



# Healthy Living

## *Women's Wellness Guide*



*Inside:*

**Healthy lifestyle ideas  
for different life stages**

**Health and wellbeing tips**

**Low GI recipes**

**7 Day meal plan**





## Contents

<i>Part A</i> Common health conditions across different life stages.....	5
<i>Part B</i> What type of diet is recommended for women? .....	12
<i>Part C</i> Putting it all together .....	20
<i>Part D</i> Links for different life stages .....	44
<i>Part E</i> References .....	45

Written by Rebecca McPhee, Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD)  
& Health Coach Consultant.

The Glycemic Index Foundation encourages individuals to make their own, informed choices about their health condition and management in consultation with their GP or healthcare team. Each recipe meets the Diabetes Recipe and Cookbook Guidelines developed by Diabetes Victoria on behalf of the Australian Diabetes Organisations Dietitians Group (ADOD), and the diabetes state and territory's organisations. Please note the serving size listed is a guide only. Consider your own individual health, nutrient and carbohydrate requirements and adjust the serving size as needed. If you are unsure of your requirements consult an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) for advice.



# Low GI (Glycemic Index) living for women's wellbeing at every life stage

Life can be busy for women which can often result in having little time to focus on health. There are so many factors that can impact health so it may feel overwhelming to know where to start making changes. Being at risk for certain health conditions will vary at different life stages, however we do know from research that many are preventable via regular health checks and following a healthy lifestyle. This Women's Wellness Guide provides insight into some common health conditions throughout a woman's life with evidence-based lifestyle recommendations on how to keep well and reduce the risk/manage of chronic disease.



## Part A

# Common health conditions across different life stages

## The reproductive years

### PCOS (Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome)

- A common endocrine condition associated with increased levels of insulin and androgens (male-type hormones) in the body.
- Common symptoms include irregular or absent periods, excess facial or body hair (hirsutism, hair loss (alopecia), weight gain, skin conditions such as acne, stress, depression, and anxiety.
- Present in 12-21% of women of childbearing age. 70% of women with PCOS remain undiagnosed.<sup>1</sup>
- The exact cause is unknown; however, risk factors include family history, genetics, insulin resistance and higher body weight.
- Due to insulin resistance, women with PCOS have a 2-3 times greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes. It also increases the risk of heart disease and stroke so early diagnosis is key to help manage the condition.
- Management of PCOS is also important if you are looking to fall pregnant.
- Adopting a healthy lifestyle is the most effective way to manage PCOS symptoms. Some women may also need medicine to better manage symptoms.<sup>2</sup>
- A low GI diet can address biomarkers of PCOS, including bodyweight and insulin resistance.
- Spreading meals over the day can improve blood glucose and insulin production.





# The reproductive years

## FERTILITY

- There are a variety of factors that can impact fertility, including some that are not in our control.
- Whilst there is no magic potion to falling pregnant, we do know from research that adopting a healthy lifestyle can increase your chances of becoming pregnant.
- An eight-year study of more than 18,000 women, conducted by Harvard Medical School found that certain diet and lifestyle factors can help with infertility issues such as ovulation. The main theme coming from the study is that a healthy lifestyle is all about balance - including more of nutrient dense plant foods and less unhealthy habits including less processed foods, stress and over-exercising.<sup>3</sup>

## PREGNANCY

- Food choices during pregnancy can impact a child's future health long after they have been born.
- Studies show that a low GI diet can: prevent excessive weight gain during pregnancy, reduce the mother's chance of developing gestational diabetes, lessen the likelihood of a complicated delivery, birth defects or lower infant birth weight and reduce a child's future risk of chronic disease including obesity and type 2 diabetes.<sup>4</sup>
- There is only a slight increase in the amount of food pregnant women need to eat each day so 'eating for two' is just a myth!
- A pregnancy eating plan focuses on including quality foods with adequate macro and micronutrients to nourish you and your baby.

## Key nutrients during pregnancy:

### Folate

- B group vitamin essential for the healthy development of the foetus in early pregnancy and prevention of neural tube defects such as spina bifida.
- 7 out of 10 cases of neural tube defects are preventable just by increasing folate intake to 500 micrograms per day.
- Current advice: is that women who are planning pregnancy (or at least 3 months before falling pregnant) or in the early stages of pregnancy supplement with 500 micrograms of folic acid daily plus dietary sources. Dietary sources: green vegetables (spinach, broccoli, asparagus, avocado, lettuce and Asian green), fruit (berries, bananas and citrus), legumes –dried beans, lentils and chickpeas, bread and cereals, nuts and yeast extracts (Vegemite, Marmite).

### Iron

- Iron helps to transport oxygen around the body and is key in producing energy, building a healthy immune system and storing oxygen in our muscles.
- Dietary sources: red meat, chicken, fish, eggs, green leafy vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes, pulses, beans and low GI, wholegrain breads and cereals.
- To increase absorption of iron from plant foods (non-haem iron sources), include vitamin C rich foods at the same time such as citrus fruits, red capsicum or kiwi fruit. Including 'haem sources' of iron from animal protein (meat, fish or chicken) can also increase absorption of iron in plant foods when eaten together.<sup>5</sup>

## Protein

- The amount of protein you need to eat increases during pregnancy.
- Protein is an important macronutrient needed for cell growth and repair and is important for building strong muscles.
- Dietary sources: red meat, chicken, fish, eggs, dairy (cheese, milk, yoghurt), legumes, pulses and soy (tofu, tempeh, soymilk and soy yoghurt).

## Iodine

- A mineral only needed in small amounts but very important for an unborn baby and its first few years of life.
- The National Health and Medical Research Council advise that all women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning pregnancy take an iodine supplement of 150 micrograms per day.<sup>6</sup>
- Dietary sources: oysters, sushi\*, canned salmon, bread (except organic), eggs and dairy (cheese, milk, natural/Greek yoghurt).

\*During pregnancy, avoid oysters, sushi and raw seafood and certain types of cheese. Go for cooked fish such as salmon.





## GESTATIONAL DIABETES (GDM)

- Otherwise known as known pregnancy diabetes, gestational diabetes occurs when the hormones produced by the placenta block the action of a woman's insulin in regulating blood sugar levels. Irregular blood sugar levels can lead to some complications including early labour, bigger babies and high blood pressure for mums.
- The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Australia (AIHW) reported that more than 1 in 6 (17.9%) of Australian women who gave birth in 2021-22 were diagnosed with gestational diabetes.<sup>7</sup>
- The treatment of gestational diabetes involves lifestyle management including healthy eating and regular physical activity. In some cases, medication may be prescribed to help regulate blood sugar levels.<sup>8</sup>

There are many myths around certain health conditions and it is no different with gestational diabetes. We explore 5 common myths around gestational diabetes and provide you with the evidence-based facts.



### Myth 1: Eating too much sugar causes GDM

- There is the stigma that eating too much sugar causes gestational diabetes. The fact is, there is no single cause, and it cannot always be prevented. Whilst poor diet, being above a healthy weight and inactivity can increase your risk, there are many other risk factors<sup>9</sup> that can lead to a diagnosis including:
- Previous diagnosis of gestational diabetes or high blood sugar levels
- Strong family history of type 2 diabetes
- Being over the age of 40
- Being from specific ethnic backgrounds
- Rapid weight gain in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy
- Having polycystic ovarian syndrome
- Taking some types of antipsychotic or steroid medications.

### Myth 2: Having GDM harms the baby

It is true that untreated gestational diabetes can cause problems for you and your baby. Women with gestational diabetes are more likely to have a caesarean section, pre-term labour, or induced labour than women without gestational diabetes. However, the likelihood of these happening is still relatively small. If managed well, most women will go on to have a pregnancy (and birth) free from complications that can harm the baby.

### Myth 3: I'm free of diabetes once the baby is born

For most women, gestational diabetes usually goes away after the baby is born. A blood test six to twelve weeks after childbirth can confirm if diabetes has resolved. However, this is not

necessarily the end of the diabetes journey. In recent years, its research shows that women with gestational diabetes have a higher risk of developing health problems later in life. The risk of type 2 diabetes is 70% higher in women who have had gestational diabetes, and the risk of developing high blood pressure and heart disease is nearly tripled.<sup>10</sup>

### Myth 4: A GDM means cutting out carbs

You don't have to start ditching the carbs altogether. Pregnancy is not the time for a low or no carbohydrate diet because your baby needs them to grow. Choosing the right type and portion of carbohydrate foods will help manage and prevent gestational diabetes. The best type of carbohydrates to choose are those with a low Glycemic Index.

It's a good idea to include carbohydrates with each meal and snack as eating large portions in one sitting can cause blood glucose levels to spike. Every woman is different when it comes to their nutritional needs but aiming for a fist-size portion of carbohydrates with each meal is an excellent general rule. Your diabetes educator or dietitian can advise on the exact portion size for you.

