

THE GOOD LIFE GUIDE

Easy tips to get the most out of every day

Together, all the way.™



GOOD THINGS HAPPEN

We Kiwis value our health and well-being, and many of us start each year with a resolution to improve at least one aspect of it. But there are so many health trends, and new studies being released every day, that it can be hard to know where to begin.

The Good Life guide knows that a healthy life isn't just about a well-used gym membership, or a daily green smoothie – it's about a well-rounded approach to well-being. That means regular exercise and a balanced diet, but also a good night's sleep, and a happy and fulfilling family life – it's not hard, but it does take a bit of effort. Inside, you'll find a few tips to help you get started.

CONTENTS	PG
GOOD FOOD	3
GOOD SLEEP	6
GOOD EXERCISE	9
GOOD TIMES	12

GOOD FOOD

Your fuel for good
health and well-being

More than anything else, the food we consume affects our entire well-being. A balanced, nutrient-rich diet will see us full of energy, thinking clearly, and in prime physical health.



CIGNA SURVEY FACT



More than

2/3

of Kiwis would like to
improve their physical
health and well-being

LEMON AID



Start your day with this incredibly simple trick. Squeeze half a lemon into a glass of water and drink it when you get up in the morning.

Not only will the bright citrus taste boost your energy better than any cup of coffee, it can also help relieve joint and muscle pain, cleanse the liver, lower blood pressure and ease heart burn.

A PLAN OF ATTACK FOR SNACKING

There's nothing wrong with snacking - it stops your blood-sugar levels from dipping too low, and keeps your appetite at bay so you don't go crazy at your next meal.

The important thing is always being prepared with some quick-and-easy, nutrient-rich snack options. Have them standing by at home, in your gym bag, or at your desk drawer at work, and avoid the temptation of the vending machine.

Libby Crawley - Nutritionist consultant

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Olives



Nuts and seeds



Quality dark chocolate



High-quality cheese



Dried fruit



Raw veggies with hummus



Avocado with crackers

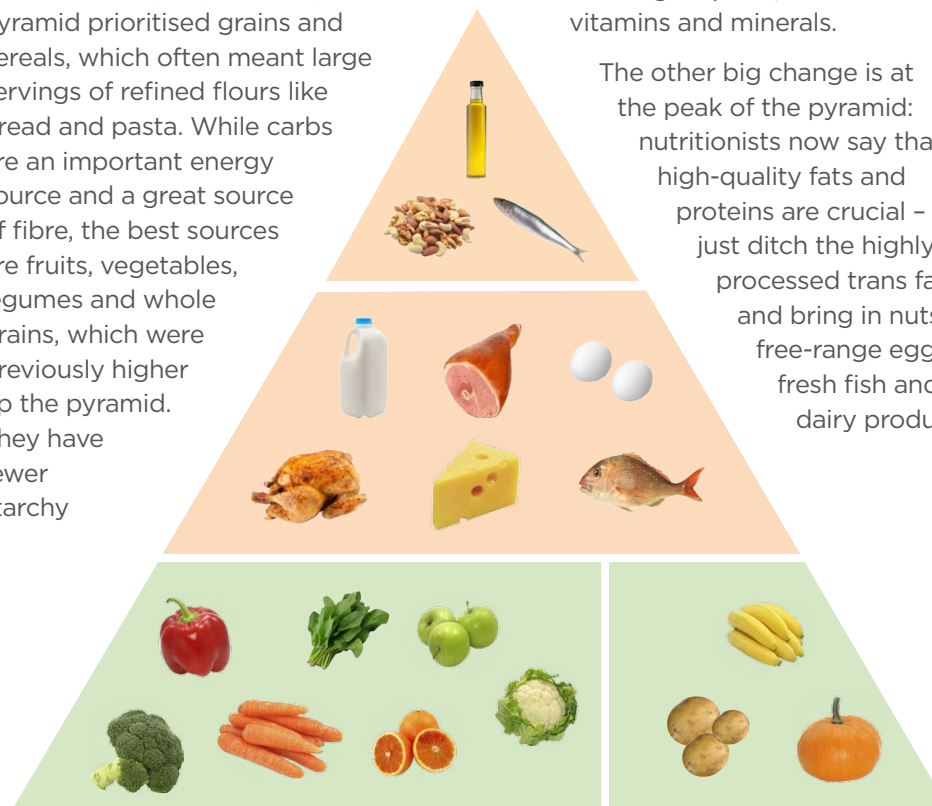
REVISITING THE FOOD PYRAMID

For years, the food pyramid has been our touchstone for a healthy diet. But recently, nutrition experts have been looking at things in a new way - in fact, they've turned the whole thing on its head.

