 30 minutes. Rissoles will cook better if you turn them over after the first 15 minutes.
- If you don't have a grater, cook the potato and mash, then add to meat.
- Make into meat loaf by placing mixture into loaf tin or casserole dish. Bake in moderate oven for 45 – 60 minutes. The length of cooking time will be determined by the thickness of the meat loaf. Mince meat dishes should be well cooked. They should not be served rare.
- Mince could be beef, pork, chicken, veal, kangaroo or lamb.
- Baked beans can be added to this recipe for a flavour change and to make the recipe serve more people. Drain and mash the beans before adding.
- Make hamburgers by flattening rissoles before cooking then serve on warmed or toasted hamburger buns or thickly sliced bread that has been toasted.
Recipe serves 4  
Preparation time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

- 500g good quality mince
- ¼ cabbage, finely sliced or shredded
- ½ cup chopped celery
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 small capsicum (optional) thinly sliced or chopped
- 2 medium carrots, chopped, grated or thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon oil
- ¾ cups water
- 2 beef cubes
- 2 teaspoons curry powder (optional)
- rice, pasta or bread

Method:

1. Brown mince in large saucepan or fry-pan.
2. Add all other ingredients (except cabbage). Simmer gently for 15-20 minutes.
3. While the meat is cooking, cook rice or pasta (if you are having these foods).
4. Add cabbage to mince. Reduce heat and cook gently for another 5 minutes.
5. Serve with rice, pasta, quick cooking noodles or bread.

Ideas & Hints:

- Add different (or more) vegetables. They could be frozen, fresh or cooked leftovers.
- One teaspoon of vegemite can be used instead of the beef cubes.
- Allow ¼ cup rice or ⅓ cup pasta per person.
- Barley could be used instead of rice (see page 9 ‘How to cook Barley’).
- If serving with pasta, wholemeal pasta will increase the fibre and iron content of the meal. Small wholemeal pasta shapes usually cook in about 5 – 10 minutes. Wholemeal spaghetti may take up to 20 minutes. When cooked, wholemeal pasta does not bulk up as much as white pasta.
- The dark green outside leaves of a lettuce can be used instead of cabbage. Wash well, shred and add just before serving. There is no need to cook any more once lettuce is added.
OODLES OF NOODLES WITH HAM AND CHEESE

Recipe serves 4-6  Preparation time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

½ of a 250g packet of egg noodles
4 slices of lean ham, chopped
1 ½ cups of grated cheese
1 ½ cups of milk
3 eggs, beaten
¼ cup plain yoghurt (optional)
small onion, chopped

Method:

1. Cook noodles in lots of boiling water until just tender, drain.
2. Combine noodles and all other ingredients.
3. Pour into greased baking dish and cook in a moderate oven (180°C) until set (about 20 minutes). Serve with vegetables or salad.

Ideas & Hints:

❖ Any type of pasta can be used instead of egg noodles.
❖ Wholemeal pasta will improve nutrition by adding fibre and iron.
❖ Powdered, fresh, long life (UHT) or canned milk can be used.
❖ Can be served cold. Good for lunch box, but will need to be kept cold so why not pack with a frozen drink or small freezer brick.
❖ About one cup of extra vegetables could be added, e.g. frozen peas or corn, grated carrot, Grated zucchini or grated sweet potato.
❖ Leave out ham and add legumes for a non-meat meal. Suitable legumes include butter beans, red kidney beans and chick peas.
❖ Skim or fat reduced milk is suitable. Fat reduced cheese could be used.
PASTA MORNAY (WITH TOMATO FLAVOUR)

Recipe serves 4-6  Preparation time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon margarine (polyunsaturated or monounsaturated)
1 onion, chopped
1 small can (300g) of concentrated tomato soup (not the ready to eat type)
1 cup milk
4 eggs, beaten
1 ½ cups grated cheese
2 ½ cups pasta, preferably wholemeal (spiral, elbows or bows)

Method:

1. Place pasta on to cook in lots of boiling water. Drain when tender.
2. While pasta is cooking melt margarine in a large saucepan. Add onions and cook until soft.
3. Add the concentrated soup and the milk to onions. Heat through and remove from hotplate.
4. Stir through cheese, pasta and beaten eggs. Reheat.
5. Serve with salad or vegetables.

Ideas & Hints:

❖ For a flavour change, replace concentrated tomato soup with concentrated chicken soup.

❖ Add salmon, tuna or left-over cooked chicken. You could leave the cheese out if you like.

❖ Spiral, elbow or bow shaped pasta works well.

❖ Wholemeal pasta will increase the fibre and iron content of the meal. Small wholemeal pasta shapes usually cook in about 5 – 10 minutes. Wholemeal spaghetti may take up to 20 minutes. When cooked, wholemeal pasta does not bulk up as much as white pasta.