### Myth 5: Drinking the glucose drink will cause gestational diabetes

Diagnosis of gestational diabetes typically involves a series of blood tests which take place over several hours and includes an oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT). The OGTT involves drinking a sweet, sugary drink (containing glucose) and testing your blood one and two hours. The glucose drink will not cause gestational diabetes or harm your baby. The test is observing how well your body processed the glucose over the period when you were sitting in the pathology lab.<sup>11</sup>

## POST PREGNANCY – POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

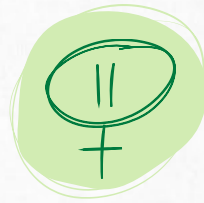
- After having a baby, it is normal to experience mixed emotions including tearfulness, anxiety, and mood swings.
- These feelings are often referred to as the 'baby blues' and are very common in the first weeks after childbirth. 'Baby Blues' does not require any special treatment unless symptoms are severe.
- Postpartum depression, otherwise known as postnatal depression, describes the more severe symptoms of depression that go on for more than two weeks and get in the way of being able to manage your daily routine, including looking after your baby.<sup>12</sup>
- 1 in 7 women experience postpartum depression and 40% of these women experience symptoms during pregnancy.
- If you feel that your low mood is getting in the way of your daily life, an important first step is to discuss this with your doctor for advice on the right treatment plan for you.
- Research shows that type of lifestyle you lead can influence your mood including diet, getting enough sleep and regular relaxation.<sup>13</sup>







## Mid-life



### MENOPAUSE

- Menopause, a natural stage during a female's life, occurs between the ages 45-55 years.
- The change in hormones increases a woman's risk of certain health conditions so adopting a healthy lifestyle is key.
- Symptoms can include mood fluctuations, disturbed sleep and hot flushes which may make it challenging to focus on a healthy lifestyle.
- Whilst studies show that menopause doesn't directly cause weight gain, the hormones associated with this stage of life, such as reduced oestrogen may lead to more weight gain around the abdominal area.
- Extra weight around the middle, unlike weight around the hips and thighs, increases the risk of chronic disease including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, breast cancer and dementia.
- A drop in oestrogen levels during menopause can lead to a reduction in bone density and consequently increase the risk of 'brittle bones' or osteoporosis. Including 3-4 serves of calcium rich foods in the diet can help prevent osteoporosis. Calcium rich foods include dairy (milk, yoghurt and cheese), calcium fortified soy milk and fish with edible bones. If it is too difficult to get enough dairy serves each day, a calcium supplement may be advised by your doctor. Keeping active especially resistance training also helps to keep bones healthy and strong.
- During or after menopause, cholesterol levels can increase due to reduced oestrogen levels in the body. This increases the risk of a heart attack and stroke so having regular medical check-ups (testing blood lipids including cholesterol and blood pressure monitoring) is vital.<sup>14</sup>



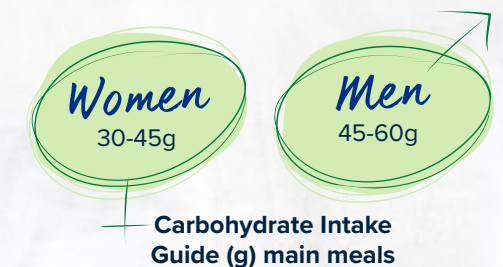
### HEART HEALTH

- Cardiovascular disease (heart disease, stroke and blood vessel disease) is the leading cause of death for women globally. Women are more likely than men to die following a heart attack.
- High cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes can all increase the chance of developing heart disease.
- Heart disease occurs when blood flow and oxygen supply to the heart is restricted due to a build-up of fat, cholesterol and plaque that clogs arteries.
- Research has also found that the type and amount of carbohydrate significantly increases a woman's risk of heart disease. High glycemic index is strongly associated with Type 2 Diabetes and metabolic syndrome, while high Glycemic load is strongly associated with an increased risk of coronary heart disease in females.<sup>15</sup>



### DIABETES

- Almost 1.3 million Australians are currently living with type 2 diabetes.
- Carbohydrate management is an important part of managing blood glucose levels. This involves choosing the right amount and type of carbohydrates i.e., carbohydrate management. Swapping to low GI carbs can significantly help manage blood glucose levels.
- The amount of carbs you eat is different for everyone with diabetes and depends on your age, gender, weight and activity levels. However, a good starting place is women: 30-45g carbs per main meal and men 45-60g carbs per main meal.





## Part B

# What type of diet is recommended for women?

There are also numerous diets marketed to women in the media which can also add a spanner in the works and may raise the questions: what is *the* best diet, and do I follow a different diet at every life stage?

Whilst women have unique nutritional needs at every life stage, the good news is that the type of diet recommended for health and wellbeing is the same. It is important to note that nutrition is not a 'one size fits all' solution – medical conditions, medications, allergies, intolerances as well as personal preferences will influence the type of diet you follow.

However, in general and based on scientific evidence, women can benefit from **Mediterranean** and **low GI (Glycemic Index)** eating patterns and reap the many health rewards. Studies continue to show that both Mediterranean and Low GI diets reduce the risk of various lifestyle related diseases including diabetes, heart disease, obesity, dementia, and some cancers.

By going back to basics and focusing on nourishing wholefoods, with attention to specific nutrients at various life stages, there will be no need to follow strict diets that are often unbalanced, expensive and exhausting to adhere to long term. Hypocrites really did have it right all those years ago 'Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food'.

The **Mediterranean diet**, one of the world's oldest and healthiest eating patterns, provides all the essential macro and micronutrients needed for all genders, including women. It is also linked to longevity making it one of the best diets as we age.<sup>16</sup>

### Key features:

- ✓ A high consumption of plant foods i.e., vegetables, fruits, nuts, legumes, wholegrains
- ✓ A relatively high fat intake, mostly provided by olive oil which are unsaturated 'good' fats
- ✓ A moderate to high fish intake
- ✓ Poultry and dairy products consumed in moderate to small amounts
- ✓ A low consumption of red meats and meat products
- ✓ A moderate alcohol intake, usually in the form of red wine

## Low GI Diet

Like the Mediterranean diet, a low GI diet is also based on wholefoods including low GI grains and legumes, nuts and a wide variety of fresh and seasonal fruits and vegetables. It also features fish, lean red meat, chicken, eggs and healthy fats such olive oil.

The Glycemic Index (GI) is a tool that measures how different types of carbohydrates affect our blood glucose levels. It is a scientifically proven way to determine which carbohydrate foods are healthiest for us. Carbohydrate comes in two forms – starches (e.g. potatoes, grains, and pasta) and sugars (e.g. sucrose, lactose, and fructose). It is found mainly in plants (fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes) or food made from plants which all feature in the Mediterranean diet.

Carbohydrate foods that are tested are given a score on a scale of 1-100.

**Carbohydrates with a high GI (70+) are digested and absorbed quickly, causing a rapid spike in blood glucose levels.**

Eat less

**Carbohydrates with a medium GI (55- 69) are digested and absorbed at a moderate rate, causing a moderate rise in blood glucose levels.**

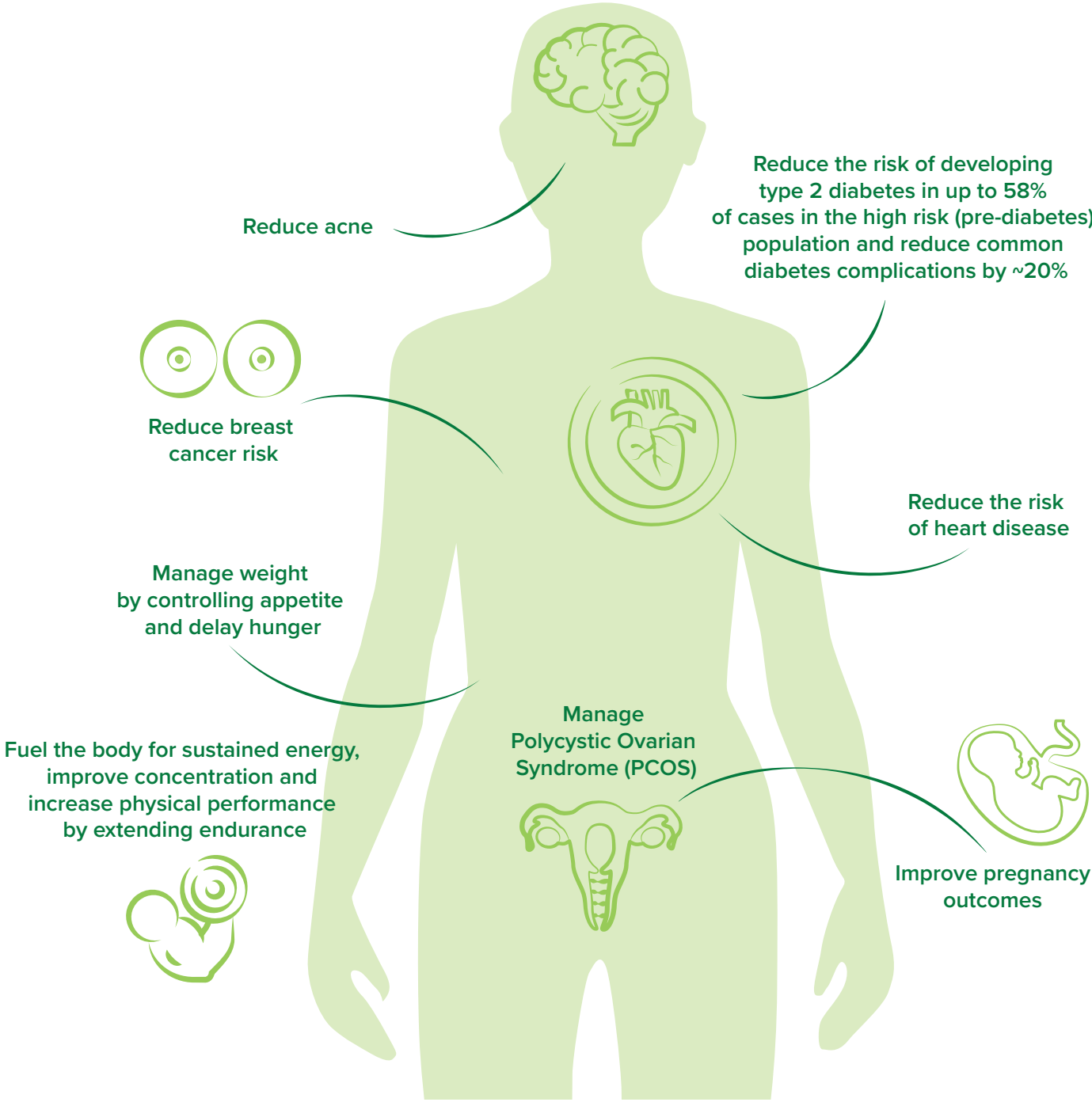
**Carbohydrates with a low GI (55 or less) are digested and absorbed more slowly at a slower rate, prompting less fluctuation in blood sugars.**

