



**Senator the Hon Fiona Nash
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR HEALTH**

MEDIA RELEASE

10 May 2014

Nutrition Survey Gives Insight on Australia's Diet

The Assistant Minister for Health, Fiona Nash, has welcomed yesterday's release of the first nutrition results from the 2011-13 Australian Health Survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Minister Nash said the data contributes to a better understanding of the diet of Australians. This can help frame efforts to encourage healthy eating and reduce the risk of diet-related chronic disease, which has a significant impact on our health system.

"While there are some positive indicators in this survey, nearly two in every three Australian adults and almost one quarter of children aged between two and 17 are overweight or obese," she said.

According to the nutrition results from the survey, discretionary foods – those foods that are not an essential part of the diet – contributed to approximately one-third (34.6%) of adults' and two-fifths (38.5%) of children's (2-18 years) energy intakes.

Discretionary foods include items such as cakes, sweet biscuits, lollies, chocolate, potato chips, take-away fried foods, many snack foods and soft drinks. These foods contain added saturated fat, salt, sugar or a combination of these.

"Reducing salt intake, in particular, is one of the most cost effective strategies for reducing non-communicable diseases, like heart disease," Minister Nash said.

"It saves lives, and even small changes can have a big impact on the health of Australians.

"A recent study published in *The Medical Journal of Australia* found the salt content of fast-food products in Australia had dropped by about two to three per cent between 2009 and 2012.

"While this is a positive step and shows Australian food manufacturers are serious about delivering better, healthier products, we recognise there's still a long way to go.

"Australia has already made progress to reduce the amount of salt and saturated fat in the food supply through reformulation, and I look forward to working with industry and the public health sector to progress this further," Minister Nash said.

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