

# Healthy Food Partnership Industry Guide to Voluntary Serving Size Reduction: Implementation and Monitoring Plan

October 2023

Version	Location	Change	Date
1	D22-635406	Updated following feedback from IMERG	May 2023
2	D22-635406	Including option for companies to commit	October 2023

# Table of Contents

The Healthy Food Partnership Industry Guide to Voluntary Serving Size Reduction (the Guide) .....3

How the Implementation and Monitoring Plan should be used .....3

    Implementation guiding principles .....3

Implementation Timeline .....4

Data collection and analysis.....4

Stakeholder engagement.....5

    Stakeholder engagement plan for implementation .....5

    Stakeholder communication.....6

Risk Management .....6

    Reputational risks .....6

    Implementation risks .....6

# The Healthy Food Partnership Industry Guide to Voluntary Serving Size Reduction (the Guide)

The Guide is voluntary and provides an evidence-based approach to inform and support food companies (including both retail and out of home sectors) to determine appropriate serving sizes for food and beverages to support consumers to manage their energy intakes.

The Guide provides serving size recommendations for 9 priority food categories. All food categories in the Guide are discretionary foods and were selected due to being key contributors to population discretionary food intake, in addition to intake of sodium, saturated fat and sugars.

The Guide is provided as a tool for out-of-home food providers, food manufacturers and retailers. There is no formal sign-up mechanism for food companies or retailers to commit to implementing the Guide and there are no formal reporting requirements for companies to report their use of the Guide to the Healthy Food Partnership Secretariat.

The Guide is supported by the Healthy Food Partnership Reformulation Program (PRP), and other initiatives, including the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGHE), the Health Star Rating system and nutrition labelling, which are tools to help consumers to make healthy choices when purchasing and consuming food.

## How the Implementation and Monitoring Plan should be used

This implementation plan details the actions the Department of Health and Aged Care (the Department) will take to successfully implement, monitor and evaluate the Guide. This includes stakeholder engagement, dissemination of the Guide (including the promotion and creating awareness of the Guide to key stakeholders and food companies) and monitoring and evaluation of the uptake of the recommendations outlined in the Guide.

Responsibility for the implementation of the Guide rests with the Department.

### Implementation guiding principles

The following principles were considered when developing this Implementation Plan:

1. Implementation must be practical, widespread, and properly resourced.
2. The Healthy Food Partnership Secretariat must include stakeholders in an ongoing process of engagement.
3. The Guide should be fully and effectively monitored and evaluated both at fixed time points and on an ongoing basis.
4. Implementation should include risk management strategies.

## Implementation Timeline

Milestone	Date
Endorsement of the Guide	December 2022
Promotion of the Guide –DoH email/website, industry conferences, networks, stakeholder forums	Ongoing
Development of a Communication Strategy for the Guide	June 2023
Baseline Desktop Serving Size Audit	November 2023
Industry Awareness Survey – 6, 18 and 24 months from release of the Guide	April 2024, April 2025, October 2025
Desktop Serving Size Audit – 6 and 18 months from release of the Guide	April 2024, April 2025
Serving Size Audit –24 months from release of the Guide	October 2025
Reports due from participating companies	2-yearly, commencing October 2025
Progress report prepared for Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group	November 2025
Review and revise Implementation and Monitoring Plan	November 2025

## Data Collection and Analysis

Data to monitor industry awareness and use of the Guide will be collected through industry awareness surveys and serving size audits respectively.

Interest in the Guide - The Department of Health and Aged Care will collect data on the number of page visits the website for the Guide receives and the number of downloads.

Industry awareness surveys- The Department of Health will survey food industry to measure awareness and use of the Guide at key points. The surveys will be implemented through the Department’s Consultation Hub for a 6 week period. The surveys will be promoted to industry through the Partnership Secretariat’s mailing lists and via platforms such as LinkedIn. The Department will also work with industry peak bodies to promote the survey to their members.

Desktop serving size audit- The Department will undertake desktop serving size audits of the food categories featured in the Guide to monitor changes in serving sizes of available food products. Audits will be undertaken through viewing company and retailer’s websites to obtain data on serving sizes of relevant food categories. A selection of small, medium and large businesses will be included in the audit. The Branded Food Database being developed by Food Standards Australia New Zealand is another tool which can be used in the audit to measure serving sizes available in the relevant retail food categories.

Learnings from the baseline audit will be incorporated into future surveys. This may include targeting the food categories or business sectors that haven’t implemented the recommendations in future surveys. The audit results will also help to inform which sectors of the market could be targeted in promoting the Guide (e.g. particular business types or particular product categories).

Serving size audit- The Department will commission an audit of available serving sizes at approximately 24 months following the release of the Guide to measure uptake of the Guide by food manufacturers and retailers.