Eat more



# Benefits of low GI diet

Research has found that a low GI diet reduces the risk of developing significant health problems for women, including the following 8 ways<sup>17</sup> a low GI diet supports women’s wellbeing:

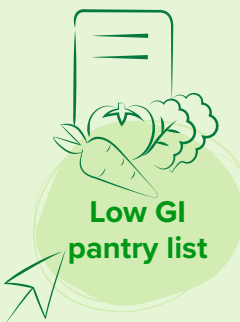


## How to go low GI

In general, low GI foods are less processed and higher in fibre compared to high GI carbs e.g., white bread compared to wholegrain bread. So going low GI does not mean giving up your favourite carbs like bread and potato!

## Quality Carbs - choose low GI

Going low GI does not mean giving up all your favourite carbs. It is all about ‘smart swapping’ – swapping high GI carbohydrates for lower GI options. The best place to start is in the supermarket and to get you started here is a pantry and shopping list.





# 12 lifestyle tips for women at every health stage



**1. Eat the rainbow** – Including enough fruit and vegetables each day will not only provide the body with essential vitamins and minerals, but it also contains important antioxidants and dietary fibre which has been shown to reduce the risk of chronic disease. Aim for 5 serves of vegetables/salad and 2 serves of fruit each day. 1 serve of vegetables = ½ cooked vegetables or 1 cup salad. At main meals, vegetables or salad should cover half the plate.

**2. Go low GI grains** – replace high GI, highly refined grains for low GI, wholegrain varieties. Including low GI grains is an important part of managing blood glucose and therefore insulin levels for PCOS, Gestational Diabetes and Diabetes. Wholegrains are also packed with fibre, B group vitamins and contribute to satiety, the feeling of fullness.

**3. Pump up plant protein** Include more protein sources from vegetable foods e.g., legumes, lentils, nuts and seeds and smaller portions of animal protein. Plant protein is high in soluble fibre, low GI, low in saturated fat and budget friendly! Studies have shown that consuming 5% of energy from plant protein instead of animal protein reduces the risk of anovulatory infertility by over 50%.<sup>18</sup> If you are new to plant protein, start by reducing the amount of animal protein in a meal and add a can of legumes such as chickpeas or lentils. Legumes are a great addition to soups, casseroles, and salads. Next aim for 1-2 vegetarian meals per week.

**4. Factor in healthy fats** Forget no fat and choose healthy fats which are unsaturated such as olive oil, oily fish and avocado, nut and seeds. A small handful (30g) unsalted nuts as a snack, cooking with extra virgin olive oil and spreading avocado on your morning wholegrain toast are simple ways to add good fats to your diet. One of the essential fatty acids, omega 3, is associated with lower rates of heart disease (heart failure and sudden cardiac death) and stroke. Omega 3 fats also have anti-inflammatory actions that may help relieve depression. Omega 3 sources include oily fish (sardines, salmon, tuna, herring, mackerel). Aim for 2-3 oily fish meals per week.



**5. Mind the meat** Animal protein is an important source of muscle building protein and nutrients such as iron and vitamin B12, however serves should be kept small and lean. This means including unprocessed, lean cuts including red meat, pork, lamb, and veal and in smaller amounts i.e., no more than 1-3 serves a week (350g a week). Studies show too much red meat contributes to unhealthy saturated fat in our diet, which is linked to high cholesterol levels, increasing our risk of heart disease and stroke. Skinless poultry (chicken and turkey) can be included which does not increase or decrease your risk of heart disease.<sup>19</sup>

**6. Limit the junk.** Processed foods often high in saturated fat, trans fats, sugar, and salt and found in many packaged, processed, and fast foods. These types of foods should be kept to a minimum and enjoyed only occasionally. This does not mean we need to cut out these foods completely. Use the 80/20 rule - include healthy food choices 80% of the time and 'treats' 20% of the time. Treat foods include chocolate, cake, biscuits, chips, and takeaway food.

**7. Steady on with the stimulants** Many of us love the buzz that a morning cuppa gives us. Including caffeine in moderation is fine however we can have too much of a good thing. Too much caffeine has been shown to exacerbate hot flushes in menopausal women. It can also cause you to feel jittery and more anxious. Avoiding caffeine in the late afternoon and evening will also ensure it does not affect sleep. For those breastfeeding, limit consumption to 200mg caffeine a day. To put this into perspective, one shot of coffee is 145mg and one cup of tea is 10-50mg.

**8. Get active** We all know that getting some regular physical keeps us fit, but it is also good for our mental health. In fact, physical activity has been shown to alleviate depression. Include at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days of the week. Activity should include both cardiovascular e.g., brisk walking, swimming, bike riding and resistance training (using weights or body weight). To increase fertility, research has shown that whilst daily exercise is important, avoid high intensity workouts which can impact conception.

**9. Balance the scales** Being above a healthy weight can increase the risk of chronic disease, impact PCOS symptoms and affect fertility. The good news is that even a weight loss of 5% to 10% can improve symptoms of PCOS, can kick start ovulation for those wanting to fall pregnant as well as reduce the risk of chronic disease such as Type 2 Diabetes.

**10. Supplement the diet** for fertility, research suggests a multivitamin daily that contains 500 micrograms of folic acid plus other B group vitamins. A pregnancy specific supplement for both men and women are the easiest ways to include the right amounts of nutrients needed for a healthy pregnancy. For other health stages, if you think you need supplementation, discuss with your doctor first about what type and how much you need.<sup>20</sup>

**11. Hydrate** Part of a healthy diet includes keeping up water intake. One study found that even mild levels of dehydration in healthy young women resulted in changes in energy and fatigue as well as increased headaches and difficulty concentrating.<sup>21</sup> If you are still breastfeeding, you will need more fluid as making breastmilk requires fluid. Keep a bottle handy when you are at home and travelling out and about to remind yourself to drink. Tea and coffee are fine to include during the day but keep amounts moderate. Avoid high calorie beverages including high sugar soft drinks, cordial, and energy drinks.

**12. Get enough shut eye** Not getting enough sleep or poor-quality sleep also affects our appetite controlling hormones causing us more likely to eat. One study also found that new mothers who slept less than 4 hours between midnight and 6am, or new mothers who napped less than 60 minutes during the day, were at an increased risk for postpartum depression.<sup>22</sup> Establish good sleep hygiene routine by avoiding the use of electronic devices before bed, ensure the room is well ventilated and a good temperature. Also avoid caffeine and alcohol several hours before bed. Including alcohol before bed may help to put us to sleep but it can interrupt quality sleep including rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, which is important for dreaming, learning, and memory processing.





## Part C

# Putting it all together

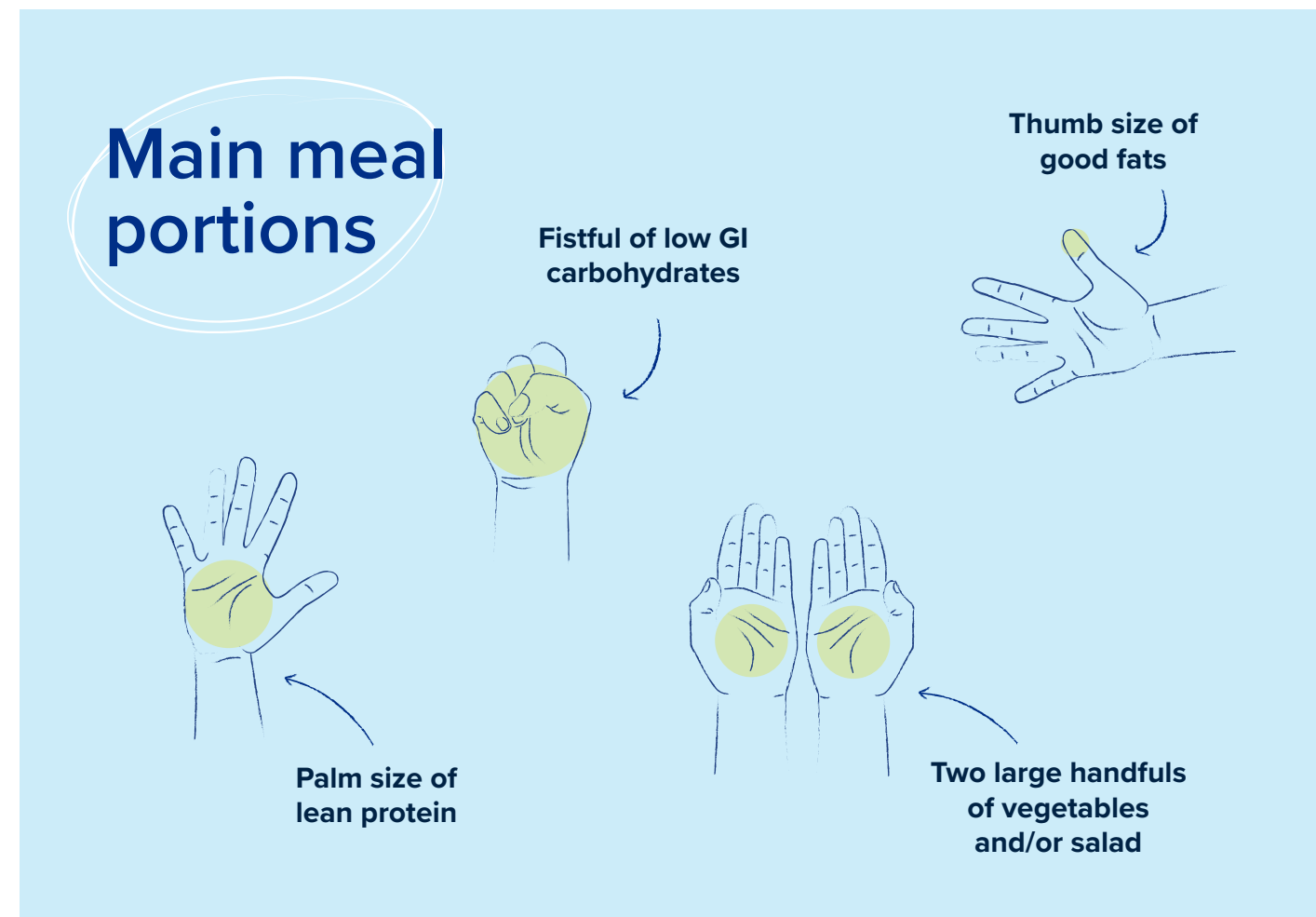
What does a low GI, mediterranean style diet look like on your dinner plate? Follow these 4 steps to meal planning to ensure your meals are balanced.

