

Choose a balanced meal

What does it mean?

With so many mixed messages concerning nutrition and health, it can be tricky to work out just what makes a 'balanced meal'. The good news is there is a simple formula you can use for good nutrition at lunch and dinner time.



What should my plate look like?

Your plate should be $\frac{1}{2}$ vegetables and salad (three serves), $\frac{1}{4}$ protein and $\frac{1}{4}$ carbohydrates. Some meals will not fit neatly into the plate model. However, the $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{4}$ principle still applies to the ingredients you add to your meal.

Is it the same for all the family?

We need different amounts of food depending on our body size and activity level. Children need child-sized meals. Teenagers tend to be active and are growing, needing more food and snacks. Adults need to manage their portions in response to their energy needs.

Vegetables & salad

$\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate = 3 serves

A serve is half a cup of cooked non-starchy vegetables or a large handful of salad. Different coloured veges contain different nutrients, so aim for a rainbow of different colours.

Protein

$\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate

This includes chicken, beef, eggs, fish, beans, lentils and tofu. Aim for the size and thickness of your palm.

Carbohydrates

$\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate

Choose around 1 cup of cooked pasta, rice, potato, kumara, taro, corn or two slices of bread – preferably wholegrain. Aim for the size of your closed fist.