The big news is, not all carbohydrates are created equally. The original pyramid prioritised grains and cereals, which often meant large servings of refined flours like bread and pasta. While carbs are an important energy source and a great source of fibre, the best sources are fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains, which were previously higher up the pyramid. They have fewer starchy

carbohydrates (which can cause blood sugar spikes), and more fibre, vitamins and minerals.

The other big change is at the peak of the pyramid: nutritionists now say that high-quality fats and proteins are crucial - just ditch the highly processed trans fats, and bring in nuts, free-range eggs, fresh fish and dairy products.



Dr. Jackie Mills | [View full article](#)

YOUR ORGANIC SHOPPING LIST

Most people agree that organic produce is the best option for our bodies and for the environment, but with the higher price tag, few people eat a 100% organic diet. The Dirty Dozen are the 12 foods with the most residual pesticides, and should be your highest priority for switching to organic.

- Grapes
- Celery
- Bok/pak choi
- Nectarines
- Oranges
- Strawberries
- Spring onion
- Lemons
- Wheat (bread)
- Cucumber
- Pears
- Broccoli

Luke Crawley, Cigna

SUGAR SUBSTITUTES

The following are some ingredients that you may consider replacing with other alternatives.

Sugar/Sweetener: While still containing fructose, honey does have a moderate antioxidant effect, and natural vitamins that can help strengthen your immune system. Also, honey has a concentrated flavour, meaning a little goes a long way.



Stevia: Another naturally occurring sugar alternative, stevia is an antimicrobial, which works as an antioxidant in the body and decreases inflammation. It also helps modulate blood sugar, meaning it reduces the stress of the large insulin spikes you get from consuming carbohydrates and sugar.

While these sugar alternatives do offer more benefits than refined cane sugar, they aren't a free pass - nutritionists advise using them in small quantities, especially if you're aiming to lose weight.

Luke Crawley, Cigna

Spotlight on Coconut oil

Coconut oil is big right now, and for good reason. It's got a long list of health benefits, including being antiviral, antibacterial, antifungal and antiprotozoal. Use expeller pressed (flavourless) or virgin coconut oil as an alternative to cooking oil, and reap the rewards.



GOOD SLEEP

Vital for a healthy mind and body

A good night's sleep allows our body to repair and our mind to reset. But it's not as simple as climbing into bed and shutting your eyes: quality sleep is something most people need to work at to achieve.



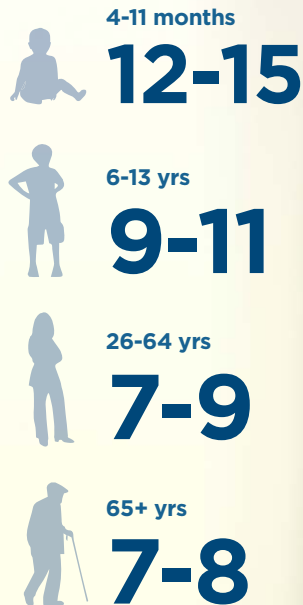
HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

It might not feel like it, but your body does some of its most important work while you sleep, including repairing muscles and regenerating your skin; releasing hormones, including those that regulate growth and appetite; and keeping your immune system at peak performance.

So how much of the good stuff do you need? Experts at the American National Sleep Foundation say between 7 and 9 hours for the average adult, but stress that it's a personal matter: they recommend assessing how you feel on different amounts of sleep to find the right number for you - and then sticking to it. However, your sleep requirements may vary depending on what else is going on in your life: work schedules, periods of stress and strenuous exercise may all mean you need more hours between the sheets.

And don't forget it's about quality, not just quantity: the repairing and re-energising happens only in the deepest stages of uninterrupted sleep.

RECOMMENDED HOURS OF SLEEP



Sleep myths and truths

Think you know your siesta from your slumber? Take our true/false test and discover your sleep

Q. If you're having trouble nodding off, try counting sheep.

FALSE Counting sheep actually further stimulates the brain and stops your mind resting enough to fall asleep.

Q. A glass of milk before bed helps you sleep

TRUE Dairy products are full of the amino acid tryptophan, which helps produce serotonin and melatonin, the sleep hormones.

Q. Naps are for old people and babies

FALSE A well-timed nap can benefit anyone. Power naps (up to 30 minutes) are especially good when you need to re-energise and re-focus on a task after a long period of activity. Any longer and you risk feeling sluggish when you wake, or have trouble sleeping at night time.

COMBATTING SLEEP'S WORST ENEMIES

If you're searching for a great night's sleep, start by avoiding these three sleep enemies.

Caffeine

Most people know that a mid-afternoon espresso is a no-go when it comes to catching forty winks; caffeine is a powerful stimulant, and will definitely inhibit sleep later on. However, coffee isn't the only culprit – caffeine is lurking in tea, chocolate, soft drinks and energy drinks, some vitamins and supplements, and in many over-the-counter pain-relief medications, such as Panadol Extra. Always check the ingredients before you consume these items, especially in the few hours before bed.