❖ For a complete meal, add cooked vegetables. Allow about ½ cup of vegetables per person. Suitable vegetables include left-over cooked vegetables, canned or frozen vegetables, chick peas, butter beans or soy beans (drain before adding). Serve with toast.
**POTATO FRITTERS**

*Recipe serves 4 - 6*  
*Preparation time: 30 minutes*

**Ingredients:**

1 large onion finely chopped  
5 medium potatoes, washed, peeled and grated (grate just before adding to other ingredients)  
2 eggs, beaten  
½ teaspoon curry powder (if you like)  
¾ cup self raising flour (approximately)  
A little oil for frying

**Method:**

1. Combine all the ingredients.  
2. Heat the oil in an electric fry pan or frying pan. The oil should just lightly cover the surface of the pan.  
3. Place about two tablespoons of mixture into the pan for each fritter. Use moderate heat.  
4. Lid on pan will slightly cook top of fritters and make it easier to turn them over.  
5. Cook fritters until underside is brown then turn them over. Potato fritters should take about 15 minutes to cook properly.

**Ideas & Hints:**

- Use half potato and half sweet potato for a flavour change.  
- Canned or frozen corn kernels could be added. Buy ‘no added salt’ canned corn if possible.  
- Left over fritters can be warmed up and used in a hamburger bun.
Recipe serves 4-6
Preparation time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

3 large or 4 small potatoes
½ cup grated cheese
2 tablespoons milk
1 onion, finely chopped or grated
6 thick sausages
1 cup gravy (use gravy mix to make the gravy. Buy reduced salt if available)

Method:

1. Pierce sausage skins, gently boil in a saucepan of water for 10 minutes.
2. Peel potatoes thinly, cook until soft. Add the milk then mash.
3. Drain fat off the sausages then slice them thinly. Fry sliced sausage for a further three minutes (approximately). Drain off any fat then stir in gravy and onions.
4. Place sausage mix into baking dish and top with the mashed potato.
5. Sprinkle the cheese over potato.
6. Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for about 15 minutes or until hot.

Ideas & Hints:

- Buy low fat or reduced fat sausages if possible. If they are not available make sure that the sausages are well cooked as this will help to remove as much fat as possible. Once well cooked, add gravy.
- Bolognaisse sauce may be used instead of gravy.
- Chopped up left-over cooked meat or chicken can be used instead of sausages.
- Add extra vegetables including legumes such as butter beans or baked beans. This will improve the food value of the dish. Adding legumes will mean that not so many sausages are needed (or the same number of sausages will serve more people).
- Serving with wholemeal pasta will increase the fibre and iron content of the meal. Small wholemeal pasta shapes usually cook in about 5 – 10 minutes. Wholemeal spaghetti may take up to 20 minutes. When cooked, wholemeal pasta does not bulk up as much as white pasta.
SAVOURY MINCE AND RICE

Recipe serves 4-6  Preparation time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

1½ cups rice (why not try brown rice?)
400g good quality mince
1 large onion, chopped
1 clove crushed garlic (optional)
3 tablespoons tomato paste
2 large carrots, grated

Method:

1. Cook rice. While rice is cooking, gently simmer all other ingredients together for about 20 minutes. (See page 9 ‘How to cook rice’)

2. Combine drained cooked rice with the meat (or serve rice separately if you like). Serve with toast or bread rolls.

Ideas & Hints:

❖ For extra flavour, brown the mince before combining and simmering with other ingredients.
❖ Add extra vegetables if you like e.g. peas, corn, grated zucchini, grated orange flesh sweet potato, grated pumpkin and legumes such as canned chick peas and butter beans.
❖ You could use about half the amount of mince but replace with two cups (400g can) of legumes such as red kidney beans, chick peas, soya beans or butter beans.
❖ If you use brown rice allow about 30 minutes for it to cook properly.
❖ Savoury mince can be served with pasta or barley instead of rice (see page 9 for how to cook). Wholemeal pasta will increase the fibre and iron content of the meal. Small wholemeal pasta shapes usually cook in about 5 – 10 minutes. Wholemeal spaghetti may take up to 20 minutes. When cooked, wholemeal pasta does not bulk up as much as white pasta.

You can view a practical demonstration of this Savoury Rice and Mince recipe by scanning this QR code with your smart phone or tablet.
(You will need the free ‘QR Code Reader’ App)

Or go to http://youtu.be/2J0ELunGUoQ
SAVOURY VEGETABLE PANCAKES

Recipe serves 4-6  Preparation time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

- 2 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- 1½ cups self-raising flour
- ⅓ cup corn kernels (frozen or canned)
- 1 small carrot, grated
- 1 stick celery, finely chopped
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley (if you have it)

Method:

1. Beat eggs and milk together then add to the flour and mix to a smooth batter.
2. Add the vegetables and parsley to the batter.
3. Drop a large spoonful of batter onto a lightly greased, moderately hot frypan. You can cook more than one at a time, but allow plenty of room as you don’t want the pancakes to touch each other.
4. Turn pancakes over after ‘bubbles’ have come to the surface and burst.

