



Results from the Western Australian Child and Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (CAPANS) 2003

Are Children Eating the Right Amount of Food?

In 2003, the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce, Healthway and the Department of Health commissioned the University of Notre Dame Australia to undertake a Statewide school-based survey to collect baseline data on child and adolescent physical activity behaviours, eating patterns and physiques.

This fact sheet describes the food intake of Western Australian children in 2003, and compares the intake of foods from Core Food Groups with recommended amounts.

SURVEY SAMPLE

A 24-hour dietary record was completed by 1,494 students aged 8–15 years. Of the sample, 49.5% (n = 739) were male and 50.5% (n = 755) were female.

THE FOOD GROUPS

- The **Core Food Groups** are cereals; fruit; vegetables; meat and alternatives including poultry, fish, eggs, legumes and nuts; milk and milk products.
- **Non-Core foods** are not essential to provide the nutrients that the body needs and some contain too much fat, sugar, salt and energy.

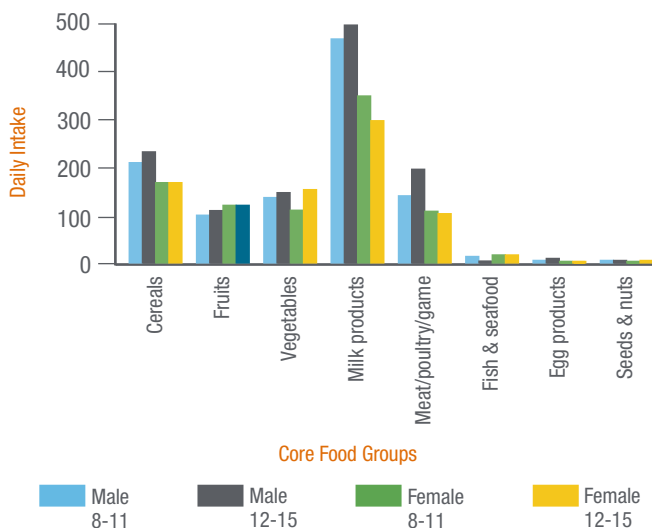
QUANTITY OF FOOD INTAKE

On average, most of the food consumed (excluding non-alcoholic beverages) was derived from Core Food Groups.

Mean daily food intake (average grams per person) was highest for:

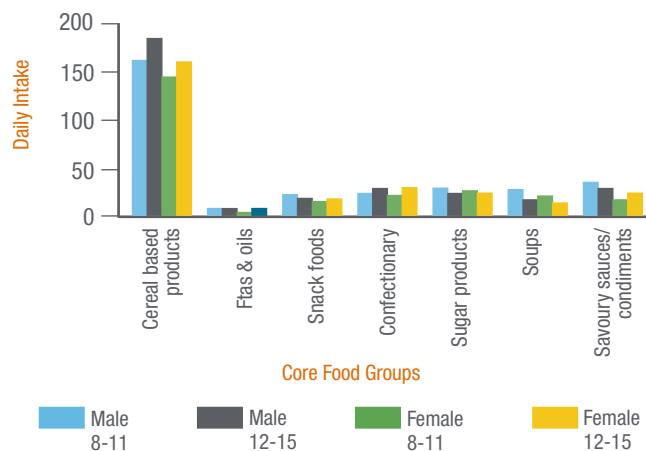
- fluid-based groups - milk and milk products and non-alcoholic beverages;
- cereal and cereal products; and
- meat, game and poultry.

Figure 1. Mean daily intake of core food groups



Of the non-core groups, significant amounts of cereal-based products (e.g. cakes, biscuits, pizza and pastries) were consumed.

Figure 2. Mean daily intake of non-core food groups



Gender Differences

For most food groups, males consumed a larger mean quantity of foods and beverages compared with females.

Females consumed a larger mean quantity of:

- fruit products and dishes;
- fish and seafood products and dishes; and
- vegetable products and dishes (at age 12–15 years only).

Mean daily intake (mean weight) of food and beverages consumed:

- was highest in males aged 12–15 years;
- was lowest in females aged 8–11 years; and
- increased with age for both males and females.

