

About FOODcents[®]

For more information on FOODcents[®], visit
www.foodcentsprogram.com.au



Philosophy

The importance of eating a healthy diet

Eating and enjoying a wide variety of nutritious foods are important during childhood when growth and maturation are occurring, and future eating habits are being established. It is important that healthy eating is enjoyable for children. Childhood is a time when an appreciation of the pleasures of good nutritious foods can be developed.

Poor nutrition is an important health issue in Australia. Many of Australia's major diet-related diseases including heart disease, diabetes and some cancers, are preventable. Childhood dietary habits can lead to the development of many of these diseases. It is well recognised that these habits are carried into adulthood. Encouraging and enabling children to adopt healthy eating habits will go a long way towards preventing health problems in their future.

Children as consumers

Children are exposed to a large amount of mass media advertising, often focusing on foods that are less nutritious and higher in fat, sugar and salt. These foods should make up a small part of a child's diet (i.e. eaten only sometimes and in small amounts). They belong in the 'eat least' part of the Healthy Eating Pyramid.

It is important to support children to make informed decisions about their food choices by offering interesting and appropriate education methods, and by providing supportive environments (e.g. healthy school canteens). Children are not only future consumers, they can influence their whole family's food choices. Even though they may not have direct control over the food purchased at home, they can influence through 'pester power'. Children can request healthier, less expensive foods.

To make healthy food choices in today's complex food supply, children need a number of skills including:

- How to identify good nutritional value for money within and between product groups
- An understanding of the additional costs of processing, packaging and advertising goods
- How to read and interpret food labels

The real life classroom

In order to influence a healthy change in eating habits, FOODcents[®] activities focus on 'real' products and experiences. FOODcents[®] curriculum activities use popular foods with current prices. Activities also use food labels and packaging to compare common 'eat least' food found in lunchboxes.

You may find that students will use FOODcents[®] skills to compare specific food products they eat at home and pass on messages to parents.

Experts hiding out within your school community

You may find there are people within the school community who are well placed to assist you with FOODcents[®] classroom activities. School health nurses or health coordinators may have a special interest in promoting healthy eating. You may find you have a nutritionist in your school community who is able to assist you.

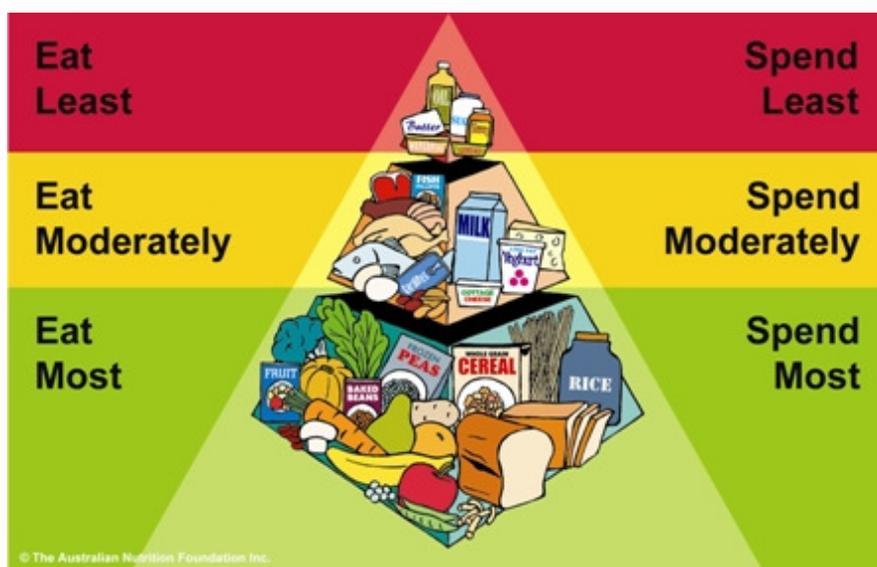
FOODcents[®] concepts

There are three main FOODcents[®] concepts:

- Food purchasing using the Healthy Eating Pyramid
- KILOCents Counter - comparing foods on a cost per kilogram basis
- Comparing labels - cost per kilogram with sugar or fat content

Food purchasing using the Healthy Eating Pyramid

The Healthy Eating Pyramid shows the value in spending food money in the same proportion as choosing foods for a healthy diet.



Spend least on 'eat least' foods. These foods do not provide many nutrients – even though you might like them, and they are often high in fat, sugar and salt. They include foods such as potato crisps, lollies, chocolates, cakes, soft drinks, cordials, coffee, oils, margarines and biscuits. 'Eat least' foods are usually over \$10 per kilogram.

Spend moderately on 'eat moderately' foods. These foods you need in moderate amounts for good health. They provide important essential vitamin and minerals. They include foods such as lean meat, eggs, chicken and fish, milk and dairy foods (yoghurts and cheese). 'Eat moderately' foods are usually between \$5 -12 per kilogram.

