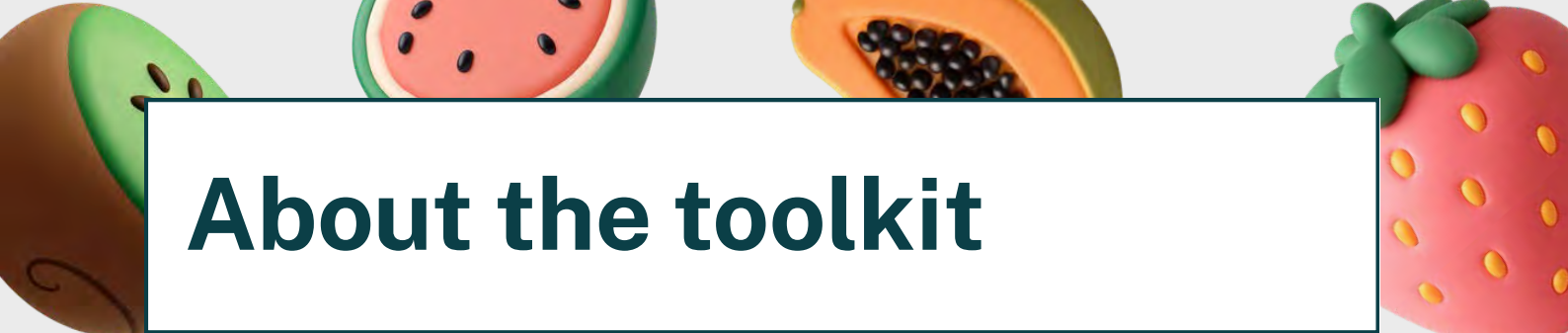


# Nourishing Communities

Digital toolkit to support healthy eating in  
community organisations





# About the toolkit

The Nourishing Communities Digital Toolkit helps community organisations encourage healthy eating among children and families. It provides easy-to-use, evidence-based resources that support learning, conversations and engagement in community settings.

The toolkit can be used in programs, group activities, events, take-home resources and social media. It is suitable for staff with all levels of experience. Resources are flexible and can be adapted to suit local community needs.

## Contents

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# Factsheets

Factsheets provide practical tips and clear, reliable information to support healthy eating conversations and help people make informed food choices. **Click on the underlined text to view the factsheets.**



## Eat well, spend less:

Tips support families to plan meals, shop smart, and stretch food budgets while enjoying healthy meals.

[View Factsheet](#)



## Feed your family in no time:

Save time with meal planning, shopping, and preparing healthy meals.

[View Factsheet](#)



## Creating healthy meal times:

Set up positive mealtime routines and build healthy eating habits.

[View Factsheet](#)



## The five food groups:

An overview of the five food groups and their nutritional benefits.

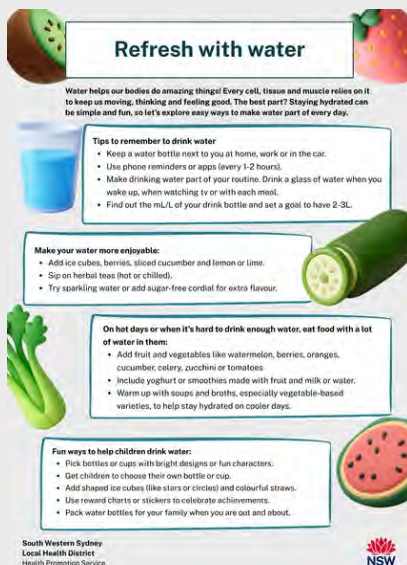
[View Factsheet](#)



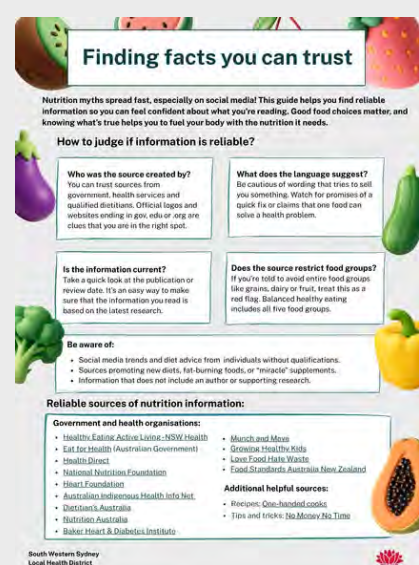
**Get more veg on your plate:**  
Simple ways to add more vegetables to meals each day.  
[View Factsheet](#)



**Building balanced meals:**  
Use this plate to build balanced meals using foods from the different food groups.  
[View Factsheet](#)



**Refresh with water:**  
Practical tips to help you drink more water.  
[View Factsheet](#)



**Finding facts you can trust:**  
Identify trusted health information to help you make informed food choices with confidence.  
[View Factsheet](#)