Ideas & Hints:

- Any vegetables are OK as long as they cook quickly or are already cooked e.g. Grated zucchini, frozen peas or chopped up cooked vegetables.
- Add some chopped up cooked meat as well as the vegetables
- You could leave out vegetables and replace with chopped cooked meat or chicken. Serve these ‘meat pancakes’ with salad or vegetables.
- Leave out vegetables and meat, add one tablespoon of sugar to make sweet pancakes that could be served with fruit for dessert or spread with a little margarine and jam for afternoon tea.
STIR FRY VEGETABLES with MEAT (Chow Mein)

Recipe serves 4 – 6

Preparation time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:
400g of good quality mince
1 large onion, sliced or chopped
¼ small cabbage
2 zucchini
1 large carrot
½ cup frozen peas
½ cup frozen or canned corn
½ cup cauliflower pieces
½ cup broccoli pieces
1½ cups rice

These vegetables are only suggestions, any vegetable, including legumes (chick peas, butter beans, red kidney beans etc.) could be used. You will need to allow about one cup of vegetables for every person.

Method:
1. Cut the vegetables into thin strips, slices or pieces and shred the cabbage.
2. Put rice on to cook. (See page 9 ‘How to cook rice’)
3. Fry the onion and meat until the meat is brown. You may like to put a small amount of oil in the pan first. Just a smear of oil is enough. Cook for about 10 minutes.
4. Add all the vegetables, except the cabbage. Put lid on, cook gently for another 10 minutes.
5. Fold the cabbage through and cook for one more minute.

Hints & Ideas:

- Vary this recipe by using chicken, tuna, or cold cooked leftover roast meat instead of mince. You may need to use about one tablespoon of oil when frying these meats.
- Other meats that make good stir fry are, cross cut blade steak and round steak. Cut meat into thin strips across the grain and follow the above method.
- For a flavour change add crushed garlic and/or chopped ginger to taste.
- A small can of legumes such as butter beans, chick peas or red kidney beans could be included. Drain before adding.
SWEET & SOUR CHICKEN

Recipe serves 4 – 6

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

1 cooked chicken
1 cup water
1 chicken stock cube
½ cup vinegar
½ cup tomato sauce
3 tablespoons sugar or honey
3 tablespoons soy sauce
2 - 3 tablespoons of cornflour
Salt & pepper to taste
1 onion chopped
2 carrots chopped into bite size pieces or sliced thinly
1 cup of beans (frozen or fresh, chopped into bite size pieces)
1 small capsicum, chopped or cut into thin strips
1 cup of corn kernels (frozen or canned)
1 medium can pineapple pieces with the juice

Method:

1. Remove the skin and visible fat from the chicken.
2. Take chicken meat off the bones and cut it into bite size pieces.
3. Place all ingredients (except cornflour) into a saucepan and bring to the boil. Turn down heat so that the mixture is just simmering slowly.
4. Mix the cornflour with a small amount of cold water to make a smooth paste that is runny enough to be poured. Stir this paste slowly into the ingredients in the saucepan.
5. Simmer gently until carrot is cooked (about 5 minutes) If the result is too thick, just add a little more water. If the result is too thin, add another tablespoon of cornflour but you will have to mix the cornflour with a little cold water to make a smooth pourable paste before adding.
6. Serve with boiled rice (allow ¼ cup uncooked rice per person) or pasta (allow a third of cup of uncooked pasta per person) or serve with 2 minute noodles.

Hint & Ideas:

❖ Instead of chicken you could use any cooked meat including fish.
❖ Most vegetables, including legumes, are suitable to be added to this recipe. Just make sure they are cut up small enough to cook or heat through, in about 10 minutes. Allow about ½ cup of vegetables per person.
❖ If serving with pasta, try wholemeal pasta. Wholemeal pasta will increase the fibre and iron content of the meal. Small wholemeal pasta shapes usually cook in about 5 – 10 minutes. Wholemeal spaghetti may take up to 20 minutes. When cooked, wholemeal pasta does not bulk up as much as white pasta.
TASTY SCRAMBLED EGGS

Recipe serves 4-6  
Preparation time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

2 teaspoons of margarine or oil (enough to lightly cover bottom of cooking pan)  
6 eggs, beaten together with ½ cup milk  
½ cup grated cheese (optional)  
2 slices lean ham, chopped (optional)

Method:

1. With moderate heat melt margarine or heat oil in frying pan (or saucepan).
2. Combine all ingredients except cheese, pour into pan. Place lid on, turn the heat down to low and stir occasionally to cook evenly. When egg is set, sprinkle with cheese and serve on toast or with vegetables or salad.

