



How Dietary Patterns Are Leading the Way Forward in Nutrition

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It is an exciting time for food and nutrition in Australia. The Australia Dietary Guidelines, last updated in 2013, are currently undergoing review [1] and will be launched in 2024. In addition, the National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030, launched in December 2021, sets ambitious targets for Australian diets, including increased fruit and vegetable consumption and reduced salt intake. The Heart Foundation has played an important role in recent years in leading a paradigm shift in the way we think about food and nutrition. Rather than focussing on individual 'good' or 'bad' nutrients, the Heart Foundation has switched its focus to overall dietary patterns in developing recommendations for a healthy heart.

The Heart Foundation's dietary patterns messaging was developed following an evidence review on dietary patterns and the primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease [2]. Evidence from systematic reviews shows several different eating patterns are linked to better outcomes (for example, the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension 'DASH' diet and Mediterranean diet). These both centre around the consumption of mostly plant-based foods, with moderate amounts of animal products, fats such as olive oil and nuts, and a low intake of highly processed foods.

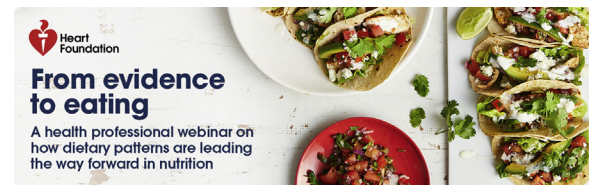
The five key components of a heart-healthy eating pattern include:

- 1) Plenty of fruit, vegetables and wholegrains
- 2) Healthy proteins especially fish, seafood, legumes, nuts and seeds with smaller amounts of eggs and lean poultry
- 3) Unflavoured milk, yoghurt and cheese
- 4) Healthy fats including nuts, seeds, avocados, olives and their oils for cooking
- 5) Herbs and spices to flavour foods, instead of adding salt.

The Heart Foundation encourages people to prepare heart-healthy meals at home. We have developed recipes and dinner plans to inspire consumers to adopt heart-healthy eating patterns as part of their everyday lives.

In October 2021, the Heart Foundation held a webinar which considered how dietary patterns are leading the way forward in nutrition. The webinar attracted over 700 health professional registrations, indicating a thirst for knowledge on this topic. Professor Sarah McNaughton, Deputy Director of the Institute for Physical

Activity and Nutrition (IPAN) at Deakin University spoke about how nutrition science has evolved, from a nutrient focus to address deficiency diseases to now focussing on dietary patterns to prevent and manage chronic diseases. Dietitian Sian Armstrong spoke about the Heart Foundation's rigorous evidence development process and the latest advice following the 2019 evidence reviews on meat, dairy, eggs and cardiovascular health.



The American Heart Association has also recently adopted a dietary patterns approach to its updated Dietary Guidance to Improve Cardiovascular Health [3]. It is evident that dietary patterns messaging continues to become more prominent globally.

We know that health outcomes are influenced by much more than a single food or nutrient. Dietary patterns advice gives consumers the flexibility to enjoy whole foods in a way that can be tailored to their personal preferences, budget, lifestyle and cultural traditions.

To view the Heart Foundation webinar on dietary patterns, visit: <https://youtu.be/T0PDvOr4Aso>

For our range of heart-healthy recipes, visit: <https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/search/recipe-categories>

References

- [1] National Health and Medical Research Council. Review of the 2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines. <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/nutrition/australian-dietary-guidelines-review/about-the-review>. [accessed 3.12.21].
- [2] Collins C, Burrows T, Rollo M. Dietary patterns and cardiovascular disease outcomes: an evidence check rapid review brokered by the Sax Institute for the National Heart Foundation of Australia. <https://www.saxinstitute.org.au/publications/evidence-check-library/dietary-patterns-cardiovascular-disease-outcomes/>; 2017.
- [3] Lichtenstein AH, Appel LJ, Vadiveloo M, Hu FB, Kris-Etherton P, Rebholz CM, et al. 2021 Dietary guidance to improve cardiovascular health: a scientific statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2021;144:e472-87. <https://doi.org/10.1161/CIR.0000000000001031>.