Alcohol

It may seem like a glass of red wine in the evening helps you drop off, but if your sleep needs improving, it's best to abstain. Alcohol may help you fall asleep initially, but can disrupt your sleep, and make you feel sluggish when you wake.

Electronics

Experts agree that electronics such as phones, laptops and tablets are powerful sleep disruptors. The harsh blue light they emit stimulates the brain and suppresses sleep-inducing melatonin, meaning you should power off at least an hour before bedtime. And according to the American National Sleep Foundation, our brains can even recognise that light while we're asleep, so the best plan of attack is to keep all devices out of the bedroom. At the very least, put your phone into flight mode; there's no need for your deep sleep to be disrupted by a text or email notification.



GOOD EXERCISE

A sure recipe for health and longevity

Nothing beats regular exercise for improving your physical, mental, and emotional health. Get the whole family moving, and everyone will reap the benefits.

CIGNA SURVEY FACT



81%

of Kiwis agree that exercising regularly has a significant positive impact on their health and well-being

FITTER, HAPPIER, MORE PRODUCTIVE

Most people, rightly, turn to exercise to improve their physical well-being. However there's increasing evidence to show that regular exercise does wonders for your mental well-being too.



Physical activity increases blood flow to the brain, meaning oxygen and nutrients reach it faster, helping your brain adapt and grow new cells. Exercise can even curb the shrinkage of the hippocampus (the brain area linked to learning and memory) that occurs after the age of 70, meaning active people stay sharper for longer.



A superstar stress reliever, exercise moderates the effects of stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline, which attack all parts of the brain, in particular the hippocampus – explaining why you can be forgetful when you're under pressure. Excessive stress hormones also harm the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for judgment, understanding and impulse control.



Exercise also supports a healthy emotional state by helping release endorphins – those happy hormones that lift your mood and lower anxiety levels. As well, being in good general health gives you a sense of well-being and vitality and maintaining a healthy weight boosts your confidence. This cocktail of benefits puts you in a more resourceful state to handle challenges of every kind.



It's official: getting regular exercise is just as good for your brain as it is for your body. It seems that the smart people are exercising, and the exercising people are smarter (not to mention happier).

Claire Bellingham, Les Mills

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JUST MOVE

It doesn't matter what kind of activity you're doing, whether it's triathlons or line dancing, just move. Aerobic exercise has a variety of benefits, including a lowered risk of chronic diseases, reduced anxiety, and improved moods. And you don't need much of it: 30 to 40 minutes a day of brisk walking will do the trick. Got that down? Add some resistance training to maintain muscle mass and strengthen your body. You don't even need a gym membership: many effective exercises – think press-ups, squats and sit-ups – can be done at home without any equipment.



EXERCISE 101

Incorporating regular exercise into our already-busy lives is often easier said than done, so it's easy to see why fifty percent of people who begin a new exercise plan have dropped out within the first six months. Here are three tips from the ones who made it stick:

1. Be the boss of your workout

Trying anything new can be intimidating, so start slowly and make sure you stay in control. Tailoring the workout to your current ability allows you to feel good about what you can do, rather than feeling like you can't keep up.

2. Frequency before intensity

Your main goal at the start of a new programme should be building a habit – focus on keeping a consistent, achievable workout routine, even at a lower level of intensity, before you worry about how hard you're working.

3. Celebrate the immediate wins

Focus on the results that occur a soon as you become active: increased energy levels, feeling more positive, or the endorphin high you get after a workout.

Jocelyn Honeyman

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ACTIVE KIDS ARE BETTER OFF



Most kids have a seemingly unlimited appetite for sports and playgrounds, but it's not always the most convenient option for parents – it can be tempting to let kids watch TV or play inside while we get stuff done around the house.

However, a recent study published in the BMC Medicine Journal has confirmed a link between lack of exercise and the development of cardiovascular risk factors in children.

The study collected information from over 3,000 European children aged between two and nine and analysed the link between their levels of activity and health markers including blood pressure, insulin resistance, cholesterol levels and more. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the survey found that risk those factors were more likely to be present in children who were not active. The study reports that to avoid those health issues, and for general health and well-being, children under 10 should get between 60 and 85 minutes of physical exercise a day, and of those 60 to 85 minutes, 20 minutes should be at a vigorous level.

Janine Phillips | [View full article](#) ↗

Under 10 years

60-85 mins

The amount of time a child under 10 years of age should spend doing vigorous exercise

Of these 60 to 85 minutes, 20 minutes should be at a vigorous level.



GOOD TIMES

A balanced life is a healthy life

A good life is much more than a regular gym routine and a nutritionist-approved diet. Hobbies, friendships, a satisfying career, and time outdoors with your family are equally important ingredients in a life well lived.



