

## Diet and activity — balancing your needs

The growth of our bodies during adolescence means we require plenty of nutrients. The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating demonstrates the types of food and the amount that you should eat as part of a healthy eating plan. Foods such as butter, margarine, chocolate, cakes, biscuits, soft drinks and many take-away foods are identified as 'extra foods' that should be eaten only occasionally or in small amounts. They are high in fat or sugar, contain few nutrients and are frequently high in kilojoules.

[ A kilojoule is a unit of energy. It is used to measure how much energy food contains and how much energy is used during various activities. ]

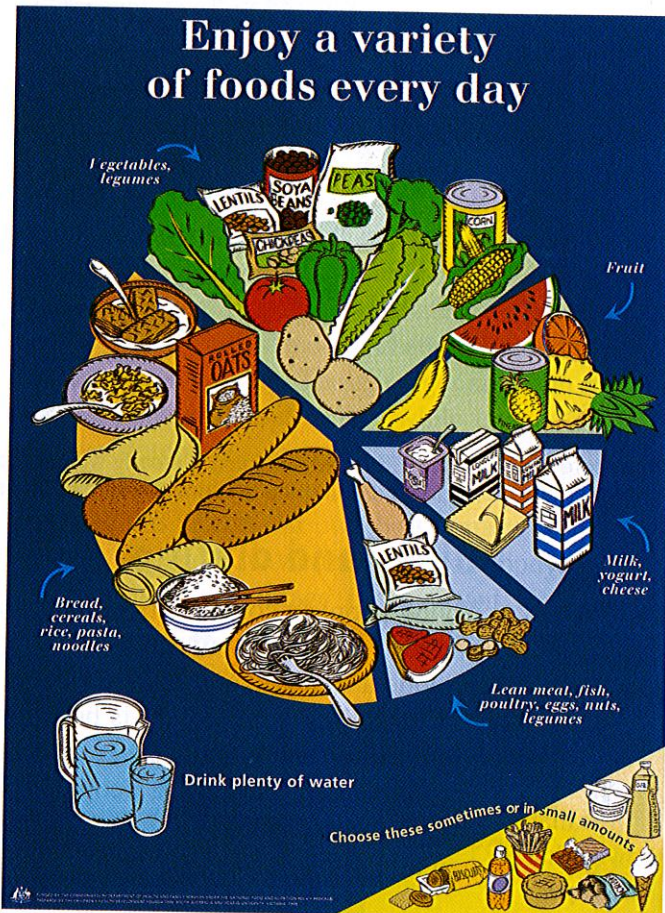


FIGURE 6.5 The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

The amount of kilojoules in food varies but, generally, the higher the fat content, the more kilojoules a food will contain. Everybody needs to consume a minimum amount of kilojoules for the body to sustain normal functions, such as breathing, digestion, blood circulation and maintaining body temperature. In addition, we need the energy from food for body growth and to fuel physical activity. The body growth that occurs during childhood and adolescence means that our energy requirements are higher at these times than during adulthood.

To maintain a steady weight, we need to carefully consider the amount of energy from food that we consume each day compared with the amount we use. When we regularly eat more kilojoules than our body needs and uses during physical activity, the excess is stored as body fat. Exercise is, therefore, as important as a healthy eating plan.