



# When you shop, reach for the stars

## Fact sheet for food shoppers

Finding healthier food when we are shopping can be time consuming. The Health Star Rating can help.

### What is the Health Star Rating?

The Health Star Rating lets you compare similar foods to see which ones are better for you. Those that have more stars on the front are healthier. It's an easy way to compare say, two types of yoghurt (but not a yoghurt and a breakfast cereal).

The Health Star Rating was recently updated so that food with higher amounts of salt and sugar get lower ratings, and fruit and vegetables (including some tinned and frozen produce) automatically score five stars, the highest rating.

### Where did the Health Star Rating system come from?

The Health Star Rating is a joint Australian, state and territory governments initiative. It was developed in collaboration with public health experts and industry and consumer groups in 2014.

The system is voluntary. Food manufacturers can choose whether to display a rating on their products. If your favourite brand of packaged food does not have a rating, you can contact the company to encourage them to use health stars.

### How are food products rated?

The system uses a strict calculation to determine the rating for each food product based on its ingredients.

Stars are added for fruit and vegetables, calcium, and protein content. Stars are taken away for salt, saturated fat and sugar content. Generally, a product with 3½ or more stars is considered healthier. Foods rated lower than two stars should be considered an occasional treat.

### Ratings are based on:

**Total energy** (measured in kilojoules) – the amount of energy a person gets from consuming a food or drink.

**Saturated fat, sodium (salt) and sugar content** – eating too much of these increases our risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, obesity and some forms of cancer.

**Fibre, protein, fruit, vegetable, nut and legume content** – eating more of these is good for your health.



## Using the Health Star Rating to support a more balanced diet

The Australian Dietary Guidelines recommend eating more fruit, vegetables and grains – like those found in cereal and wholemeal bread.

You can use the Health Star Rating to make healthier choices and ensure you eat a variety of food from the five food groups everyday including:

- **vegetables and legumes/beans**
- **fruit**
- **grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties**
- **lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans**
- **milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat.**

It's important to remember that you don't need to change your whole diet – simply choosing a higher star rating product when buying packaged foods and including fresh fruit and vegetables in your basket can make a big difference.

## Shopping tips

- **Aim for a variety of healthy foods on your shopping list.**
- **Look for the Health Star Rating on the front of packaged food products.**
- **Use the Health Star Rating to compare similar types of food products.**
- **Make one positive change to your shopping basket or ingredients for a meal.**
- **Use the nutrient information icons to choose products lower in saturated fat, sugars and sodium (salt).**
- **Some products will show a 'positive' nutrient icon as well. You can use this information to choose products high in these nutrients, if they are important to you.**



## More information about healthy eating

The Australian Dietary Guidelines provide information for people of different ages, life stages and gender, on the recommended daily amounts from each of the five food groups. Visit [eatforhealth.gov.au](http://eatforhealth.gov.au)

For more information visit [healthstarrating.gov.au](http://healthstarrating.gov.au)



### The Health Star Rating

A joint Australian, state and territory governments initiative in partnership with industry, public health and consumer groups.