# Fun Food Facts about the Five Food Groups

## Teacher Information

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| **Vegetables and legumes** | • Most Australians eat only about half the recommended quantity of vegetables per day.  
• Vegetables are nutrient dense, low in energy (kilojoules) and a good source of dietary fibre and minerals and vitamins (such as magnesium, vitamin C and folate).  
• Legumes are the seeds or pods from any bean, pea or lentil.  
• Legumes are a good source of carbohydrate, fibre, plant protein, B-complex vitamins, iron, potassium, and other minerals.  
• Slow release of carbohydrates and energy from legumes helps regulate blood glucose levels. |
| **Fruits** | • Most Australians eat only about half the recommended quantity of fruit, but drink far too much fruit juice (½ cup per day is enough).  
• Consuming fruit instead of juice provides more fibre and less energy (kilojoules) and leaves you feeling fuller longer.  
• The vitamins, minerals and fibre in fruit help to lower blood pressure and blood cholesterol.  
• People who eat enough fruit are less likely to suffer heart disease or stroke.  
• Fruit helps keep gums and skin healthy. |
| **Grain foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high fibre varieties** | • Most Australians eat less than half the recommended quantity of wholegrain foods, and too much refined grain (cereal) food.  
• The nutrients provided by whole grains include carbohydrates, protein, fibre and a wide range of vitamins and minerals.  
• Whole grains are very low in fat but contain beneficial polyunsaturated fatty acids and fat soluble vitamin E.  
• Whole grains help keep the digestive system healthy and help prevent constipation and bowel cancer.  
• Whole grains help to lower blood cholesterol and glucose levels and reduce risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes. |
| **Lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds** | • The foods from this food group are ‘protein rich’ and most Australians have no trouble eating enough each day.  
• Variety of choices from this group is important to gain nutritional benefits and reduce health risks.  
• Lean red meat is an excellent source of protein, iron, zinc and vitamin B12 but adults need no more than 100-120g per day.  
• Foods in this group are an important source of minerals including iron, zinc and iodine, B group vitamins (B12 only from animals), and essential fatty acids.  
• The iron and zinc in animal foods is more easily absorbed by the body than in plant foods such as nuts, seeds and legumes/beans.  
• Vitamin C found in fruit and vegetables helps absorption of iron from these non-animal foods. |
| **Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives (mostly reduced fat)** | • Most Australians consume only about half the recommended quantity of milk products, but too many full fat varieties.  
• Reduced fat dairy foods are recommended after the age of 2 years to decrease saturated fat and energy content of the diet.  
• Reduced fat varieties of milks are not suitable for children under the age of two due to their high energy needs for growth.  
• Milk foods are a good source of protein, minerals, calcium and vitamins. |