# Conversation cards

These conversation cards help start discussions about healthy eating. Each postcard has a key message on the front and questions on the back. They can be used in group activities, as conversation starter or as a take-home resource. **Click on the underlined text to view the cards.**



[View Card](#)



[View Card](#)



[View Card](#)



[View Card](#)



[View Card](#)



[View Card](#)

## Let's talk about grains



Our body's main energy source



High in fibre to support digestion



B vitamins turn food into energy

[View Card](#)

## Let's talk about meat and alternatives



Protein builds strong muscles



Contains iron for healthy blood



Omega-3's for brain and heart health (fish + nuts)

[View Card](#)

## Let's talk about dairy and alternatives



Calcium for strong bones and teeth



Vitamin B12 for brain and blood health



Protein builds strong muscles

[View Card](#)

## Refresh with water

Water helps our body do amazing things! Every cell, tissue and muscle relies on it to keep us moving, thinking and feeling our best. So let's talk about some ways to drink more water.



[View Card](#)

## Building balanced meals



Building a healthy plate can be colourful, fun and full of choices. Let's talk about the foods you love and how you can build your own meal.

[View Card](#)

## Finding facts you can trust

Nutrition myths spread fast, especially on social media. Knowing what's true helps you fuel your body with the nutrients it needs. Let's explore where you look for information and how to know what is reliable.



[View Card](#)

# Activities for children

These fun food activities help children learn where food comes from and how it becomes part of everyday meals. The activities can be used in services or at home and are suitable for all ages.

**Click on the underlined text to access the links.**

## 🎵 **Music, songs and movement:**

Supports learning through music, rhythm and play.

1. [Healthy eating songs and movement activities](#).
2. Munch & Move music [playlist](#) and [songbook](#).



## 🎨 **Art, craft and creative play:**

Encourages creativity while learning about food and where it comes from.

1. [Vic Heath kids food activities](#).
2. [Fruit and vegetable posters or placemats](#).
3. [Vegetable printing and collage using food scraps](#).



## 🧠 **Games, thinking and learning:**

Builds recognition, language and early counting skills.

1. [Fruit and vegetable bingo](#).
2. [Mathematical exploration using food and water play](#).
3. [Celebrity foodie head guessing game](#).



# Activities for children

## **Sensory food exploration:**

Supports curiosity and confidence around food.

1. Mystery food sensory bags.
2. Touching, smelling and tasting fruit and vegetables.



## **Cooking, growing and storytelling:**

Helps children connect food with everyday life.

1. Making fruit kebabs (Page 74).
2. Growing chia seeds.
3. Food-focused story time and shared reading (book ideas).
4. The Magic Lunchbox storybook and video.



## **Riding the Vegetable Horse Multilingual Children's Book:**

A multilingual picture eBook that helps children learn about healthy eating through stories and play. Created by Sydney Local Health District, it is available in multiple languages to support inclusive learning.



# Lunchboxes

These resources provide simple ideas for healthy lunchboxes and everyday snacks. They help families build healthy habits at school and on the go. **Click on the underlined text to access the links.**

## Lunch box builder

Have a play and get ideas for foods from the 5 healthy food groups to build a healthy lunch box.



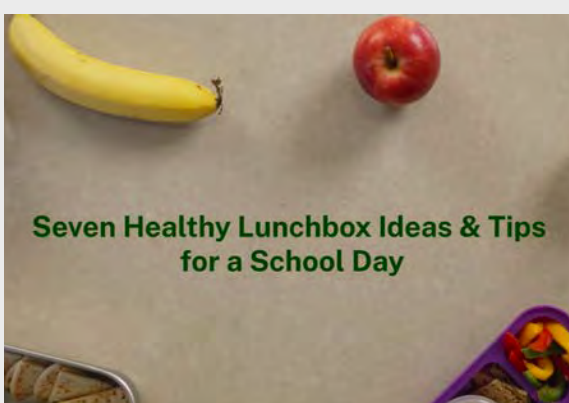
## Healthy Lunchbox Builder

(Cancer Council) : A simple online tool to help build balanced lunchboxes using a variety of food options.



## SWAP IT Lunchbox guide:

Practical tips to help prepare healthy, balanced and appealing lunchboxes for children.



## Seven Healthy Lunchbox Ideas

(video): A short video with quick, easy lunchbox ideas for busy families.

# Fussy eating and mealtimes

These resources help families manage fussy eating and build positive mealtime experiences for young children.