**1. Where are the carbs?** Include low GI, fibre rich carbs at each meal. This includes potato, sweet potato, rice, pasta, corn, couscous, barley, legumes or wholegrain bread. Aim for a 'fist size' or ¼ of your plate to include low GI carbs.

**2. Where is the protein?** Protein includes lean meat, poultry (chicken and turkey), fish, eggs, legumes, tofu, tempeh. Aim for one portion at each meal. One portion is 1 'palm sized' portion of protein.

**3. Where is the colour?** Does your meal include lots of high fibre, colourful vegetables and salad? Aim for at least 2 large handfuls (2 cups) of vegetables or salad or half your plate.

**4. Add a dash of good fats.** Do not forget the essential fats, which can also contribute to satiety. Healthy fats include avocado, olives, nuts and seeds. Healthy cooking oils include olive, canola, sunflower, peanut and soybean oil.



## Body foods for women

The following 10 foods are nutrition powerhouses, supporting women's health and wellbeing, feature in our 7-day women's wellness meal plan and should be on the shopping list!

### 1. Green leafy veggies

- ✓ Includes spinach, kale, broccoli, cabbage, dark coloured lettuce, and Asian varieties (bok choy, choy sum etc)
- ✓ Provides B group vitamins including folate, important during pregnancy and pregnancy planning
- ✓ A source of vitamin K, which with calcium and vitamin D, keep bones strong and prevent osteoporosis
- ✓ Provides iron. Due to monthly menstruation, premenopausal women require more iron i.e., 18mg per day. This amount reduces significantly to 8mg a day once a woman has ceased menstruating. Boost iron absorption by combining leafy greens with vitamin C rich food such as tomatoes, red capsicum or citrus

### 2. Berries

- ✓ Includes blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and strawberries
- ✓ Low in calories
- ✓ Rich in antioxidants. Blueberries have the highest antioxidant value per weight compared to other food categories. Antioxidants can reduce inflammation throughout the body particularly the brain, reducing the risk of dementia

### 3. Olive oil

- ✓ Choose cold pressed olive oil which is highest in antioxidants and less processed
- ✓ Rich in monounsaturated fats and antioxidants which lowers the risk of chronic disease, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, metabolic syndrome, and certain types of cancer
- ✓ One study also found that people who consumed a diet rich in monounsaturated fats in the form of olive oil had a lower risk of severe skin ageing<sup>23</sup>

### 4. Nuts

- ✓ Tree nuts includes walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, brazil nuts, cashews and macadamias
- ✓ Provides magnesium, which has an important role of converting sugar into energy for fuel
- ✓ Rich in healthy fats, which can help reduce cholesterol and prevent heart disease. Including ¼ cup (about 30 g) of unsalted nuts each day, you can reduce your risk of heart disease by up to 27%<sup>24</sup>

### 5. Oats

- ✓ Choose steel cut oats which are low GI compared to instant oats
- ✓ Rich in beta glucan, a soluble fibre which may help to lower LDL (bad cholesterol)
- ✓ Low GI - One study found that people who ate oats for breakfast felt fuller resulting in eating less at lunchtime than people who ate cornflakes, a high GI cereal<sup>25</sup>







## 6. Oily fish

- ✓ Oily fish includes salmon, tuna, sardines, herring, and mackerel. Aim to include 2-3 serves of oily fish per week
- ✓ Anti-inflammatory actions help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, relieve depression as well as slow down cognitive decline

## 7. Eggs

- ✓ A great source of affordable, high-quality protein and contain all nine essential amino acids
- ✓ One egg also supplies 6% of our daily Vitamin D needs which is an essential vitamin to help maintain strong bones
- ✓ The cholesterol in eggs has *minimal* impact on cholesterol levels
- ✓ Eggs also contribute to satiety, the feeling of fullness, which can help appetite regulation

## 8. Legumes

- ✓ Includes lentils, chickpeas, soybeans, black beans, and red kidney beans
- ✓ An excellent, cheap source of plant protein and prebiotic fibre which important for gut health
- ✓ Rich in B vitamins, iron, magnesium, zinc, and potassium
- ✓ Low GI value, helping you to feel fuller for longer and sustaining energy levels
- ✓ Soybeans are rich in phytoestrogens, plant-based oestrogen, that mimic the role of natural oestrogen in the body and may help to relieve hot flushes in menopausal women

## 9. Greek Yoghurt

- ✓ Rich in calcium. Women over 50 years of age need more calcium and yoghurt supplies a good amount. 1 cup of Greek yoghurt contains one third of your daily calcium requirements

- ✓ Contains natural occurring bacteria, probiotics. Probiotics have been shown to improve digestion, strengthen immunity and support nutrient absorption which are all key functions for improving energy

## 10. Avocado

- ✓ A rich source of healthy fats including monounsaturated fat which can help lower inflammation and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease
- ✓ Rich in vitamins and minerals including folate, magnesium and potassium which are all beneficial for heart and brain health as well as foetal development
- ✓ Half an avocado provides approximately 18% of the recommended daily intake of vitamin K, an essential vitamin that supports bone health by increasing calcium absorption.



## How can I eat healthy on a budget?

Some forward planning and a little ‘know how’ will ensure you are able to eat healthily without breaking the bank balance.

### Start with pantry basics before considering convenience foods.

Stocking up ‘pantry essentials’ makes it easier to plan healthy meals at a budget price. Essentials include:

- Fresh, frozen, and canned fruit and vegetables
- Low GI carbs - wholegrain bread, oats, natural muesli, crackers, rice, pasta, noodles, barley, couscous, quinoa, bulghur, semolina, teff, buckwheat
- Lean red meat, chicken, fish (fresh and tinned), eggs and legumes (canned and dried)
- Reduced fat milk, yoghurt, cheese, or dairy alternatives - soymilk, soy yoghurt
- Olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocado, 100% nut butters e.g., peanut, almond
- Miscellaneous items: herbs (fresh and dried), spices, reduced salt soy sauce, no added salt tomato paste, vinegar.

### Buy in season

Seasonal fruit and vegetables are at their nutritional peak, taste better and is often cheaper. [Click here](#) to find the Australian seasonal fruit and vegetables calendar.

### Do not forget frozen and canned vegetables and fruit

Frozen and canned fruit and vegetables are a great option especially if you are always finding that you are throwing out fresh produce. Frozen fruit and vegetables are snap frozen after harvest and still hold a lot of nutrition and can be a healthy, longer lasting option. When fresh berries are not in season and more expensive, switch to the frozen variety. Canned tomatoes are also an excellent pantry essential especially during winter

when fresh tomatoes are out of season. Canned tomatoes are also higher in the antioxidant, lycopene compared to fresh tomatoes.

### Mind the marketing

Foods marketed as being a ‘superfood’ tend to cost more and may be overrated. For example, a protein ball costs a minimum of \$3.00 per ball compared to a small handful of unsalted nuts for around \$0.40 or a hard-boiled egg for \$0.50. Avoid buying into the hype, you are often paying more for packaging or convenience. Buy some good quality food containers or snap lock bags to help you store and transport your snacks.

### Shopping ‘know how’

Before purchasing your food, consider where you will purchase it from. You can often find value for money at farmers’ markets, grocers, butchers, and fish markets. Local supermarkets will also have weekly specials, so scope out their catalogue ahead of time to identify deals. Also, when you are shopping, do not forget to look on the high and low shelves as they can hold some of the cheaper items, including generic varieties. It may also be worth buying in bulk especially meat products. Buy lean cuts of quality meat when they are on special and freeze until later in the week or month when you may need it.

