Food Trends

If you are looking to making changes to what you eat, it can be tempting to follow a diet that gives you hard and fast rules. It is important to remember that in nutrition, variety and balance are key.

The [Australian Dietary Guidelines](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/) recommend you eat the right amount of food and drinks to meet your energy needs. Choose a variety of foods from the five food groups and keep active.

Food trends are not consistent with the Dietary Guidelines. In this fact sheet we give you an overview of what food trends are and the risks.

**What are food trends?**

Food trends are patterns of eating that involve a level of restriction. They are not based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Food trends might be:

* A specific food or drink in large quantities to ‘detox’ your body. For example, ‘detox tea’ or ‘juice cleanse’.
* Only eating at certain times of day, other than for religious reasons. For example, fasting diets.
* Not having a certain type of food or nutrient without a medical or ethical reason. For example, gluten free or lactose free diets.
* Being rigid and restrictive with your diet. For example, ‘clean eating’ where you only eat unprocessed foods.

# What are the risks?

Food trends are generally not based on the best available scientific evidence. They may cause damage to your physical and mental health. Restricting when and what you eat can contribute to disordered ideas about food and body image. It also makes it harder for you to eat all the nutrients your body needs to function.

These diets are not supported by Accredited Practicing Dietitians. Such diets are often used as a marketing tactic promoted online or in magazines.

## Having one specific food or drink to ‘detox’ your body

Our lungs, kidneys, liver, intestines and immune system take away most toxic substances within hours. There is no need to follow a special diet to ‘detox’.

People who drink detox teas can become sick. There is a risk of becoming malnourished and dehydrated, particularly if laxatives are used. ‘Cleaning out’ the intestines can get rid of good bacteria you need to keep regular and healthy.

## Only eating at certain times of the day

Fasting when you are in school will reduce your concentration. This can impact on your learning. It is a lot harder to get the nutrients you need when you are eating within a shorter time frame. You may have less energy to be active and do all the things you normally do. If you don’t have enough energy, protein and micronutrients you might get run down and be sick more often. It can also affect your growth. Girls might also have delayed or irregular periods.

## Leaving out a type of food or nutrient

The five food groups in the Australian Dietary Guidelines are grouped by nutrient. This means if you cut out a food group, you will miss out on essential nutrients.

There are some people who need to avoid certain foods for medical reasons. For example, people with coeliac disease will become very ill if they eat foods that have gluten. Some people have tummy issues if they eat too much lactose. We call this lactose intolerance.

If you do not have a medical reason to avoid certain types of foods, there is no benefit. It means you are less likely to get all the nutrients you need from your diet. If there is a medical reason for you to avoid or remove particular foods from your diet, talk to your GP or an Accredited Practicing Dietitian (APD). You should also speak with your GP or an APD if you choose not to eat some foods for ethical reasons. For example, vegetarian or vegan diet.

## Having a rigid and restrictive diet

The main concern with this type of diet is that it labels food as ‘good’ or ‘bad’. People can become obsessed with what they allow themselves to eat. Some people can even punish themselves for eating food that they think is ‘too processed’. Controlling and limiting food to only ‘clean foods’ can crete stress. This stress can outweigh benefits from eating less processed food.

Fresh vegetables and fruit are not always available or affordable. Tinned and frozen varieties offer another way to include them in your diet. This might mean eating some additives needed to keep tinned food from going off.

# For more information:

[Dietitians Australia](https://daa.asn.au/smart-eating-for-you/smart-eating-fast-facts/healthy-eating/im-tired-all-the-time-should-i-try-a-detox-diet/)