Ideas & Hints:

❖ You could leave ham out and replace with other cooked meat or with chopped cooked vegetables including corn kernels and canned legumes such as butter beans.
❖ If you are serving extra people, allow two eggs per person and two tablespoons of milk per egg.

BEAN BURGERS

Recipe serves 4 – 6  
Preparation time about 30 minutes (once potato is cooked)

Ingredients:

600g potatoes (6 medium potatoes) cooked and mashed  
1 red capsicum finely chopped  
1 x 310g can of butter beans, drained and mashed  
1 clove of garlic, crushed  
2 eggs beaten together  
½ cup of dried breadcrumbs plus extra breadcrumbs for rolling burgers in

Method:

1. Mix together the mashed potato, capsicum, beans, garlic, breadcrumbs and egg.
2. Shape into burgers using about two tablespoons of mixture and roll in the extra breadcrumbs, flatten slightly.
3. Place burgers onto greased oven trays or baking paper and bake in a moderate oven for about 30 minutes. Burgers could be cooked in a lightly greased frying pan and turned over half way through cooking time. If cooked in the oven there is no real need to turn burgers over.
4. Serve on hamburger buns with extra salad vegetables. Burgers could also be served with vegetables for a non-meat meal.
**TUNA MORNAY**

*Recipe serves 4 - 6    Preparation time: 40 minutes*

**Ingredients:**

- 1½ cups rice
- 450 g can tuna, drained
- 410 g can asparagus soup or chicken soup (soup concentrate, not the ‘ready to eat’ type soup)
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 1 onion chopped finely
- 1 cup grated cheese
- ½ cup fresh breadcrumbs
- Oil or margarine for greasing oven dish

**Method:**

1. Mix the cheese and breadcrumbs together.
2. To make mornay, mix the tuna, soup, tomato and onion together.
3. Place the mornay in a greased oven dish and sprinkle with of grated cheese and breadcrumbs that have been mixed together.
4. Place rice on to cook.
5. Place mornay in a moderate oven (180°C) to heat through (about 20 minutes).

**Ideas & Hints:**

- If you don't want to heat the mornay in the oven it can be heated through in a saucepan. Just put mornay into a large saucepan and heat through using low to moderate heat. Stir occasionally. The cheese can be mixed through or sprinkled on the top of the mornay once it is served. You will not need to use the breadcrumbs.
- For a flavour change add one teaspoon of mustard and one tablespoon of any type of mayonnaise.
- Mornay could be served with pasta instead of rice. Wholemeal pasta is a good choice. It provides fibre and iron. Small wholemeal pasta shapes usually cook in about 5 – 10 minutes. Wholemeal spaghetti may take up to 20 minutes. When cooked, wholemeal pasta does not bulk up as much as white pasta.
- If you don’t have any breadcrumbs, just use cheese by itself to sprinkle on top of mornay.
VEGETABLE SLICE

Recipe Serves 4 - 6

Preparation time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

1 onion, chopped finely or grated
2 carrots, grated
2 medium size zucchini, scrubbed then grated
1 capsicum (optional), chopped finely
2 sticks celery, chopped finely
1 cup grated cheese
1 cup corn kernels (canned or frozen)
2 cups self raising flour
6 eggs
½ cup milk

Method:

1. Beat milk and eggs together.
2. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Pour into greased baking dish or greased muffin tins.
4. Bake in a moderate oven (180ºC) 30 minutes or until firm. If making muffins cook for about 15 minutes depending on size of the muffins.

Ideas & Hints:

❖ Use half white flour, half wholemeal flour for extra fibre.
❖ Use any vegetables you like including legumes such as butter beans and haricot beans. If you use potato, sweet potato or pumpkin, they would need to be grated.
❖ Use any leftover cooked vegetables.
❖ You will need about three cups of vegetable in total.
❖ Great for packing into lunch box. This slice will need to be kept cold, so why not pack along with a frozen drink or small freezer brick.
ZUCCHINI SLICE

Recipe serves 4 - 6  Preparation time: 35 minutes

Ingredients:

2 medium zucchini, thoroughly washed and grated
1 onion, chopped finely or grated
1 cup grated cheese
1 cup self raising flour
6 eggs, beaten

Method:

1. Combine all the ingredients and mix well.
2. Pour into greased baking dish.
3. Bake in moderate oven (180°C) for 20 minutes or until firm to touch. Test with a skewer. The skewer should come out clean.

Ideas & Hints:

❖ Use half white flour, half wholemeal flour for extra fibre.
❖ Add a couple of slices of chopped up ham or about a cup of chopped up cooked meat or cooked chicken.
❖ Great for packing into lunch box. It will need to be kept cold, so why not pack with a frozen drink or small freezer brick.
❖ If serving as the main meal, serve with extra cooked vegetables or salad.
❖ The recipe could be baked in muffin tins instead of in a baking dish. The cooking time will be a bit shorter. Bake until firm to touch.

