# rl_chillidressingNutrition

http://www.formulaforlife.com.au/images/spacer.gifAustralia offers a vast array of choices when it comes to nutritionally rich, healthy foods. Unfortunately like most western countries, we also offer an abundance of "quick fix" impulse foods that are largely nutritionally poor and high in undesirable fats, salts and sugars. To help Australians choose foods that supply adequate nutrition, an invaluable scientific food guide for good health has been developed - the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGHE) . It recommends levels of dietary intake from the different food groups.

The basis of this food guide is that for a healthy diet, a variety of foods are needed daily. No one food, by itself, supplies all the essential nutrients. The food guide lists the number of serves of foods from each group that should be eaten each day for health as they supply our bodies with necessary and balanced amounts of energy, vitamins and minerals, protein, fat, carbohydrate and dietary fibre.

Each day, select a wide variety of foods from within these food groups, in their recommended proportions.

As a basic guideline, we should eat from these groups as follows:

* Eat plant foods in abundance - vegetables, legumes, fruit, bread, cereal, rice, pasta, and noodles.
* Eat animal foods in moderation - milk, yoghurt, cheese, meat, fish, poultry, and eggs.
* Drink lots of water every day.

Following is a more detailed explanation of these groups and how they contribute to a healthy diet, as well as more specific recommendations for a daily number of servings.

## Recommended Dietary Intake (RDI)

http://www.formulaforlife.com.au/images/spacer.gifRecommended Dietary Intake refers to the amount of specific nutrients required in one day for good health.

This amount is set out in guides developed by Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. RDI tables are available from government bookshops. The amount your body needs to maintain a healthy weight, varies according to our age, sex, body size, amount of physical activity and whether you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

The RDIs do not help you understand what foods to eat to obtain specific nutrients. SO to help Australians meet these RDIs, the Commonwealth of Australia published The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, which suggests how much food and what variety of foods to eat each day, according to your age and stage of life.  
Formula For Life has merged this information with other leading health recommendations to create Recommended Intakes (RI) for foods and nutrients.

Recommended Intakes are important to ensure we eat enough of certain foods to keep us healthy. In some cases, too much of one type of food can cause an imbalance in our bodies which may lead to health problems. Recommended Intakes help you plan a measured and varied diet taking in the 5 food groups.

## Vital nutrients

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Within the five main food groups you'll find all the nutrients your body needs to stay healthy. So which nutrients are most important? Following are the five key nutrient groups needed to maintain your body's health:

* Carbohydrates
* Dietary Fibre
* Protein
* Fats
* Vitamins and minerals

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## Kilojoules and calories

http://www.formulaforlife.com.au/images/spacer.gifKilojoules and calories both define the energy value of food. Calorie is still used in the USA to define energy, but Australia now uses kilojoule and you'll find this term shortened to kJ on food labels. The measurement of 'calories' signifies the amount of chemical energy that may be released as heat when food is metabolised. One calorie is equivalent to 4.2 kilojoules.

The balance between our energy intake versus the energy we expend is the main reason for weight loss or weight gain. Too many kJ eaten spells too much body fat on you. Too few kilojoules causes body fat loss.

Approximately two-thirds of your daily kJ needs are needed to just run your body as though you were asleep - to keep the blood pumping, your heart beating, your brain and nerves firing, your lungs breathing, and for the repair and maintenance of all your body's cells. This is called the "basal metabolic rate".

Those who exercise, or have a job requiring physical energy, have a higher basal metabolic rate and thus burn more kilojoules. For example a sedentary office worker may use about 9000kj per day, a manual worker lifting materials may burn approximately 12500kj per day, and a labourer or elite athlete may use up to 17000kj per day.

## Vitamins

http://www.formulaforlife.com.au/images/spacer.gifThere are ten essential vitamins which can be divided into two groups - Water soluble (the B group vitamins and Vitamin C) and the fat-soluble vitamins (A,D and E).

## Minerals

http://www.formulaforlife.com.au/images/spacer.gifMinerals are the inorganic chemical elements in the diet and body. Some minerals in our diet form our bones and teeth. The human body needs at least 20 different minerals to function properly. Some are required in large amounts, such as calcium, which makes the hard part of teeth and bones; iron, which produces haemoglobin, a component of blood that carries oxygen around the body; potassium and sodium.

Other minerals needed in smaller, or trace, amounts include magnesium, zinc, manganese, selenium, iodine, sodium, copper and chromium. These help the production of enzymes (which speed up chemical reactions in the body) and hormones (substances that control the functioning of different organs).

While most of us focus on our vitamin intake, mineral deficiencies do occur with calcium, iron and zinc being the most common. The correct diet, however, can easily restore the balance of these minerals.