**Click on the underlined text to access the links.**



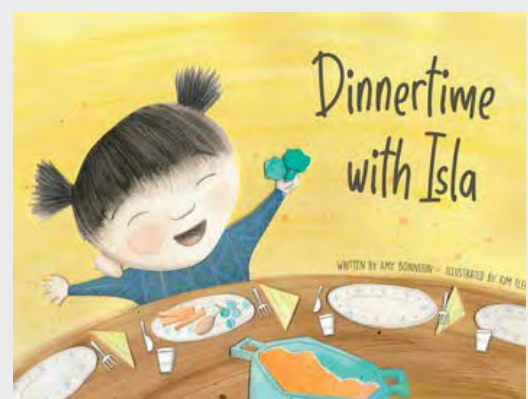
**Enjoyable Mealtimes:** Tips to support positive mealtime routines, such as being a good role model, offering regular meals and letting children respond to hunger cues.



**Mealtime Challenges:** Tips to help families manage common mealtime challenges and build positive, stress-free eating habits.



**Eat the rainbow:** Help children explore new foods, build confidence, and try a variety of fruit and vegetables in fun ways.



**Dinnertime with Isla:** A video that provides families with tips for managing fussy eating and making mealtimes more positive and enjoyable.

# Reading food labels

These resources help families understand food labels and make informed choices when shopping. They provide simple tips for comparing products and choosing healthier foods. **Click on the underlined text to access the links.**

**When you shop, reach for the stars**

Fact sheet for food shoppers

**Finding healthier food when we are shopping can be time consuming. The Health Star Rating can help.**

**What is the Health Star Rating?**

The Health Star Rating tells you how many stars a food has to see which ones are better for you. Foods that have more stars on the front are healthier. It's an easy way to compare say two types of yoghurt (but not a yoghurt and a breakfast cereal).

The Health Star Rating was recently updated so that food with higher amounts of salt and sugar get lower ratings, and fruit and vegetables (including some dried and frozen products) automatically score five stars, the highest rating.

**Where did the Health Star Rating system come from?**

The Health Star Rating is a sign Australian state and territory governments initiated. It was developed in collaboration with public health experts and industry and consumer groups in 2014.

The system is voluntary. Food manufacturers can choose whether to display a rating on their products. If your favourite brand of packaged food does not have a rating, you can contact the company to encourage them to use Health Stars.

**How are food products rated?**

The system uses a strict calculation to determine the rating for each food product, based on its ingredients.

Stars are added for fruit and vegetable, oatmeal, and protein content. Stars are taken away for salt, saturated fat and sugar content. (Remember, a product with 3.5 or more stars is considered healthier if foods rated lower than two stars should be considered an occasional treat).

**Ratings are based on:**

- Total energy** (measured in kilocalories) – the amount of energy a person gets from consuming a food or drink.
- Saturated fat, sodium (salt) and sugar content** – eating too much of these increases our risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, obesity and some forms of cancer.
- Fibre, protein, fruit, vegetable, nut and legume content** – eating more of these is good for your health.

**The more stars, the healthier.**

## Health Star Rating Factsheet:

A simple rating system that helps compare packaged foods quickly. More stars and a higher rating usually means a healthier choice.

**Demystifying food labels**

Life is busy and reading food labels is often put off. But "You Know" shopping labels can help you make the right choices for your health. This guide explains the important parts of the nutrition information panel so that you can quickly compare foods, check kilocalories and make the healthiest choice for you.

**Healthy Choices**

**Nutrition Information (average)**

average per 100g (1 cup) | average per 100g (1 cup) | average per 100g (1 cup)

|               | Per 100g | Per 100g | Per 100g |
|---------------|----------|----------|----------|
| ENERGY        | 435kJ    | 1441kJ   |          |
| PROTEIN       | 2.5g     | 8.5g     |          |
| FAT TOTAL     | 0.4g     | 1.2g     |          |
| — SATURATED   | 0.1g     | 0.4g     |          |
| CARBOHYDRATES | 18.0g    | 61.0g    |          |
| — SUGARS      | 3.0g     | 11.0g    |          |
| FIBRE         | 0.4g     | 1.2g     |          |
| SODIUM        | 0.0g     | 0.0g     |          |

**Servings**  
This label shows energy, sodium, fibre and protein content. Look for the number of servings in the label. This is the amount of food you should eat in one sitting.

**Per Serving**  
This tells you how much of a nutrient, or how many kilocalories, you get in one serving. If you eat more than one serving, you will get more of the nutrient. Look for the number of servings in the label. This is the amount of food you should eat in one sitting.

**Per 100g**  
This column is designed to help you compare different products and see how the nutrients in 100 grams of food compare. This is the amount of food you should eat in one sitting.

**Energy**  
Energy is listed in kilocalories (kJ) and kilojoules (kJ). Lower energy means fewer kilocalories. Look for the number of kilocalories in the label. This is the amount of food you should eat in one sitting.

**Protein**  
Protein is essential to our body to build and repair tissues. It is also important for the body to build and repair tissues. Look for the number of protein in the label. This is the amount of food you should eat in one sitting.

**Fat**  
Fat is essential for the body to build and repair tissues. It is also important for the body to build and repair tissues. Look for the number of fat in the label. This is the amount of food you should eat in one sitting.