You can view a practical demonstration of this Zucchini Slice recipe by scanning the QR code with your smart phone or tablet.

(You will need the free ‘QR Code Reader’ App)

Or go to http://youtu.be/InoWRXDZYuU
BAKED VEGETABLES – a great meal or snack

Recipe serves 4-6  
Preparation time: 1 hour

Ingredients:

2-3 medium potatoes (optional)  
4 small sprigs fresh rosemary

4-6 serve size pieces orange flesh sweet potato  
2 teaspoons turmeric (optional)

4-6 serve size pieces pumpkin  
2 teaspoons curry powder (optional)

1-2 parsnips (optional)  
4 tablespoons oil

2-3 cloves garlic, chopped or crushed (optional)

Method:

1. Preheat oven to moderate (180°C).
2. Prepare vegetables by scrubbing and peeling or just scrub well. It is much easier to remove the skin from pumpkin once it is cooked. Cut vegetables into serve size pieces or chunks.
3. If you are using spices or herbs to flavor the vegetables, place vegetables into a large bowl or clear plastic bag. Add spices, herbs and oil then shake the vegetables so they are coated in oil and spices. If you prefer to use an oil spray, add herbs and spices, place vegetables onto the baking tray or in an oven proof baking dish, spray lightly with oil.
4. Bake until tender (30 - 45 minutes). Vegetables can be turned over once during cooking but, don’t have to be.
5. For a main meal, serve these vegetables with meat or scrambled egg or boiled egg.
6. For a light meal, serve on toast and sprinkle with grated cheese or parmesan cheese.

Ideas and Hints:

❖ Other vegetables that could be used include zucchini (whole or in chunks), small yellow squash (whole), onion, mushrooms. These are softer vegetables and will only need about 20 minutes to cook so, put them in with the other vegetables about half way through the cooking time.

❖ If baked beans or other canned legumes are added you will have a ‘non meat’ meal.

❖ Dried herbs can be used instead of fresh herbs but just use a sprinkling. Dried herbs usually give a stronger flavour than fresh herbs so don’t use too much.

Don’t forget, baked jacket potatoes and other baked vegetables, make a great snack.
Recipe serves 4  

Preparation time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 cup Arborio rice
- 3 cups chicken stock (ready to use stock, stock powder or stock cubes)
- 2 cups mixed vegetables (cooked, or frozen)
- ½ cup parmesan cheese (optional)

Method:

1. Place stock into medium to large saucepan. Bring to boil.
2. Slowly add rice to stock, stirring all the time. Boil gently for about 30 minutes. Stir occasionally.
3. Add vegetables about 15 minutes before rice is finished cooking.
4. Once rice is soft, remove from the heat, stir the parmesan cheese through.
5. Serve.

Ideas and Hints:

- Other suitable vegetables include:
  - frozen vegetables (corn and peas are best)
  - any left-over cooked vegetables
  - chopped (about one centimeter chunks) or grated vegetables e.g.; sweet potato, zucchini, pumpkin, mushrooms
  - finely chopped leek
  - drained canned vegetables e.g.; corn, legumes (butter beans, chick peas etc.).

Allow at least ½ cup vegetables per person.

- Replace parmesan cheese with grated tasty cheese but don’t stir it through, just sprinkle on top of Risotto when served.
- Mash canned salmon or tuna (about ¾ - 1 cup) could be added along with the vegetables.
- Instead of salmon or tuna, about one cup (or more) of chopped cooked chicken could be added to the vegetables.
SPINACH FRITTATA

Recipe serves 4  Preparation time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

2 spinach leaves, washed well then chopped. Slice stalks thinly  
1 onion, chopped  
8 eggs, beaten  
1 cup grated tasty cheese  
2 tablespoons oil  
2 cloves garlic, crushed.

Method:

1. Preheat moderate oven (180°C). Grease baking dish (approximately 20 centimetres square with sides about 4 centimetres high).
2. Heat oil in frying pan or saucepan and lightly fry onion and garlic.
3. Add chopped spinach to onion. Turn heat down, place lid on and cook gently for about 5 minutes. Stir occasionally.
4. Put about ½ the spinach into baking dish then sprinkle with ½ the cheese. Add remainder of spinach.
5. Pour beaten egg over spinach, and then sprinkle on the rest of the cheese.
6. Bake until firm and lightly brown (about 30 minutes). Serve with bread, rice or pasta.

Ideas and Hints:

❖ Replace spinach with other vegetables e.g. broccoli, zucchini, grated orange sweet potato, frozen mixed vegetables or drained canned legumes such as butter beans or chick peas. A combination of a few vegetables would be very acceptable.