Spend most on 'eat most' foods. These foods you need to eat most of. They provide important vitamins, minerals, fibre and energy. They include foods such as bread and plain cereal foods (plain breakfast cereals, pasta, rice) and fruit, vegetables and legumes (like baked beans). 'Eat most' foods are usually between \$2 -6 per kilogram.

FOODcents[®] recommends that 60% of the food budget be spent on 'eat most' foods (breads, cereal foods, fruit and vegetables) 30% on 'eat moderately' (meat and dairy) and only 10% on 'eat least' (those foods high in fat and sugar). Currently, most people do not spend according to the Healthy Eating Pyramid.

KILOcents Counter - comparing foods on a cost per kilogram basis

When you compare prices per kilogram you will find highly processed, packaged and advertised foods are more expensive and less healthy than lesser processed, healthier foods.

You can compare products to identify good nutritional value for money. Check the price per kilogram of the food you buy and decide if it is good value for money compared to healthier alternatives.



Low Fibre \$14 / kilo

High Fibre, \$5 / kilo

The KILOcents Counter is a tool to help you calculate the cost per kilogram of foods. Some supermarkets are now displaying 'unit pricing' in the form of price per kilogram or price per 100g. This is good news for shoppers who want to compare different brands of the same product as well as different foods which serve the same purpose.

It is obvious to compare the cheapest per weight of a snack food, but how about comparing the cost to something healthier. You might be surprised at how much processed unhealthy foods really cost.

Follow these simple instructions to familiarise yourself with the KILOcents Counter.

- Find out the price (dollars and cents) and weight (grams or millilitres) of the food you want to check
- Always round off only one way either up or down when comparing foods
- Round off the price to the nearest 50 cents
- Round off the weight to the nearest 50 grams

Use the KILOcents Counter to calculate the cost per kilogram of **a 180 gram packet of dried apples that costs \$3.60.**

- Round off the price to the nearest 50 cents - **\$3.60 becomes \$3.50**
- Round off the weight to the nearest 50 grams - **180 grams becomes 200 grams**
- Run your finger down the **\$3.50** column until it hits the **200 gram** row - **the cost of the dried apples is \$17.50 per kilogram.**

		PRICE									
		50c	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$2.00	\$2.50	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$4.00	\$4.50	\$5.00
GRAMS	50	10.00	20.00	30.00	40.00	50.00	60.00	70.00	80.00	90.00	100.0
	100	5.00	10.00	15.00	20.00	25.00	30.00	35.00	40.00	45.00	50.00
	150	3.33	6.67	10.00	13.33	16.67	20.00	23.33	26.67	30.00	33.33
	200	2.50	5.00	7.50	10.00	12.50	15.00	17.50	20.00	22.50	25.00
	250	2.00	4.00	6.00	8.00	10.00	12.00	14.00	16.00	18.00	20.00
	300	1.67	3.33	5.00	6.67	8.33	10.00	11.67	13.33	15.00	16.67
	350	1.43	2.86	4.28	5.71	7.14	8.57	10.00	11.43	12.86	14.28
	400	1.25	2.50	3.75	5.00	6.25	7.50	8.75	10.00	11.25	12.50
	450	1.11	2.22	3.33	4.44	5.56	6.67	7.78	8.89	10.00	11.11
	500	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	8.00	9.00	10.00
	550	0.91	1.82	2.73	3.64	4.54	5.45	6.36	7.27	8.18	9.09

Comparing the cost of dried apples, **\$17.50 per kilogram**, with fresh apples in season, **\$3.50 to \$5 per kilogram**, clearly demonstrates the effect on price of processing, packaging and advertising. Usually, the more work done by the manufacturer to process and promote the product, the greater the cost per kilogram of the food.

You can use this activity to compare value for money across food groups. For example the KILOCENTS Counter can be used to calculate how many grams of a particular food \$10 would buy. You could buy about 3 kilograms of seasonal fruit or bread compared to about 1/2 a kilogram of chocolate.

Comparing labels – cost per kilogram with sugar, sodium or fat content

Within a food category it is useful to compare the cost and the nutritional value. For example, breakfast cereals vary in terms of price per kilogram. They also have different amounts of fat, sugar, salt and fibre per 100 grams. This information is available on the label. Rank a variety of different types of cereals in order of cost per kilogram (from porridge oats through to highly advertised sugary breakfast cereals). Rank them according to their sugar content, fibre content and sodium content. This is a good way to demonstrate the impact of processing, advertising and promotion on food costs.

NUTRITION INFORMATION		
Servings per package: 3		
Serving size: 150g		
	Quantity per Serving	Quantity per 100 g
Energy	608 kJ	405 kJ
Protein	4.2 g	2.8 g
Fat, total	7.4 g	4.9 g
– saturated	4.5 g	3.0 g
Carbohydrate, total	18.6 g	12.4 g
– sugars	18.6 g	12.4 g
Sodium	90 mg	60 mg
Calcium	300 mg (38%)*	200 mg
* Percentage of recommended dietary intake		
Ingredients: Whole milk, concentrated skim milk sugar, strawberries (9%), gelatine, culture, thickener (1442).		