**Sugars**  
It is best to avoid large amounts of added sugars. If you eat a lot of added sugars, you will get more kilocalories. Look for the number of added sugars in the label. This is the amount of food you should eat in one sitting.

**Fibre**  
Fibre is essential for the body to build and repair tissues. It is also important for the body to build and repair tissues. Look for the number of fibre in the label. This is the amount of food you should eat in one sitting.

**Sodium (salt)**  
Sodium is essential for the body to build and repair tissues. It is also important for the body to build and repair tissues. Look for the number of sodium in the label. This is the amount of food you should eat in one sitting.

Healthier. Happier.

Queensland Government

## Understanding food labels:

A guide to reading nutrition labels, including serving sizes, energy, and nutrients like sugar, fat and salt.



# Optional resources to support delivery

Organisations may choose to use the following optional, low-cost resources to support activities and engagement. These resources can be used in play-based learning to encourage conversations about food, cooking and healthy eating. These resources are suggestions only. **Click on the underlined text to access the links.**

## Cookbooks and recipes:

- **Cancer Council:** Healthy recipe ideas.
- **Foodbank:** Cheap and healthy recipes.
- **No Money, No Time:** Meal ideas starting from 16c per serve.
- **NSW Health:** Easy and healthy recipes.
- **Heart Foundation:** Cheap eats cookbook.

## Child-friendly cooking equipment:

- Child-safe knives e.g. Kiddie Kutter and Foost.
- Small silicone tongs.
- Reusable food picks.
- Wavy choppers.
- Silicone muffin cups and trays.
- Wooden food sets.
- Toy cooking equipment.
- Pretend kitchen appliances.
- Pizza and food preparation play sets.





# Additional community programs and supports

The following existing programs, services and resources outside of Nourishing Communities can support organisations.

**Click on the underlined text to access the links.**

## **Get Healthy Service (NSW Health):**

- A free and confidential coaching service for adults in NSW. It offers personalised support to help people achieve their health goals, such as staying active or and reducing alcohol consumption.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants are supported by culturally safe and tailored services.
- Support is also available in other languages through the Translating and Interpreting Service.

## **Get Healthy in Pregnancy:**

- Free support for women and families during pregnancy, birth and beyond.

## **Go4Fun:**

A free and online healthy lifestyle program for families with primary-school aged children. Enjoy health coaching, practical tools and fun family activities.

## **Low Cost and Free Food Directory:**

Find free meals, food pantries, food vouchers, wellbeing support, and financial assistance across the region, and at the click of button. The free tool is produced by the Health Promotion Service. Organisations and community members can also **subscribe** for regular updates.



# Additional community programs and support

## **Foodbank Language Guide:**

A practical guide that helps people have respectful, inclusive and supportive conversations about food insecurity and food relief.

## **Ask Izzy:**

The free online tool connects people with local support services including meals, housing, healthcare, financial support and community services.

## **Community Gardens Australia Directory:**

A directory that helps people find local community gardens and connect with opportunities to access fresh produce, gardening activities and community food projects.



The image shows the cover of the 'Healthy Family Bulletin' from the South Western Sydney Local Health District. The header is purple with a heart icon and the NSW logo. Below the header is a collage of four photos: a family eating at a table, a family in a kitchen, a family with children on bicycles, and a family playing soccer. The text on the cover includes 'Monthly newsletter for families. Delivered direct to your inbox!' and a large 'FREE!' starburst. At the bottom, it says 'Trusted information and tips to help you grow healthy kids and connect with the community.' and lists topics: Healthy eating, Getting active, Screen time, Living well, and Events near you. There is a 'SCAN ME!' button and a QR code. The footer says 'Produced by the Health Promotion Service.'

South Western Sydney Local Health District  
**Healthy Family Bulletin**

Monthly newsletter for families.  
Delivered direct to your inbox! **FREE!**

Trusted information and tips to help you grow healthy kids and connect with the community.

Read about:

- Healthy eating.
- Getting active.
- Screen time.
- Living well.
- Events near you.

SCAN ME!

Produced by the Health Promotion Service.

## **Healthy Family Bulletin:**

A free monthly newsletter from the Health Promotion Service. Topics include healthy eating, physical activity, screen time and wellbeing.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to subscribe to the newsletter.

# Bringing it all together

Conversations about food can help children and families build positive relationships with nutrition and develop healthy eating habits.

This toolkit provides simple and practical resources to help community organisations start conversations about healthy eating through information sharing, activities and discussion.

Used together or individually, these resources can create supportive community settings where healthy food choices are achievable and relevant to everyday life.



For more information about the Nourishing Communities Toolkit, email: [SWSLHD-HealthyEnvironments@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SWSLHD-HealthyEnvironments@health.nsw.gov.au)