Allow about ½ cup vegetables per person.

❖ If serving more than four people, use more eggs. Allow two eggs per person.
❖ Use ½ teaspoon of ‘ready to use’ minced garlic. The supermarket will have small jars of minced garlic (once opened, store in the refrigerator).
❖ Instead of baking in the oven, this frittata could be cooked in a frypan or frying pan with the lid on and using very low heat. When set you may like to brown it under the griller although, this is not necessary. If the top is not quite set and you don’t want to use the griller, you could gently turn frittata over section by section using an egg slice.
Recipe serves 4 - 6

Preparation time: 15 minutes, but you will need to put the evaporated milk in the refrigerator the night before.

Ingredients:
375g can of evaporated milk
1 pkt jelly crystals

Method:
1. Refrigerate evaporated milk overnight.
2. Make jelly using only half the amount of water recommended on the packet instructions. Place the jelly into the refrigerator and allow to cool until thick, but not set.
3. Whisk the jelly until light and fluffy.
4. Whisk the milk until light and fluffy.
5. Mix the fluffy jelly and fluffy milk together.
6. Place dessert in refrigerator to completely set.

Ideas & Hints:
- If jelly becomes too set before beating, stand in warm water and stir unto just runny then, place back in refrigerator but be careful not to set too firmly this time.
- Chopped fruit could be added when mixing whipped milk and jelly together.
- This dessert could be ‘set’ in individual cups if catering for a child’s party.
CUSTARD POWDER CUSTARD

Recipe serves 4

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon custard powder
1 tablespoon sugar (white, brown or raw)
1 cup milk

Method:

1. Blend custard powder with a little of the cold milk so it is lump free and runny enough to pour.
2. Add sugar to the blended custard powder.
3. Place the remainder of the milk on to boil. When just boiling, stir in the blended custard powder, and continue to stir until custard comes to boil again. Boil gently for about one minute. Remove from heat.

Ideas & Hints:

- Make a sweet white sauce by using cornflour instead of custard powder. Add a few drops of vanilla essence to improve the flavour. This sauce is good on puddings and fruit instead of custard. Sprinkle with nutmeg if you like.
- Any milk can be used - fresh, powdered, long life (UHT), canned, soy milk, full cream, fat reduced or skim are all suitable.
- If powdered milk is used it does have a tendency to burn on bottom of saucepan (especially skim milk powder). To help avoid this, use moderate heat and stir regularly.
- To help stop a ‘skin’ forming on the cooked custard, cover with a tightly fitting lid or use alfoil or glad wrap to cover custard.
- Do not leave custard at room temperature for more than two hours as it is a ‘high risk’ food in which harmful bacteria like to grow. Keep custard in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to two days but no longer.
- If unable to make custard (for whatever reason), packet custard is a good alternative. ‘Long life’ (UHT) is a good choice as it does not have to be refrigerated until after it is opened.

Once opened, all ‘long life’ products need to be refrigerated.
CREAMED RICE

Recipe serves 4-6
Preparation time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

4 tablespoons rice (medium grain or Arborio rice is best. Long grain better for savoury dishes)
2 ½ cups milk
3 dessertspoons sugar

Method:

1. Place rice and milk into saucepan. Bring slowly to boil with lid off, stir occasionally.
2. Simmer gently over low heat with lid off. Stir from time to time to help prevent burning.
3. Cook until rice is tender (about 30 minutes). Add sugar and stir through.
4. Serve hot or cold, by itself or with fruit.

Ideas & Hints:

- Creamed rice makes a great snack.
- All types of milk are suitable to use (fresh, long life, powdered, evaporated)

FRUIT CRUMBLE

Recipe serves 4 - 6
Preparation time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

1 x 800g can pie (solid pack) apples
½ cup plain flour or self raising flour
¼ cup brown sugar
¼ cup coconut
¼ cup rolled oats
3 tablespoons margarine

Method:

1. Rub margarine into dry ingredients to make crumble. Place fruit into oven dish. Sprinkle crumble over fruit.
2. Bake in moderate oven (180ºC) 15-20 minutes.

Ideas & Hints:

- Use any fruit. Pie pack or fruit canned in juice. If using fruit canned in juice you will need to drain off about half of the juice. You could stew your own fruit. Rhubarb and apple stewed together is a nice combination.
- Why not make twice as much crumble mix and freeze half for next time.
SCONE DOUGH

Recipe makes 10 - 12 small scones  
Preparation time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

2 cups self raising flour  
1 cup milk  
1 tablespoon sugar  
2 tablespoons margarine

Method:

1. Preheat oven to hot (about 230°C) Grease oven tray or use baking paper.  
2. Rub margarine into flour add sugar, stir in enough milk to make soft dough.  
3. Place the dough onto a floured surface. Knead lightly then pat dough out to about two centimeters thick.  
4. Use floured scone cutter or sharpish knife to cut dough into scones, bake 8-10 minutes.