The audit will collect serving size data on each of the food categories included in the Guide and measure use of other strategies to promote appropriate serving sizes such as on-pack messaging. A variety of food businesses will be included in the audit to determine whether there is variation in the adoption of the Guide and identify approaches to improve uptake. Consideration can be given about whether to include a control study, such as measuring serving sizes in comparable products in New Zealand, to determine whether the Guide has impacted serving sizes in Australia.

The information and data provided through the surveys and audits will be reported to the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group and Executive Committee. This information can also help to refine the promotion of the Guide and target particular market sectors or products if there is evidence of uneven adoption of the Guide across the industry. Consideration will be given to results of the industry awareness survey, audits and other sources of intel available to the Secretariat when evaluating the implementation of the Guide.

## Participation requirements

### Commitment

All companies, regardless of size or number of products are encouraged to commit to the recommendations in the Guide. Participation is voluntary and companies can join at any time - there is no cut off for signing up. By committing to the recommendations in the Guide, companies are showing their intent to work towards reducing the serving sizes for existing products as far as practicable. Companies are also encouraged to use the recommendations in the Guide to inform new product development.

As this is a voluntary program, there are no penalties for not achieving the recommendations in the Guide and no reporting of individual companies' achievements. Participating companies can be acknowledged on the Partnership website, however public acknowledgement is completely voluntary and is not a requirement of the program.

### Reporting requirements

As part of the voluntary commitment, companies will be asked to report on their progress toward voluntary serving size reductions. Once the Partnership secretariat receives commitment to the program, the company will be provided with the reporting and monitoring template. Reports are requested for baseline data (October 2023) and 2-yearly, commencing in October 2025.

## Distribution and Stakeholder Engagement

### Distribution

The Guide will be distributed through a variety of channels, ensuring a wide range of stakeholders are informed. These will include:

- the Department of Health and Aged Care's website,
- Healthy Food Partnership email distribution lists,
- relevant stakeholder networks (e.g., Australian Food and Grocery Council, Restaurant and Catering Association),
- special interest groups (e.g., Food Industry Nutritionists Group (FING), relevant Dietitians Australia interest groups),

- food industry conferences, and
- stakeholder forums.

For a complete list of contacts, see [Appendix 1](#).

## Stakeholder engagement plan for implementation

To ensure the Guide is implemented effectively, stakeholders should be fully informed of the initiative and their commitments as voluntary participants.

The Partnership's Secretariat will email the Partnership's Community of Interest and the approximately 160 food companies who were initially identified during the consultation process. The email will:

- provide details of the Guide;
- include an information pack, comprising the rationale for serving size reduction and a copy of the Guide;
- Encourage sharing of the Guide across food industry networks, and particularly encourage industry peak bodies to share and promote the Guide amongst their members.

## Stakeholder communication

The Healthy Food Partnership Secretariat will develop a separate Communication Plan for the implementation of the Guide. The goal of the plan is to inform food companies that the Guide has been launched and that their participation is important, and to champion the program to the community. Effective communication will ensure food companies are aware of the Guide, encouraging adoption.

Communication activities will include:

- updating the Partnership website to ensure information on the Guide is accessible to stakeholders;
- preparation of an information brochure for dissemination at industry events;
- a media release from the Minister to formally announce the Guide; and
- preparing an industry-specific press release to related trade media outlets to encourage adoption and to champion the Guide.

# Risk Management

## Reputational risks

There are reputational risks to the Healthy Food Partnership. For example, there may be criticisms associated with the voluntary nature of the Partnership or companies not implementing the recommendations. The Department will monitor engagement of food companies with the Guide and progress towards implementing the recommended serving sizes.

## Implementation risks

There is a risk that the Guide does not achieve meaningful reductions in serving sizes of the priority categories. This risk will be minimised by ensuring there are ample awareness raising activities through multiple channels to achieve a sufficient level of engagement with the Guide. The serving sizes are considered feasible, having been set through analysis of the current food supply, what has been achieved internationally, and through consultation with industry<sup>1</sup>. Specific actions will be detailed in the Communication Strategy.

---

<sup>1</sup> See [Industry Guide to Voluntary Serving Size Reduction: Rationale for details on the development of the guide](#)

## Context and Background

In late 2015, the Australian Government established the Healthy Food Partnership (Partnership) with the aim of improving the dietary habits of Australians by making healthier food choices easier and more accessible, and by raising awareness of appropriate food choices and portion sizes.

The Partnership provides a mechanism for government, the public health sector and the food industry to cooperatively tackle obesity, encourage healthy eating and empower food manufacturers to make positive changes. The scope of work within the Partnership comprises several policy areas that consider portion size, food reformulation, food service environments and education. Initiatives under the Partnership are voluntary in nature.

