

# What's changed

In November 2020, the Ministry of Health published updated *Eating and Activity Guidelines for New Zealand Adults* (Ministry of Health 2020). This resource describes key changes from the old to the new edition of the Guidelines.

The updated Guidelines replace the *Eating and Activity Guidelines for New Zealand Adults* (Ministry of Health 2015).



## **The Guidelines have been updated to include up-to-date recommendations for pregnant and breastfeeding women**

The updated Guidelines provide evidence-based recommendations on healthy eating and physical activity for all New Zealand adults, including recommendations and information for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

The nutrition advice for pregnant and breastfeeding women has been reviewed and updated from the previous 2006 (and partially updated in 2008) *Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Healthy Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women: A background paper*. For the first time, we have provided recommendations for being safely and comfortably physically active during pregnancy.

In 2019, the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) contracted the University of Auckland to review and update the Ministry's nutrition guidelines for pregnant and breastfeeding women, and infants and toddlers. A Technical Advisory Group made up of experts in maternal, infant and toddler nutrition was established to review the available scientific evidence and provide input into the development of updated recommendations. The physical activity recommendations for activity during pregnancy are based on the *2019 Canadian guideline for physical activity throughout pregnancy* (Mottola et al 2018).

The updated recommendations for pregnant and breastfeeding women have been incorporated into the *Eating and Activity Guidelines for Adult New Zealanders* as the general adult recommendations are mostly relevant for pregnant and breastfeeding women. Information specific to pregnant and breastfeeding women appears within each Statement and identifies information that may be different or is additional to the recommendations for adults.

## **The Eating and Activity Statements for adults were not part of the review**

The general Statements for adults remain the same as in the first edition of the Guidelines (Ministry of Health 2015). However, the sections about 'what New Zealand adults are doing' have been updated using more recent data, primarily from the 2018/19 New Zealand Health Survey (Ministry of Health 2020).

## **Serving size advice for adults has been updated**

It is also significant to note a change in the tools used to describe what a healthy eating pattern looks like. Specifically, we have adopted the evidence-based Australian serve size advice.



For more information, refer to the 'New serving size advice' infosheet available on the Ministry of Health website.

## General changes

### **The document has a new design**

The document has been redesigned to have a new look and feel.

### **Acknowledgement that a range of factors determine food and activity choices**

The updated Guidelines acknowledge the wider determinants that influence people's food and physical activity choices, and ultimately their health. The Guidelines refer to pae ora, the Government's vision for Māori health. Pae ora is a holistic view of health that sees the elements of mauri ora (healthy individuals), whānau ora (healthy families) and wai ora (healthy environments) as interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The Guidelines encourage practitioners to consider the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of New Zealanders when communicating the advice in the Guidelines.

### **Healthy sustainable diets**

For the first time, the Guidelines include commentary on the similarities between the Eating and Activity Statements and the principles of sustainable eating as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization (FAO and WHO 2019). This also reflects how important wai ora (healthy environments) are to our overall health and wellbeing.

### **There is a new breastfeeding statement**

Even though breastfeeding is the ideal and optimal way to feed a baby, less than sixty percent of New Zealand infants are exclusively breastfed at three months of age. This is an issue of equity as Māori and Pacific have lower rates of breastfeeding compared to non-Māori and non-Pacific women.

The breastfeeding statement acknowledges that women are more likely to breastfeed and to breastfeed for longer when they are supported by the people around them and the wider community to do so. We all need to do our part to create an environment that supports women to breastfeed and provide timely and culturally appropriate breastfeeding support to women who need it. Improving breastfeeding rates in Aotearoa/New Zealand will directly contribute to achieving equity for Māori.



## References

FAO and WHO. 2019. *Sustainable Healthy Diets – Guiding Principles*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Health Organization.

Ministry of Health. 2006 (revised 2008). *Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Healthy Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women: A background paper*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

Ministry of Health. 2015. *Eating and Activity Guidelines for Adults*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

Ministry of Health. 2020. Biochemical Data Explorer 2014/15: New Zealand Health Survey [Data File]. URL: <https://minhealthnz.shinyapps.io/nz-health-survey-2014-15-biomedical>

Mottola MF, Davenport MH, Ruchat S, et al. 2018. 2019 Canadian guideline for physical activity throughout pregnancy. *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 52: 1339–46.