The Effect of Lifestyle, Cultural and Social Practices on Nutritional Status
### Influences on nutritional status

- Health and the role of diet in the development of conditions, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, food sensitivity/intolerance/allergies
- Lifestyle and the effect of cultural and social practices on nutritional status
- Media and ethical issues related to advertising practices on food consumption such as the promotion of ‘health’ foods and ‘fast’ foods

- Describe the relationship between nutrient intake and dietary disorders
- Discuss ethical issues related to the responsible advertising of food products
Impact of Lifestyle on Nutritional Health

Lifestyle choices play a significant role in determining the health status of individuals. The TWO lifestyle factors that can impact on health include;

➔ Exercise
➔ Alcohol Consumption
The energy intake obtained by the diet must be balanced with energy expenditure.

An excessive energy intake, or inadequate activity, will result in the body storing the excess energy and gaining weight. If this continues, an individual could become overweight or even obese.

Over the last century, Australians' activity level has decreased dramatically.

Improvements in technology mean that leisure activities passive too, with television and computers providing after-school activities to replace bike-riding and tree-climbing.

All of these changes mean that Australians now have a sedentary lifestyle and many people do not exercise at all, missing out on health benefits and increasing their risk of weight gain and lifestyle-related diseases.
While exercise is good for us, too much exercise can be harmful. Extreme levels of exercise can:

- Damage skeletal joints
- Deplete iron stores
- Increase cancer risk due to the increase of oxidative damage to body cells
- Can lead to extreme weight loss and nutritional deficiencies
Alcohol is toxicity to body tissues, damaging the liver, pancreas and brain.

Over-consumption of alcohol contributes to weight gain due to its high energy content, and metabolising the alcohol depletes the body of important nutrients.

Over-consumption of alcohol can also be associated with aggression, violent crime and relationship problems.

Energy Content per Gram

- Alcohol
- Proteins
- Fats
- Carbohydrates

37.3% of Australians aged 14 years and over consume alcohol on a weekly basis.
ALCOHOL DEATHS

ALCOHOL KILLS 15 AUSTRALIANS EVERY DAY

5,554 EACH YEAR

2,087 PER YEAR

3,467 PER YEAR

Cancers (31%)
Cardiovascular diseases (34%)
Digestive diseases (11%)
Infectious and parasitic diseases (6%)
Injuries (12%)
Neuropsychiatric diseases (6%)

Cancers (25%)
Cardiovascular diseases (13%)
Digestive diseases (16%)
Infectious and parasitic diseases (4%)
Injuries (36%)
Neuropsychiatric diseases (7%)


Data used in this report is from 2010.
Australia is a culturally diverse country, so a wide variety of cultural and religious influences affect our food habits.

Food taboos mean that certain foods may be excluded from the diet altogether, not for any nutritional reason but as part of religious tradition.
# Impact of Culture and Religion on Nutritional Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture/Religion</th>
<th>Food Taboo</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian People</td>
<td>● During Easter, many Christians avoid eating red meat on Good Friday and may avoid certain foods during the period of Lent leading up to Easter.</td>
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| Muslim People                            | ● Abstain from food and drink during the daylight hours in the holy month of Ramadan, then celebrate the end of Ramadan with a feast.  
● Muslims also avoid consuming pork and pig products, and don’t drink alcohol.  
● They also only eat animal products that have been killed in a special way. |
| Seventh Day Adventists and many Buddhist People | ● Follow a Vegetarian Diet and don’t drink alcohol.                        |
| Hindu People                             | ● Avoid beef and beef products.                                           
● Also don’t drink alcohol.                                                               |
| Jewish People                            | ● Some Jewish people (orthodox Jews) avoid eating dairy foods at the same meal as meat products.  
● They don’t drink alcohol.  
● They don’t eat pork or pig products, and only eat animal products that have been killed in a special way.  
● They also avoid eating shellfish.                                                    |
People are social beings and many of our social gatherings revolve around food.

Sharing a meal can symbolise harmony and friendliness, and is a way of expressing hospitality and caring.

Certain foods are often viewed as appropriate for certain types of social occasions, and the choice of foods and beverages will reflect the cultural practices of the group. For example; a children's birthday party, dinner at a restaurant, a family celebration.
The choice of menu will affect the nutritional value of the meal. Gradual changes in cultural practices can have positive effects. For example; a trend towards the use of seafood or vegetables at a barbeque may result in decreased consumption of saturated fats.

Adopting food practices from other cultures may also be beneficial. ‘Mediterranean’ and ‘Asian’ diets are becoming mainstream and have a nutritionally positive influence.