### Bulk up meals with legumes and vegetables

Halve the quantity of meat in a main meal dish and add a can of legumes such as chickpeas, lentils, kidney beans, soybeans or cannellini beans and vegetables. Legumes taste delicious in soups and casseroles and help to thicken the sauce. For a low GI, low saturated fat, high fibre bolognese dish, reduce lean beef mince from 500g to 250g and add a can of lentils, grated zucchini, grated carrot, tinned tomatoes, tomato paste, onion, garlic, and herbs (basil, oregano). You will be surprised at how much you will save and how good it tastes!



# 7-Day Women's Wellness Menu Plan



This Women's Wellness, 7 Day menu plan features easy to prepare meals that won't break the bank balance. In fact, most of the recipes are under \$5 per serve! Recipes are based on a low GI, Mediterranean style diet i.e., a variety of nutrient rich plant foods (vegetables, fruit, wholegrains, legumes and nuts) and moderate amounts of lean protein. By eating this way, saturated fat, added sugars and salt will be lower, while still rich in essential vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre.

This menu plan is a general guide only. If you are pregnant or have certain medical conditions, you can still enjoy the variety of nutritionally balanced meals and snacks provided. However, how much and how often you eat may vary. If you are unsure of your requirements consult an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) for advice. Each recipe meets the Diabetes Recipe and Cookbook Guidelines developed by Diabetes Victoria on behalf of the Australian Diabetes Organisations Dietitians Group (ADOD), and the diabetes state and territory's organisations.

## Monday

### Breakfast

#### Smashed Avocado Toast with Egg

Top 2 slices of toasted Bûrgen® Soy-Lin® Bread with 1 mashed avocado with lemon, salt and pepper. Layer with 2 sliced boiled eggs. Drizzle with a little extra virgin olive oil and garnish with 2 Tbsp parsley. Serves 2.

##### Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1075/256
Protein (g)	12
Fat (g)	16.3
Saturated fat (g)	2.8
Carbohydrate (g)	9
Sugar (g)	2
Dietary fibre (g)	10.4
Sodium (mg)	227
Potassium (mg)	869

\$2.05  
PER SERVE

### Lunch

#### Roast Pumpkin & Coconut Soup

RECIPE ON PAGE 32

Serve soup with chopped coriander leaves and 1 slice low GI toast.

##### Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1092/260
Protein (g)	11.7
Fat (g)	10.4
Saturated fat (g)	1.9
Carbohydrate (g)	26.4
Sugar (g)	8.6
Dietary fibre (g)	7.1
Sodium (mg)	127
Potassium (mg)	1188

\$1.11  
PER SERVE

### Dinner

#### Baked Salmon with Basil Pistou

RECIPE ON PAGE 34

Pistou: Using a mortar and pestle (or food processor) crush 1 cup basil leaves, 1/4 cup olive oil, 1 clove crushed garlic, 1 tsp lemon rind and salt until combined a paste is formed. Transfer to a bowl, cover with plastic wrap and store in the fridge until required. Pistou will keep for several days.

Salmon: Preheat oven to 220°C. Rub olive oil over salmon steaks. Place salmon on a baking paper-lined baking tray. Bake for approximately 10 minutes or until cooked to your liking. Rest for 2-3 minutes, then drizzle with pistou. Serve with a tomato salad or steamed vegies of your choice. Serves 4.

##### Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1932/460
Protein (g)	26
Fat (g)	35
Saturated fat (g)	6.9
Carbohydrate (g)	7.6
Sugar (g)	6.3
Dietary fibre (g)	4.8
Sodium (mg)	1174
Potassium (mg)	843

\$6.10  
PER SERVE

### Snack #1

#### Lemon Chia Balls

Blend 1 cup of both almonds and cashews, and 4 Tbsp chia seeds in a food processor until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add 2 cups medjool dates pitted and chopped and juice of a lemon. Form into balls and roll in coconut and refrigerate. Makes 30 balls.

##### Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	458/109
Protein (g)	2.2
Fat (g)	6.7
Saturated fat (g)	2.4
Carbohydrate (g)	10
Sugar (g)	7.4
Dietary fibre (g)	2.6
Sodium (mg)	3.6
Potassium (mg)	161

\$0.26  
PER SERVE

### Snack #2

#### Fruit Smoothie

1 cup milk of your choice with 1 small banana or 1/2 cup berries.

##### Nutrition info

	per serve
kJ/cal	830/198
Protein (g)	10
Fat (g)	3.8
Saturated fat (g)	2.4
Carbohydrate (g)	27
Sugar (g)	26.7
Dietary fibre (g)	3.6
Sodium (mg)	152
Potassium (mg)	470

\$1.57  
PER SERVE



Tuesday

Breakfast

Instant Bircher Muesli

Place 4 medjool dates, ½ cup oats, 1 apple cored/quartered, 8 almonds, 1 Tbsp coconut, ½ tsp cinnamon & ½ cup yoghurt. Place in high-speed blender and “pulse” several times until well combined. Spoon into two bowls and serve. Serves 2

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1084/258
Protein (g)	9.2
Fat (g)	8
Saturated fat (g)	3.7
Carbohydrate (g)	33
Sugar (g)	20
Dietary fibre (g)	8.2
Sodium (mg)	77
Potassium (mg)	450

\$2.15  
PER SERVE

Lunch

Mediterranean Tuna Salad

In a small bowl or jar, add 1 Tbsp olive oil and 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar, salt and pepper. Mix or shake well. In a large bowl add 2 cups baby spinach leaves, 2 tomatoes diced, 1 cup low GI brown rice cooked, 185g tuna in spring water drained and flaked, ½ avocado sliced and fresh basil shredded. Toss gently. Add dressing and mix well. Serves 2.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1693/403
Protein (g)	26.1
Fat (g)	14.7
Saturated fat (g)	2.5
Carbohydrate (g)	37
Sugar (g)	8
Dietary fibre (g)	6.7
Sodium (mg)	271
Potassium (mg)	1061

\$3.04  
PER SERVE



Dinner

French Style Chicken Casserole

In a non-stick casserole pan, heat olive oil and add 800g chicken thighs. Cook until chicken is slightly browned. Add 1 onion diced, 1 carrot diced, 2 cloves crushed garlic, 1 bay leaf, 2 Tbsp fresh thyme, salt and pepper. Stir. Add 75g lean chopped bacon and cook. Add 150ml white wine and bring to the boil. Add 200g sliced mushrooms and cover, cooking on a low heat for approx. 20 mins. Add 4 chopped Carisma parboiled potatoes to the casserole, cooking for 5 mins. Serve with chopped parsley. Serves 4.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1697/404
Protein (g)	48
Fat (g)	13
Saturated fat (g)	3.8
Carbohydrate (g)	23
Sugar (g)	5
Dietary fibre (g)	10.5
Sodium (mg)	515
Potassium (mg)	2189

\$4.92  
PER SERVE



Snack #1

Carrot Cake Muffins

RECIPE ON PAGE 35

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	735/175
Protein (g)	3.3
Fat (g)	8
Saturated fat (g)	1.2
Carbohydrate (g)	19
Sugar (g)	8.6
Dietary fibre (g)	3
Sodium (mg)	198
Potassium (mg)	189

\$0.65  
PER SERVE



Snack #2

2 wholegrain crispbreads with 1 Tbsp hummus.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	693/165
Protein (g)	5
Fat (g)	7.3
Saturated fat (g)	0.9
Carbohydrate (g)	17.2
Sugar (g)	1
Dietary fibre (g)	4.8
Sodium (mg)	167
Potassium (mg)	147

\$0.28  
PER SERVE

Wednesday

Breakfast

Strawberry Breakfast Trifle

Slice 250g strawberries and divide in 2 tall glasses or bowls. Add 200g Greek yoghurt on top of strawberries. Drizzle with 1 tsp of honey. Sprinkle ½ cup granola over the top. Serves 2.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1516/361
Protein (g)	14.11
Fat (g)	18.3
Saturated fat (g)	3
Carbohydrate (g)	30.5
Sugar (g)	18
Dietary Fibre (g)	8.3
Sodium (mg)	114.1
Potassium (mg)	703.6

\$2.39  
PER SERVE



Lunch

Sweet Potato and Rainbow Veggie Frittata

RECIPE ON PAGE 36

Sprinkle frittata with extra crumbled feta and fresh basil leaves.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1298/298
Protein (g)	17.1
Fat (g)	16.9
Saturated fat (g)	4.4
Carbohydrate (g)	17
Sugar (g)	12
Dietary fibre (g)	5
Sodium (mg)	350
Potassium (mg)	774

\$4.92  
PER SERVE

Dinner

Low GI Air Fryer Nachos

Place a sheet of baking paper into the air fryer. In a single layer, add tortilla triangles (made from 2 wraps) into the air fryer basket, overlapping so there are no gaps. Top triangles with 400g black beans, 1 diced onion, 2 diced tomatoes, 1 diced red capsicum, ½ cup pickled jalapeños and 1/3 cup grated reduced fat cheese. Place in the air fryer and cook at 160°C for five minutes or until the cheese has melted. Whilst nachos are cooking, make guacamole by mashing ½ avocado, 1 small chilli, chopped, 1 clove garlic, chopped, 1 Tbsp lime juice and 2 Tbsp chopped coriander in a small bowl. Remove nachos from the basket, top with guacamole, ½ cup reduced fat Greek yoghurt and extra coriander. Serves 2.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	2230/531
Protein (g)	32.3
Fat – total (g)	15.5
Saturated Fat (g)	7.3
Carbohydrate – total (g)	52.3
Sugar (g)	23.8
Dietary Fibre (g)	23.7
Sodium (mg)	563
Potassium (mg)	1810