Ideas & Hints:

- If you made the dough too soft to knead just place the dough into a greased baking tin. Bake at 180°C for 20 - 30 minutes. Test with a skewer. Cool slightly, cut into slices.
- Scones can be frozen at the raw dough stage or when cooked.

Other uses for Scone Dough:

Sweet dumplings - To make dumplings, flour hands, roll dough into balls using about a tablespoon of dough. If stewing your own fruit, add dumplings to fruit once it is simmering. If canned fruit is used, empty fruit plus juice into a large saucepan, bring to boil, carefully drop in dumplings. Turn heat down and simmer gently with the lid on until dumplings are cooked (about 15 minutes).

Savoury dumplings - Leave out sugar. To make dumplings, roll pieces of dough into balls using about a tablespoon of dough. Add to meat stews or casseroles for the last 15 minutes of cooking time. Savoury dumplings are served instead of potato, rice or pasta.

Cheese scones - Leave out sugar, add ½ cup of grated tasty cheese after margarine is rubbed in.

Fruit scones - Add ½ cup sultanas or chopped dates after the margarine has been rubbed in.

Cinnamon swirls - Pat dough out thinly. Sprinkle lightly with cinnamon and sugar, roll up. Cut into slices about two centimetres thick. Place ‘swirls’ into greased, lined baking dish. Bake for about 10 minutes at 180°C - 200°C. Try jam instead of sugar; just spread thinly using a bread & butter knife. The rolled up dough could be left uncut and cooked as a ‘log’

Pumpkin scones - Remove ½ cup milk and replace with ½ cup mashed pumpkin plus one beaten egg. Pumpkin could be replaced with orange flesh sweet potato. Sweet potato is usually a bit drier than pumpkin so, when making the dough, one or two extra tablespoons of milk may be needed.

Puffaloons or Fried Scones - Leave out sugar. Press dough to one centimetre thick. Cut into scones. Place in moderately hot frying pan with small amount oil. Cook to golden brown on underside, turn over. Brown other side. Serve hot with vegetables and meat instead of potato.

Fried potato scones – Make as for fried scones but remove ¼ cup of milk and add ½ cup cooked mashed potato. Yummy with soup or stew.
WEETBIX SLICE
(Great for school lunches)

Cuts up into 16 pieces  Preparation time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

1 cup self raising flour
5 Weetbix™, Vitabrits™ or other breakfast biscuits, crushed
1 cup coconut
4 tablespoons margarine (polyunsaturated or monounsaturated)
⅔ cup sugar (white or brown)
1 egg, beaten
1 cup sultanas (optional)
1 tablespoon golden syrup or honey (optional)

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 150°C.
2. Grease a baking tin, 28 x 20 cm. approximately with sides at least 4 cm. high) Line the bottom with greased paper.
3. Melt margarine, sugar and honey together but don’t allow to become hot.
4. Add the sultanas, egg and coconut to margarine.
5. Mix in the flour and crushed breakfast biscuits.
6. Press mixture into the prepared baking tin.
7. Bake 30 minutes. Cut into squares while warm but leave in tin until cool. Note that this slice is soft when it is first removed from the oven. It becomes firm as it cools. Don’t cook for longer than 30 minutes or the slice may be too hard when cold.

Ideas & Hints:

- Ice while still warm but not while hot. Chocolate icing is great.
- For a variation, spread half the mixture over the base of a baking tin, and then spread with a thin layer of jam. Spoon the remainder of the breakfast biscuit mix on top.
- For a flavour change and extra nutrition, add about ½ cup milo along with the flour and crushed Weetbix.
RICE BUBBLE & OAT BISCUITS

Recipe makes: 20-24  Preparation time: 35 minutes

Ingredients:

1 cup rice bubbles
1 cup rolled oats
½ cup plain flour
½ cup self raising flour
¼ cup coconut or ⅓ cup of rolled oats or about ½ cup wheat germ
½ cup sugar (brown or white)
2 dessertspoons honey or golden syrup
½ cup of margarine (this is the same as 125 grams or about 5 dessertspoons)

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 160°C (slow).
2. Mix together the rice bubbles, oats, flour and sugar.
3. Melt the margarine and honey together.
4. Pour the melted margarine into the dry ingredients and mix well.
5. Place spoonfuls of mixture onto a greased tray. You may need to press biscuits into shape. Leave enough space between each biscuit to allow for spreading.
6. Bake for 15-20 minutes. Biscuits should be golden brown when cooked.
7. Allow biscuits to cool on cooking tray.