MINIMUM RECOMMENDED INTAKE

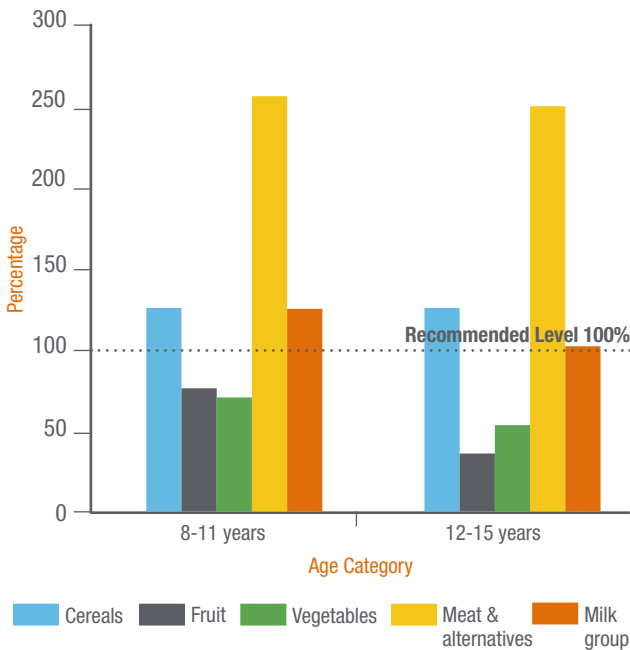
Mean daily intakes of foods from Core Food Groups were compared with recommended intakes of Core Food Groups for children (8–11 years) and adolescents (12–15 years).

Males

- Fruit and vegetable intake fell short of minimum recommended amounts, particularly at age 12–15 years where intake was only half the minimum amount recommended.
- Mean intake of meat and alternatives including poultry was more than double the minimum recommended intake.
- Mean intake of cereals was greater than the minimum recommended.
- Mean intake of milk and milk products reduced from age 8–11 to age 12–15 years.



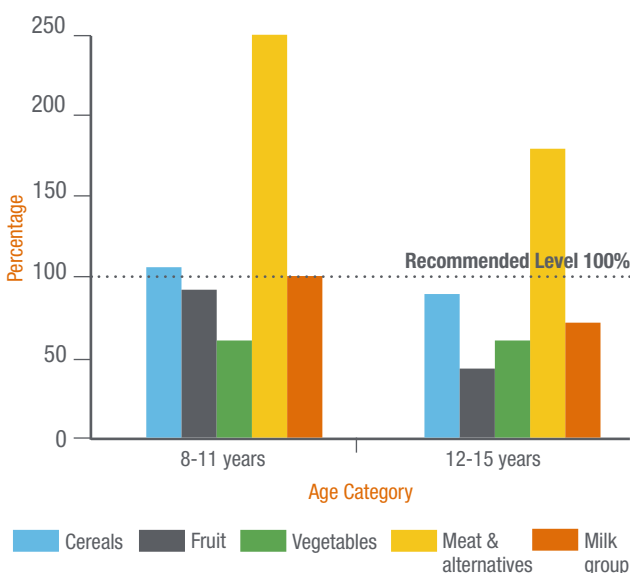
Figure 3. Proportion of recommended amounts of core food groups consumed by males



Females

- Vegetable intake fell short of minimum recommended amounts, particularly at age 12–15 years.
- Fruit intake fell from just below recommended level at age 8–11, to below half the minimum recommendation at age 12–15 years.
- Milk and milk products intake fell from the recommended level at age 8–11, to approximately two thirds of the minimum recommended intake at age 12–15 years.
- Mean intake of meat and alternatives including poultry were greater than the minimum recommended, particularly at age 8–11 years where the intake was more than double the minimum amount recommended.

Figure 4. Proportion of recommended amounts of core food groups consumed by females



NUTRITION RECOMMENDATIONS

The NHMRC Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia¹ recommend that children and adolescents should enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods and drink plenty of water. Recommended daily food servings vary with body size and physical activity level but most children should aim for the following serves:

Children and Teenagers	CEREALS (Including Breads, Rice, Pasta and Noodles)	VEGETABLES, LEGUMES	FRUIT	MILK, YOGHURT, CHEESE	LEAN MEAT, FISH, POULTRY, NUTS AND LEGUMES	EXTRA FOODS (Have no more than)
4–7 yrs	5–7	2	1	2	½	1-2
8–11 yrs	6–9	3	1	2	1	1-2
12–18 yrs	5–11	3	3	3	1	1-3

For more information on dietary recommendations visit: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/_files/n30.pdf

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Other key findings and recommendations, including levels of physical activity in children, can be found in the CAPANS report² at www.beactive.wa.gov.au or by contacting the Physical Activity Taskforce Secretariat on 9382 5980.

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Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce
Department of Health



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1. National Health and Medical Research Council. (2003). *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia incorporating the Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers*. Canberra Department of Health and Ageing.
2. Hands, B., Parker, H., Glasson, C., Brinkman, S. & Read, H. (2004). *Physical Activity and Nutrition Levels in Western Australian Children and Adolescents: Report*. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government.