\$4.20  
PER SERVE



Snack #1

RECIPE ON PAGE 38

Tzatziki with 1 cup raw veggies e.g., celery, cucumber, capsicum, snap peas.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	517/123
Protein (g)	7.1
Fat (g)	2.2
Saturated fat (g)	1.2
Carbohydrate (g)	13.3
Sugar (g)	10
Dietary fibre (g)	5
Sodium (mg)	114
Potassium (mg)	195

\$0.89  
PER SERVE



Snack #2

Low GI Chocolate Fudge Balls

Blend 1 cup medjool dates, 1 cup almonds, 1 tsp vanilla and 1 Tbsp cocoa in a food processor. Blend well. Place in a bowl and use your hands to combine ingredients until they form a “ball”. Roll into small balls. Roll in ½ cup coconut so they are well coated. Makes 12 balls.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	533/127
Protein (g)	2.7
Fat (g)	8
Saturated fat (g)	2.8
Carbohydrate (g)	11.3
Sugar (g)	9.3
Dietary fibre (g)	2.7
Sodium (mg)	3.5
Potassium (mg)	227

\$0.55  
PER SERVE



Thursday

Breakfast

Low GI Banana Bread

SEE RECIPE ON PAGE 39

In a bowl, whisk wholemeal flour, almond meal, oats, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt. In a separate bowl, mash the banana. Using a whisk, whisk in honey, olive oil, milk, yoghurt, vanilla and eggs. Add dry ingredients to wet mixture. Using a spatula, gently stir the mixture until thoroughly combined. Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan and spread evenly. Sprinkle the batter with cinnamon or extra oats. Bake for 30 minutes at 175°C then loosely cover with foil and bake for a further 30 minutes.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1088/259
Protein (g)	6.5
Fat (g)	11.6
Saturated fat (g)	1.8
Carbohydrate (g)	29
Sugar (g)	14.6
Dietary fibre (g)	4
Sodium (mg)	230
Potassium (mg)	287

\$0.87  
PER SERVE



Lunch

Waldorf Salad

In a small bowl or jar, add 1/2 cup Greek yoghurt and 1 Tbsp lemon juice. Mix or shake well. In a large bowl add 2 celery sticks, 1/2 red onion finely diced, 2 cored apples chopped, 200g cooked chicken chopped, 1/3 cup parsley finely chopped and 1/4 cup walnut halves. Toss together. Drizzle over dressing and mix well to coat all the salad ingredients. Serves 2.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1541/449
Protein (g)	39.5
Fat (g)	18.4
Saturated fat (g)	2.7
Carbohydrate (g)	25
Sugar (g)	24.5
Dietary fibre (g)	9.4
Sodium (mg)	161
Potassium (mg)	1151

\$4.70  
PER SERVE



Dinner

Fish en Papillote with steamed veggies

Cut baking paper into 4 squares. Pre-heat oven to 200°C. Place 4 fish fillets into the middle of baking paper sheets. Brush olive oil on each fillet. Add a slice of lemon over the fish, 2 Tbsp fresh thyme and a pinch of salt. Bring paper sides up over fish and double fold top and sides to seal, making packets. Place packets on a baking tray and bake for 12-15 mins, depending on thickness of fish. Serve with seasonal veggies. Serves 4.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1435/343
Protein (g)	38.5
Fat (g)	14.9
Saturated fat (g)	3.1
Carbohydrate (g)	9.6
Sugar (g)	5.5
Dietary fibre (g)	6.8
Sodium (mg)	178
Potassium (mg)	1066

\$4.40  
PER SERVE

Snack #1

Process 250g roasted pumpkin, 420g can drained chickpeas, 1 tbsp olive oil, 2 tbsp tahini, 1 tsp salted reduced soy sauce, 1 clove crushed garlic and 2 tsp cumin in a blender until smooth. Serves 8. Serve with 1 cup vegetable sticks per serve.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	801/192
Protein (g)	8.9
Fat (g)	6.9
Saturated fat (g)	0.9
Carbohydrate (g)	17.9
Sugar (g)	7.3
Dietary fibre (g)	10
Sodium (mg)	78.3
Potassium (mg)	592

\$0.90  
PER SERVE

Snack #2

1 serve fresh fruit e.g., apple or pear with 30g walnuts or almonds.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1006/241
Protein (g)	6
Fat (g)	15.9
Saturated fat (g)	2.3
Carbohydrate (g)	16
Sugar (g)	9.5
Dietary fibre (g)	4.8
Sodium (mg)	5.6
Potassium (mg)	397

\$0.85  
PER SERVE



Friday

Breakfast

Spiced Blueberry Smoothie

Combine 1 cup milk of your choice, 1/2 cup blueberries, 2 Tbsp reduced fat Greek yoghurt, 1/2 tsp vanilla, 1 tsp chia seeds and a pinch of cinnamon into a blender. Blend until smooth and creamy. Serves 1.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	878/209
Protein (g)	13.4
Fat (g)	5.1
Saturated fat (g)	2.8
Carbohydrate (g)	24.7
Sugar (g)	24
Dietary fibre (g)	4.8
Sodium (mg)	142
Potassium (mg)	606

\$3.29  
PER SERVE



Lunch

Barley Salad with Creamy Lemon Dressing

In a small bowl or jar, add 1/4 cup reduced fat Greek yoghurt, 1 Tbsp lemon juice and 1/2 tsp Dijon mustard. Mix or shake well. In a large bowl add 1 cup mixed salad leaves, 150g cherry tomatoes halved, 1 cup cooked pearl barley cooked and 1/2 Lebanese cucumber, 1/4 Spanish onion, 180g salmon fillet cooked or chicken, 1/2 avocado, 2 Tbsp fresh flat-leaf parsley all chopped. Toss gently. Add dressing and mix well. Serves 2.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1541/367
Protein (g)	34
Fat (g)	8.6
Saturated fat (g)	2.1
Carbohydrate (g)	31
Sugar (g)	6.6
Dietary fibre (g)	12
Sodium (mg)	155
Potassium (mg)	1298

\$4.55  
PER SERVE



Snack #1

4 wholegrain crackers with 2 Tbsp reduced fat cottage cheese & 4 tomato slices.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	547/131
Protein (g)	6.5
Fat (g)	3.4
Saturated fat (g)	0.9
Carbohydrate (g)	17
Sugar (g)	4
Dietary fibre (g)	2.3
Sodium (mg)	260
Potassium (mg)	230

\$0.88  
PER SERVE



Snack #2

1 apple sliced with 1 Tbsp 100% nut butter.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	945/225
Protein (g)	4.6
Fat (g)	12.5
Saturated fat (g)	1.5
Carbohydrate (g)	20.5
Sugar (g)	18
Dietary fibre (g)	6.5
Sodium (mg)	92
Potassium (mg)	200

\$0.86  
PER SERVE



Saturday

Breakfast

Garlic Mushroom Sourdough

Heat olive oil in a fry pan and saute ¼ diced onion for 2 minutes. Add 2 cups sliced mushrooms and continue to cook for 4-5 minutes. Add ½ tsp dried thyme, 1 tsp balsamic vinegar, 2 cloves crushed garlic, black pepper and cook for another few minutes, until fragrant. Push mushrooms to the side and add a handful of spinach and halved cherry tomatoes. Cook spinach until wilted and tomatoes until coloured. Add ½ smashed avocado and mushrooms to 4 slices sourdough toast. Add spinach and tomatoes to the plate. Garnish with salt and pepper, lemon juice, and parsley. Serves 2.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1548/379
Protein (g)	12.2
Fat (g)	17
Saturated fat (g)	2.7
Carbohydrate (g)	34
Sugar (g)	5
Dietary fibre (g)	11
Sodium (mg)	436
Potassium (mg)	1233

\$4.78 PER SERVE

Lunch

Low GI Veggie Patties

In a bowl, mix 3 cups SunRice Low GI Brown Rice cooked, 1 carrot grated, 4 spring onions finely chopped, ½ cup fresh coriander chopped, 1 cup baby spinach leaves finely chopped, 250 g chickpeas tin, mashed, ¼ cup sunflower seeds, ¼ cup tahini paste, 2 Tbsp reduced, salt, soy sauce, 1 tsp ground cumin. Form 8 even sized patties and refrigerate for a couple hours.

Drizzle olive oil in a large fry pan and cook for 5 mins each side. Serve with a green salad and a dollop of Tzatziki. Serves 8.



Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1214/289
Protein (g)	13
Fat (g)	9
Saturated fat (g)	2.1
Carbohydrate (g)	33
Sugar (g)	1.2
Dietary fibre (g)	7.7
Sodium (mg)	512
Potassium (mg)	705

\$1.60 PER SERVE

Dinner

Low GI Cottage Pie

SEE RECIPE ON PAGE 40

Serve one portion of the Low GI Cottage Pie with a generous handful of salad leaves or steamed vegetables. Serves 6.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1491/355
Protein (g)	36
Fat (g)	14.7
Saturated fat (g)	6
Carbohydrate (g)	22
Sugar (g)	6.6
Dietary fibre (g)	6.7
Sodium (mg)	589
Potassium (mg)	1295

\$4.85 PER SERVE

Snack #1

Fruit & Nut Bliss Balls

In a food processor, process ½ cup hulled tahini, ½ cup oat bran, ½ cup almond meal, ¼ cup raw almonds, ½ cup prunes pitted, ½ cup dried apricots and ½ cup Low GI honey until mixture starts to stick together. Shape into balls. Roll in desiccated coconut. Makes 20 balls.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	561/134
Protein (g)	3
Fat (g)	6.9
Saturated fat (g)	1.4
Carbohydrate (g)	13.5
Sugar (g)	11.1
Dietary fibre (g)	2.1
Sodium (mg)	5.2
Potassium (mg)	173

\$0.52 PER SERVE



Snack #2

170g reduced fat Greek yoghurt and 150g blueberries or strawberries.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	739/176
Protein (g)	12.1
Fat (g)	0.7
Saturated fat (g)	0.3
Carbohydrate (g)	27
Sugar (g)	26
Dietary fibre (g)	3
Sodium (mg)	80
Potassium (mg)	602

\$3.51 PER SERVE

Sunday

Breakfast

High Protein granola

SEE RECIPE ON PAGE 42

Serve ½ cup of low GI, high protein granola with ½ cup reduced fat Greek yoghurt and ½ cup fresh fruit such as berries.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	373/220
Protein (g)	17.3
Fat (g)	15.7
Saturated fat (g)	3.2
Carbohydrate (g)	35
Sugar (g)	25
Dietary fibre (g)	9.8
Sodium (mg)	148
Potassium (mg)	649

\$3.50 PER SERVE

\*Nutrition information and costing based on 1 serve of granola with ½ cup reduced fat Greek yoghurt and ½ cup blueberries.

Lunch

Eggs with Chickpeas and Spinach

In a non stick frypan, add olive oil and bring to medium heat. Add 1 chopped shallot & crushed garlic, stirring and cooking for 2 minutes. Add 1 can drained chickpeas and cook for 3 minutes. Add 2 cups spinach and 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes and cook for another 2-3 minutes. Make 4 spaces in the mixture in the frypan and crack 4 eggs inside of them. Cook for 3-5 minutes or until egg whites are almost set. Serve chickpea mixture with an egg in a shallow bowl and sprinkle with salt, pepper and parmesan cheese shavings and 1 slice of low GI toast. Serves 4.



Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1037/247
Protein (g)	18.3
Fat (g)	10.4
Saturated fat (g)	4.1
Carbohydrate (g)	14.8
Sugar (g)	2.1
Dietary fibre (g)	6.4
Sodium (mg)	545
Potassium (mg)	500

\$1.90 PER SERVE

Dinner

Braised Zucchini Cacciatore

SEE RECIPE ON PAGE 43

Serve the Cacciatore with natural/ Greek yoghurt spooned over. Serves 4.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	2117/504
Protein (g)	19.1
Fat (g)	27.7
Saturated fat (g)	4
Carbohydrate (g)	34.7
Sugar (g)	16.4
Dietary fibre (g)	22
Sodium (mg)	525
Potassium (mg)	1491

\$3.40 PER SERVE



Snack #1

Hot Spiced Nuts

Heat ½ Tbsp olive oil in a fry pan with 1 tsp Moroccan spice mix, stir for a few seconds until fragrant. Add 1 cup mixed nuts, cook till well-coated and turn brown. Remove from heat and serve. Serves 4.

Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1050/250
Protein (g)	6.6
Fat (g)	24
Saturated fat (g)	2.8
Carbohydrate (g)	2.7
Sugar (g)	1.5
Dietary fibre (g)	3.7
Sodium (mg)	29.7
Potassium (mg)	175

\$1.11 PER SERVE

Snack #2

Fruit Salad & Ricotta Cheese

¾ cup chopped summer fruits mixed with ½ cup ricotta cheese.

Nutrition info

	per serve
830/198	830/198
Protein (g)	10
Fat (g)	3.8
Saturated fat (g)	2.4
Carbohydrate (g)	27
Sugar (g)	26.7
Dietary fibre (g)	3.6
Sodium (mg)	152
Potassium (mg)	470

\$2.00 PER SERVE



# Roast Pumpkin & Coconut Soup



**SERVES: 6** **TIME: 75 minutes**

### Ingredients

- 1 kg pumpkin peeled, deseeded and diced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- salt pinch
- 2 brown onion finely chopped
- 4 clove garlic finely diced
- 1 tbsp ginger grated
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground coriander seed
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- 1 cup evaporated milk Light and Creamy Carnation Evaporated milk with coconut essence
- fresh coriander (cilantro) for garnish

### Method

1. Preheat fan-forced oven to 200°C.
2. In a large bowl add chopped pumpkin and add a tablespoon of olive oil and salt. Use your hands to coat the pumpkin well.
3. Place pumpkin on a baking tray, making sure the pumpkin is evenly spread apart. Bake until pumpkin starts to turn a light golden colour and is soft. Cooking time can range from 30 to 40 minutes. Set aside.
4. Heat 1 Tablespoon of olive oil in a large saucepan until hot. Add onions and cook until softened, stirring occasionally. Add garlic, ginger, cumin and coriander, mix together and cook for a further 2 minutes.
5. Add pumpkin and vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Simmer for 20 minutes. Next add the evaporated milk and stir well. Remove from heat and use a handheld blender to blend the soup to a thick, smooth consistency. Add extra vegetable stock if you want a thinner consistency.
6. Pour soup into serving bowls. Season with pepper, drizzle with coconut milk and garnish with coriander leaves.

### Notes

Recipe courtesy of Rebecca McPhee, Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD).

### Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1092/260
Protein (g)	11.7
Fat – total (g)	10.4
Saturated Fat (g)	1.9
Carbohydrate – total (g)	26.4
Sugar (g)	8.6
Dietary fibre (g)	7.1
Sodium (mg)	127
Potassium (mg)	1188





# Baked Salmon with Basil Pistou



SERVES: 4 TIME: 25 minutes

### Ingredients

- 1 basil pistou
- 4 salmon fillet 460g or 115g each
- extra virgin olive oil
- sea salt and ground black pepper



### Method

1. Preheat oven to 220°C.
2. Rub olive oil over salmon steaks. Place the fish on a baking paper-lined baking tray and season with salt and pepper.
3. Bake for approximately 10-15 minutes or until cooked to your liking. Rest for 2-3 minutes, then drizzle with pistou.

### Notes

Pistou: Using a mortar and pestle (or food processor) crush 1 cup basil leaves, 1/4 cup olive oil, 1 clove crushed garlic, 1 tsp lemon rind and salt until combined a paste is formed. Transfer to a bowl, cover with plastic wrap and store in the fridge until required. Pistou will keep for several days.

Recipe courtesy of Rebecca McPhee, Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD).

### Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1932/460
Protein (g)	26
Fat – total (g)	35
Saturated Fat (g)	6.9
Carbohydrate – total (g)	7.6
Sugar (g)	6.3
Dietary fibre (g)	4.8
Sodium (mg)	1174
Potassium (mg)	843

# Carrot Cake Muffins



SERVES: 12 TIME: 30 minutes

### Ingredients

- 1 cup wholemeal self raising flour
- 1/3 cup rolled oats OR oat bran
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 eggs lightly whisked
- 3 medium ripe bananas mashed
- 2 tbs low GI honey
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 2 medium carrots, grated
- 1/2 cup blueberries OR chopped prunes
- 1/4 cup walnuts



### Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C and grease a 12-cup muffin tin or 2 x 12 mini muffin tin. Sift together flour, oats, bicarbonate of soda and cinnamon in a large bowl.
2. In a separate bowl, mash banana with honey. Add eggs and olive oil, mixing together until combined.
3. Create a well in the centre of dry ingredients and pour in banana mixture. Mix well.
4. Stir in carrots, blueberries (or prunes) and walnuts. If mixture is too dry, add 1 tsp of hot water.
5. Spoon batter into muffin tin and bake for approximately 15 minutes (or until cooked).

### Notes

Recipe by Rebecca McPhee, Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD).

### Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	735/175
Protein (g)	3.3
Fat – total (g)	8
Saturated Fat (g)	1.2
Carbohydrate – total (g)	19
Sugar (g)	8.6
Dietary fibre (g)	3
Sodium (mg)	198
Potassium (mg)	189



# Sweet Potato & Rainbow Veggie Frittata



**SERVES: 6** **TIME: 75 minutes**

### Ingredients

- 1 sweet potato large (approx 600g) peeled, halved lengthwise and cut into 1cm-thick slices
- 1 red capsicum (pepper) large, deseeded, cut into 1.5cm pieces
- 2 zucchini sliced into 1cm thick rounds
- sea salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 red (Spanish) onion thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 cups baby spinach leaves
- 12 eggs
- 90 ml milk
- 85 g Danish feta and extra for serving
- 1/3 cup fresh basil extra for serving

### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/ 180°C fan force and line a large baking tray.
2. Toss sweet potato, capsicum and zucchini in 1 tbsp of the olive oil, season with salt and pepper. Bake for 20-25 mins or until vegetables are tender.
3. Meanwhile, caramelise the onions – heat the remaining 1 tbsp of olive oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring often, for 5-6 minutes or until onions are turning translucent. Add a good pinch of salt and pepper. Stir and continue to cook for another 5-6 minutes, until onions are brown (be careful not to burn them!) Add vinegar and cook for a further 3-5 minutes until vinegar has soaked into the onions. In the final minute, add the baby spinach and cook until just wilted. Remove from heat and set aside.
4. Whisk together the eggs and milk in a large bowl. Stir in the basil and 3/4 of the feta. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Lightly grease and line a 22.5cm square baking pan/cake tin with baking paper, allowing paper to overhang by about 5cm on each side. Add half of the roast vegetables and the caramelised onion mixture in an even layer over the base of the tin, then pour over the egg mixture. Arrange the remaining roast vegetables on top and sprinkle with remaining feta.
6. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until centre is just set. Using the paper overhang, lift the frittata out of the pan and allow to cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes.
7. To serve, sprinkle with extra crumbled feta and fresh basil leaves.

### Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1298/125
Protein (g)	17.1
Fat (g)	16.9
Saturated fat (g)	4.4
Carbohydrate (g)	17
Sugar (g)	12
Dietary fibre (g)	5
Sodium (mg)	350
Potassium (mg)	774





# Tzatziki



SERVES: 8 TIME: 10 minutes

### Ingredients

- 2 cups low fat Greek yoghurt
- 1 cucumber
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 tbsp fresh mint finely chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh dill finely chopped
- 2 tsp lemon juice freshly squeezed
- sea salt and ground black pepper



### Method

1. Rinse and trim the ends of the cucumber. Cut the cucumber in half lengthways and use a teaspoon to scoop out the seeds. Using a grater, grate the cucumber in a large bowl.
2. Next, place the grated cucumber in a metal strainer and add a sprinkling of salt. Use the back of a spoon or your fist to squeeze out the excess liquid. Discard the liquid.
3. Place strained cucumber in another bowl. Add all other ingredients and mix to combine. Garnish with a few dill or mint sprigs.
4. Serve with veggie sticks or wholegrain crackers.

### Notes

Makes 2 cups (8 serves) ¼ cup = 1 serve.

Recipe courtesy of Rebecca McPhee, Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD).

### Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	517/123
Protein (g)	7.1
Fat – total (g)	2.2
Saturated Fat (g)	1.2
Carbohydrate – total (g)	13.3
Sugar (g)	10
Dietary fibre (g)	5
Sodium (mg)	114
Potassium (mg)	195

# Banana Bread



SERVES: 10 TIME: 70 minutes

### Ingredients

- 1 cup wholemeal plain flour
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 cup rolled oats
- ½ cup almond meal
- 3 bananas large, ripe, mashed
- ⅓ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ⅓ cup low GI honey
- 2 eggs lightly beaten
- ¼ cup milk of your choice
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- ½ cup reduced fat greek yoghurt



### Method

1. Preheat oven to 175°C.
2. Line a loaf tin with baking paper. Lightly grease over the top with a pastry brush and olive oil.
3. Dry ingredients: In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together the wholemeal flour, almond meal, oats, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt.
4. Wet ingredients: in a large, separate bowl, mash the banana. Using a whisk, whisk in honey, olive oil, milk, yoghurt, vanilla and eggs.
5. Add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture. Using a spatula, gently stir the mixture until thoroughly combined. Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan and spread evenly. Sprinkle the batter with cinnamon or extra oats.
6. Bake for approximately 30 minutes then loosely cover with foil (covering with foil will prevent the loaf from over-browning). Bake for a further 30 minutes or until cooked in the middle (use a skewer to test the middle of the bread. If the skewer comes out clean then its cooked).

### Notes

Makes 1 loaf (10 slices).

Recipe courtesy of Rebecca McPhee, Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD).

### Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1088/259
Protein (g)	6.5
Fat – total (g)	11.6
Saturated Fat (g)	1.8
Carbohydrate – total (g)	29
Sugar (g)	14.6
Dietary Fibre (g)	4
Sodium (mg)	230
Potassium (mg)	287





# Low GI Cottage Pie



 **SERVES: 6**  **TIME: 80 minutes**

## Ingredients

- 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil
- 100g lean middle bacon chopped
- 1 brown onion finely diced
- 1 carrot peeled and finely chopped
- 1 celery stalk, trimmed and finely chopped
- 2 clove garlic large cloves, crushed
- 500g lean beef mince
- 1 tbsp tomato paste no added salt
- 1 cup red wine 250ml
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme finely chopped
- ground black pepper
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 tbsp plain flour
- 250 ml beef stock reduced salt
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 kg lower GI potatoes peeled and halved
- 1/3 cup reduced fat milk
- 1/2 cup reduced fat tasty cheese grated

## Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C.
2. Heat olive oil in a large, non-stick casserole dish. Add bacon and cook until golden and crispy.
3. Add onion, carrot, celery and garlic and cook for a few minutes until soft.
4. Add beef mince, breaking up with a spoon and cook for several minutes until browned.
5. Add tomato paste, red wine, thyme, black pepper and peas. Bring to the boil. Reduce heat and simmer for several minutes until the liquid has slightly reduced.
6. Add the flour, beef stock and bay leaf. Simmer for approximately 10 minutes or until liquid thickens slightly. Turn off heat and set aside, covered.
7. For the potatoes – boil in a large saucepan until soft. Drain and return to the sauce pan. Add milk and mash until smooth and lump free.
8. In an oven-proof baking dish, add meat mixture and spread evenly. Top with mashed potato and spread evenly over the meat mixture. Top with grated cheese.
9. Place in a pre-heated oven and cook for approximately 30 minutes or until the top is a golden colour.

## Notes

Recipe courtesy of Rebecca McPhee, Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD).

## Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	1491/355
Protein (g)	36
Fat – total (g)	14.7
Saturated Fat (g)	6
Carbohydrate – total (g)	22
Sugar (g)	6.6
Dietary fibre (g)	6.7
Sodium (mg)	589
Potassium (mg)	1295



# High Protein Granola



**SERVES: 8** **TIME: 65 minutes**

## Ingredients

- 2 cups rolled oats
- 1 ½ cups almonds raw
- ¾ cup pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp orange zest
- 1 tsp vanilla extract or vanilla essence
- 3 tbsp low GI honey or pure maple syrup, warmed



## Method

1. Preheat a fan-forced oven to 120°C (250°F).
2. Combine oats, almonds, pumpkin seeds, cinnamon and orange zest in a large bowl.
3. Pour warmed honey or maple syrup and vanilla into the dry ingredients and mix through until oats and nuts are well coated.
4. Line 2 large baking trays with baking paper.
5. Divide the granola onto the trays and evenly spread the mixture out into one layer. Keep the granola well-spaced so it keeps it crunchy and less likely to become soggy.
6. Place the trays in preheated, oven and bake for oven for approximately 50 minutes or until golden brown. Continue to check muesli and give it mix now and then to prevent burning.
7. Once baked, cool muesli on trays. Store in an airtight container.
8. Serve ½ cup with milk of your choice or Greek yoghurt. Add ½ cup raspberries or blueberries or other fruit for some natural sweetness.

## Notes

Recipe courtesy of Rebecca McPhee, Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD).

## Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	373/220
Protein (g)	17.3
Fat – total (g)	15.7
Saturated Fat (g)	3.2
Carbohydrate – total (g)	35
Sugar (g)	25
Dietary fibre (g)	9.8
Sodium (mg)	148
Potassium (mg)	649

# Braised Zucchini Cacciatore



**SERVES: 4** **TIME: 45 minutes**

## Ingredients

- 6 zucchini medium
- 5 tbsp olive oil
- 1 brown onion small, finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic finely diced
- 1 pinch dried chilli flakes optional
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- ½ cup white wine
- 800 g cherry tomatoes (2 x 400g cans)
- ⅓ cup pitted kalamata olives
- 400g butter beans (1 can) drained, rinsed well
- 1 handful fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 handful fresh basil
- 1 cup natural yoghurt to serve



## Method

1. Cut the zucchini in half lengthways, then cut each half in half again on an angle to give you shorter pieces. Season the cut zucchini with salt and pepper.
2. Place a large saucepan over a medium/high heat and add the olive oil, zucchini, and a good pinch of salt. Cook the zucchini on their cut sides to colour, then remove and add the remaining oil, onion, garlic, chili, a good pinch of salt and cook over a medium heat for 5 minutes to soften.
3. Next add the tomato paste and cook for another 1 minute then add the white wine, cooking for 1 minute longer before adding the cherry tomatoes and 1 cup of water. Bring to a simmer then stir through the zucchini, cover and simmer for approx. 12 minutes. You want the zucchini soft but not falling apart.
4. Adjust the seasoning, stir through the olives and butter beans, parsley and cook for 1 more minute.
5. Serve the Cacciatore with natural yoghurt spooned over.

## Notes

Recipe courtesy of Tom Walton.

## Nutrition info

	per serve
Energy (kJ/Cal)	2117/504
Protein (g)	19.1
Fat – total (g)	27.7
Saturated Fat (g)	4
Carbohydrate – total (g)	34.7
Sugar (g)	16.4
Dietary fibre (g)	22
Sodium (mg)	525
Potassium (mg)	1491



# Part D

The following links provide more specific information for the different life stages:

## PCOS

[Polycystic ovary syndrome \(PCOS\) | Jean Hailes](#)

## Pregnancy

[n55h\\_healthy\\_eating\\_during\\_pregnancy.pdf \(eatforhealth.gov.au\)](#)

## GDM

[booklet-gestational-diabetes-caring-for-yourself-and-baby.pdf \(ndss.com.au\)](#)

## Post Partum Depression

[www.panda.org.au](#)

[www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](#)

## Menopause

[AMS Home - Australasian Menopause Society](#)

[Menopause | Jean Hailes](#)

## Heart Disease

[Home | The Heart Foundation](#)

## Diabetes

[GIF\\_DiabetesGuide\\_eBook.pdf - Google Drive](#)

[Unite in the fight for change | Diabetes Australia](#)

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# The Glycemic Index Foundation



For more than two decades the Glycemic Index Foundation has helped people lead healthier lives by making a low GI lifestyle easy.

The Glycemic Index Foundation is an Australian not-for-profit health promotion charity and with support from The University of Sydney and Diabetes NSW & ACT, is the world authority on the glycemic index and its health benefits.