CIGNA SURVEY FACT



94%

of Kiwis rank their children's health as a core component of family health and well-being

LOOKING AFTER NUMBER 1



When life gets busy, we have to make sacrifices. And all too often, it's our own well-being that's the first to see the chopping block. The irony being that as your physical and mental health suffers, you're less able to cope with the stressful situation. Next time you feel the pressure, try these three tips to get things back on track.

When we feel overwhelmed, planning tends to go out the window, yet organisation is precisely what you need. Book in non-negotiable gym visits, plan out your weekly meals to avoid resorting to takeaways, and schedule your relaxation too. Whether first thing in the morning or just before you go to bed, allow yourself at least 30 minutes of alone time to meditate, read, or simply sit and watch the sun rise.

If the sound of an email alert causes your heart rate to skyrocket, and your family complains about you taking work calls at dinner, it's time to take a break from technology. Allocate a sacred time, say, 8pm-9pm, when you

turn off your laptop, cellphone and any other devices – the world won't miss you for an hour and you will feel revitalised afterwards.

One of the easiest and most relaxing things you can do with five minutes is listen to music. Need energising? Turn the stereo up loud and dance in your living room. Or calming? Put on headphones and listen to a relaxing piece of music while you sip a herbal tea.

Dr Libby Weaver | [View full article](#) 

Getting back on top after a few too many

While we recommend only drinking alcohol in moderation, occasionally things get a little too festive. Here are our favourite natural tips for getting back on track with the least amount of long-term damage.

Tip 1. Probiotic power

Foods such as yogurts, pickles, and kim chi all contain probiotic bacteria that look after your gut and liver, both of which are in need of some TLC. Polishing off some probiotics can help eliminate toxins from the body, and reduce the oxidative damage and gastric stress caused by alcohol.

Tip 2. Have a cuppa

The antioxidants in green tea protect the liver from damage caused by alcohol, and accelerate the metabolism of alcoholic compounds from the body. Pro tip: opt for the caffeinated version today.

Tip 3. Eat your veges (and fruits)

Asparagus and other sulphur-rich green vegetables help your poor liver recover. They also supply nutrients that improve enzyme function, alleviating the symptoms of a hangover. Next up, berries and kiwifruit will stabilise your sugar levels, creating a smoother environment for alcohol to be removed from the body.

Tip 4. Hit the gym

It may be the last thing you feel like, but sweating is the most efficient way of extracting alcohol from the body. To boot, the elevated breathing rates will speed up your metabolism, further helping to clear the alcohol and its metabolic by-products.



HEALTHY FAMILY = HAPPY FAMILY

A physically fit family is a happy family. Active children sleep better and learn better, and are protected from illnesses later in life.

But it's not enough to drop your kids off at soccer practice and cheer them from the sidelines. We must model for children the habits we want them to pick up - it's no surprise that studies show a significant association between parents who exercise and children who exercise in later life. Seeing mum or dad making time for regular exercise normalises the activity, and makes it a natural choice for your child as they grow up.



Even better is being active together - here are few ideas for making exercise a family affair:



Bike places on weekends instead of taking the car.



Get involved at the playground - swinging from monkey bars is a killer workout



Walk the dog with one other member of the family and get one-on-one time while you're at it.



Encourage your children to practice their new sports skills with you, then teach them a game from your childhood.

Claire Bellingham Les Mills

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GOOD TIMES GREAT REWARDS

10% healthy living discount on standard Lifeone premiums

At Cigna we think if you're making an effort, then we can too. By choosing to live an active and healthy lifestyle you help minimise the effects of aging and are better prepared for what ever life throws at you.

Talk to us about receiving a 10% healthy living discount on standard Lifeone premiums.

Find out more at cigna.co.nz 

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LES MILLS

Group Fitness

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Exercise should be fun and our group fitness classes are a powerful way to get the motivation, inspiration and results you're after.

Chart topping music, rock star instructors, and the latest cutting-edge moves will keep you coming back for more.

Strength, cardio, dance, martial arts, mind-body, cycling.

Fatloss, toning, agility, speed, endurance, co-ordination, flexibility, health.

Find out more at lesmills.co.nz



RUN TIME

Us Kiwis believe strongly in the importance of spending time with our family and that it's important to do well financially. However this seems to be at a cost to our physical well being. In a time-poor society, this highlights the challenge of juggling family time with exercise.

At Cigna we are fully committed to supporting Kiwis to lead healthier lifestyles, which is why we are proud to be the principal sponsor of Wellington's Round the Bays event. Events like Cigna Round the Bays are a great opportunity to combine spending time with family and physical activity.

Keep an eye out for the next event early next year. Find out more at

cignaroundthebays.co.nz



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