Ideas & Hints:

- Wholemeal flour can be used for extra fibre.
- Cornflakes or other similar cereal can be used instead of rice bubbles.
- Store in an airtight container.
HEALTHY WEIGHT

There is so much talk about the increasing number of people (adults and children) who are overweight or very overweight (obese). The worry is that these conditions can lead to health problems including type II diabetes.

There are lots of reasons for undesirable weight gain. Modern lifestyle has much to answer for.
- we may not be as active as we should be
- we may be at the computer for long periods of time
- we may be watching TV for too many hours a day
- we may be eating more takeaway or ready to eat foods that can be high in fat or sugar (or both)
- we may be eating more than we really need.

WHAT TO DO
Healthy eating and daily exercise is the answer. This is a lifestyle. Sound too hard? Perhaps not! The information in this chapter will help.

Let’s talk about food

- First of all, going on diets or skipping meals doesn’t work – not for adults, not for children. Some ‘weight loss diets’ may work in the beginning but, in the long term, they are doomed to fail.
- Don’t skip meals especially breakfast. You will get too hungry and probably end up eating much more than you would normally eat.
- Between meal snacks are important. Ideas include:
  - Fruit (not juice)
  - Bread (preferably wholegrain). Why not try drying thinly sliced bread or flat bread such as Lebanese bread, in a slow oven until it becomes crisp. Use this instead of savoury biscuits which can be expensive and often fatty.
  - Low fat dairy foods such as yoghurt and custard.
  - Noodle snacks are fine but look for the ones that don’t have oil or fat included on the ingredient list. Two minute noodles can be high in fat and salt.
  - Raw vegetables such as carrot sticks, capsicum strips, cucumber chunks.
  - Cold cooked vegetables such as potato and pumpkin chunks.
  - Breakfast cereal
- If you like desserts go for fruit and serve with yoghurt or custard (low fat). Save the apple pie for special occasions.
- Don’t get children (or yourself) into the habit of having ‘treats’ on a regular basis e.g. a can of soft drink after swimming lessons, a packet of potato crisps or a chocolate bar each day in a school lunch box. Treats are ‘sometimes’ food.
  - Snacking in front of the TV is also a trap, even if the snacks are nutritious. It is just too easy to eat too much.
  - Water is the best thirst quencher. Tap water is cheap and readily available and it has no kilojoules (calories). Soft drinks, sports drinks, cordials and even fruit juice, contain lots of sugar and this means extra kilojoules. The sugar contained in these
drinks can also contribute to tooth decay. It is important to note that low joule soft drinks contain acid and this can damage tooth enamel.

- Fruit juice contains significant amounts of sugar even if it is unsweetened. It is easy to drink large amounts of juice and this means lots of extra kilojoules. It really is better to eat one or two pieces of fruit in preference to juice. You will get the vitamins you need and you also get fibre (juice has virtually none). Fruit has to be chewed and this is good for gum health. If you do like juice, try to limit it to one small glass a day. (you will save money!)

**When Eating Out**

- Steer away from food places that give free food with coffee. The free food is often high fat and/or high sugar and you will usually eat it even if you are not hungry. If you really like the coffee, you could be strong and request no free goodies.
- Avoid ‘all you can eat’ places. You usually end up eating too much.
- Choose potato wedges instead of potato chips. Wedges have less fat.
- Ask for grilled fish and chicken instead of battered or crumbed.
- Beware of ‘meal deals’; they can be a fat trap.
- Choose garden salads instead of creamy pasta salads.
- Try steamed or boiled rice instead of fried rice.
- Takeaways can be fun but they can also be fatty so, no more than one takeaway meal a week.
- Ask for smaller serves, particularly of fatty foods e.g. potato chips. It is easier to ask for smaller serves than to leave food uneaten on the plate.

**Let’s talk about exercise**

First of all, you don’t have to go to the gym. There are ‘no cost’ things that could be done on a daily basis. Here are just a few ideas:

- Walk the ‘littlies’ to school.
- Encourage teenagers to walk to school.
- The whole family could walk the dog.
- A family bush walk can be fun.
- Play with the children: - hide and seek, ball games, cricket in the backyard or down at the park. What about a treasure hunt?
- Take the baby for a daily walk in the pram.
- If possible walk to the shops. This may mean going to the shops a few times a week – and that’s good exercise.
- Don’t spend too much time watching T.V or in front of the computer.
Wrap the play dough in plastic and store it in a cool place. It should last for up to two weeks.

**Ingredients:**

2 cups plain flour  
4 tablespoons of cream of tartar  
2 tablespoons of cooking oil  
1 cup salt  
2 cups water  
food colouring (optional)

**Method:**

1. Mix all the dry ingredients together in a saucepan.  
2. Pour in water, colouring and oil. Mix well.  
3. Stir over medium heat until the dough forms a ‘lump’ and falls away from the side of the saucepan. This will take about 5 minutes.