This multifaceted approach reflects the fact that dietary choices are determined through a complex interplay of factors and thus, there is not one single policy measure that can be introduced to shift populations onto a healthier dietary trajectory.

The Portion Size Working Group (PSWG) was one of the first working groups established under the Partnership. One of the objectives of the PSWG was to consider how to engage with industry to optimise portion sizes. Between September 2016 and June 2018, the PSWG undertook research and assessments and developed key recommendations. One of these recommendations was to develop an industry engagement strategy to adopt voluntary activities to support healthier sizes of portions and servings. Key activities of the strategy include the development of a best practice guide on serving size to provide industry with guidance and support to undertake serving size reductions, and the development of recommended serving sizes for key discretionary foods and beverages. The PSWG also developed [consistent terminology for describing the size of food and beverages](#). The PSWG was disbanded following the release of their report and the Industry Best Practice Guide Working Group (IBPGWG) was convened in August 2019 to deliver on this recommendation.

The IBPGWG was tasked with establishing priorities for serving size recommendations which may help consumers achieve dietary patterns that are consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines (ADG). The recommended serving sizes are intended to drive a decrease in energy and risk associated nutrients (added sugar, sodium and saturated fat) in priority food categories.

Feedback received from a public consultation in August 2021 informed the development of the Guide and the Draft Rationale. 27 submissions were received from a broad range of industry sectors and public health groups. There was strong support for portion size and serving size guidance as a complementary public health measure to support the community in reducing the number of serves and portion sizes of discretionary foods and beverages consumed. Practical and detailed feedback provided on the individual categories and the design of the Guide was considered by the IBPGWG when finalising the Guide.

Following public consultation, the IBPGWG agreed to rename the guide to the Industry Guide to Voluntary Serving Size Reduction (the Guide), in recognition of some stakeholder views that true best practice would be to reduce serving size for all discretionary foods to 600kJ.

For further information on the development of the Industry Guide to Voluntary Serving Size Reduction and the rationale for reducing serving sizes, see [Industry Guide to Voluntary Serving Size Reduction: Rationale](#).



# Appendix 1: Distribution

## Websites

- The Department of Health and Aged Care's website for the Healthy Food Partnership
- <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/healthy-food-partnership/industry-guide-to-voluntary-serving-size-reduction>

## Healthy Food Partnership email distribution lists

- Healthy Food Partnership Executive Committee
- Healthy Food Partnership Community of Interest
- Healthy Food Partnership Industry Best Practice Guide Working Group

## Stakeholder networks and peak bodies

- Australian Food and Grocery Council
- Restaurant and Catering Industry Association
- Ai Group
- Australian Beverages Council
- Dairy Australia

## Special interest groups

- Food Industry Nutritionists Group (FING)
- Relevant Dietitians Australia interest groups
- Relevant conferences and trade shows

## Examples of companies with products in relevant categories (not an exhaustive list)

Manufacturers	Out-of-home sector
Woolworths	McDonalds
ALDI	Yum! Restaurants (KFC)
Metcash	Hungry Jacks
Coles	Pizza Hut
Nestle	Dominos
Mars Food	Subway
PepsiCo	Red Rooster
Coca Cola Amatil	Nandos
Fonterra	Zambrero
Unilever	Oporto
Murray Goulbourn	Michel's Patisserie
Bega	Coffee club
George Weston Foods	Pie Face
Goodman Fielder	Grill'd
Lactalis	Bakers Delight
McCain Foods	Doughnut King
Patties	Wendy's
Mondelez	Ben and Jerry's
Inghams	Spotless
Mrs Mac's	Sodexo
	Muffin Break

## Appendix 2: Sign up form



### Healthy Food Partnership Guide to Voluntary Serving Size Reduction: Sign-up Form

Company name \_\_\_\_\_

Represented by \_\_\_\_\_

This form is to confirm that \_\_\_\_\_ is committed to the recommendations in the Healthy Food Partnership Guide to Voluntary Serving Size Reduction (the Guide).

By committing to the Guide *\_(Company name)\_* is committing to:

- The recommended serving sizes outlines in the Guide; and
- submit a baseline report on the serving size their relevant products within 3 months of commitment, based on the sign-up time period; and
- submit 2-yearly reports, using the *Healthy Food Partnership Guide to Serving Size Reduction: Reporting and Monitoring Template*

By committing to the recommendations in the Guide, you are showing your intent to work towards reducing the serving sizes for existing products as far as practicable. You are also committing to use the recommendations in the Guide to inform new product development.

As this is a voluntary program, there are no penalties for not achieving the recommendations in the Guide and no reporting of individual companies' achievements.

Please note this form is an intention of commitment only and is not intended to be legally binding.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_