# Nutrition and healthy eating

**Dr Sarah White:** Jemma, O'Hanlon, dietician and nutritionist, thank you so much for joining us on the podcast today. I'm actually going to start by saying, what's the difference between a dietician and a nutritionist?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Well, dieticians have a little bit more qualifications, so they spend a bit more time at university, looking more at the medical nutrition therapy side of things. So particularly working with patients that have therapeutic needs, chronic disease management, even things like enteral feeds, PEG feeds, quite complex conditions that dieticians deal with. But dieticians are nutritionists. So as we go through university, it's generally around a three year degree, which is a nutrition degree, and then the added year is the dietetics.

**Dr Sarah White:** Terrific. And actually that might become quite good to know, because we get so much advice about nutrition and diets, but actually people who are qualified in this area have three to four years of university study. And so there's a really big difference between a dietician, nutritionist, and then the influencer, right?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** A hundred percent. And that's a real bugbear of mine. When I see the pills and potions and products that are promoted everywhere with very little scientific evidence, it frustrates me and upsets me as an evidence-based professional. So look, I really hope today we can clarify and bust some myths and set the story straight once and for all.

**Dr Sarah White:** So should we do that straight away? Is there really some magic superfood that is just going to fix everything? It's not true, right?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** If only, Sarah, if only. Now, I like to say that all of our whole foods that we need to be eating every day our superfoods, that's the way I like to talk about them. Because really when we're eating a healthy, balanced diet, we are going to get all of our macronutrients, micronutrients, bioactive compounds, getting all that we need. So our whole foods are our superfoods. We don't need to have some really expensive berry or seed or supplement to meet our nutritional needs. In fact, it's the long game. It's the healthy eating pattern over weeks, months, years that really does matter.

**Dr Sarah White:** Right, okay. So let me go back to macronutrients and micronutrients. What basically are we talking about here, Jemma? Because even I get confused sometimes when I hear or read all these different stories. And we know that a lot of women sort of get fatigued about, 'Oh, I've got to have this much my plate, no wait, am I supposed to have that much?' What's some really simple things to remember?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Nutrition is complicated.

**Dr Sarah White:** Don't tell me that!

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Oh my goodness. But we don't have to get overwhelmed, as well. There are some very simple, healthy eating principles that we can follow. So macronutrients are our carbs, our proteins, and our fats. They're our big nutrients.

**Dr Sarah White:** Okay. Carbohydrates, protein, fats. We all know those three things, right, got it.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Exactly. Micronutrients are our vitamins and our minerals. So calcium, magnesium, iron, folate, those sort of nutrients. So smaller nutrients, but essential for our health and wellbeing. In terms of that healthy plate, the best way to think about it is actually, a half of your plate should be vegetables, a quarter should be your lean protein, and a quarter should be your sustaining carbohydrates, so your healthy low GI, wholegrain carbohydrates. And if you think of that breakdown, you can't really go wrong.

**Dr Sarah White:** And so those healthy wholegrain carbohydrates are things like brown rice?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Brown rice, wholegrain or wholemeal bread, and wholemeal pasta. So it's simply swapping from your refined white grains to a more whole grain. And interestingly, I heard this recently, and I think it's a really good way of thinking about it, when we choose the refined grains, we're actually contributing to food waste. Because essentially they're getting rid of all that goodness and it it's been chucked in the bin. So by actually eating the whole grain, we are benefiting our health and the environment as well.

**Dr Sarah White:** Oh, another incentive then. Okay. So what are some of those key nutrients that you mentioned, particularly the ones that are important as women age, and where do we find them?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** So as, us women, as we age, important nutrients, we need to keep our bones really strong and healthy. So calcium, vitamin D and protein are essential for good bone health. So we'll find them in milk, yoghurt and cheese, predominantly. Particularly calcium is rich in milk, yoghurt and cheese. Vitamin D, most people associate it with sunlight, so getting a few rays of sun each day. A little bit of skin exposure will give us some vitamin D, but we can also get them through food. So vitamin D is also found in eggs, in oily fish like salmon, tuna, and interestingly, it can also be found in mushrooms. So when we put our mushrooms in the sun, mushrooms will actually produce vitamin D, and all you need is 15 minutes of exposure to the sun, and a serve of mushrooms, you'll get your daily serve of vitamin D.

**Dr Sarah White:** Okay, great. So just go for a walk and eat some mushrooms along with whatever else, as part of that 'half the plate', right? (Disclaimer – we don’t recommend forqaing for wild mushrooms. Purchase mushrooms from your local fruit and vegetable shop).

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Exactly, exactly. And then the final nutrient, protein. And a lot of women may be a bit nervous about protein, they don't want to get really bulky or become a body builder, but we need protein. And women need more protein as we age because we are more at risk of muscle loss as we age. So protein from our food, and then combining that, of course, with physical activity, resistance in particular, is going to keep our muscles strong and our bones strong. So where is protein found? It's found in our lean meats. So for example, chicken, fish, red meat. It's also found in beans, so legumes, beans, lentils, chickpeas, et cetera. Nuts, it's found in. It's even found in eggs. And even milk, yoghurt and cheese it's found in, too. So I would say for healthy bones, that's a real priority, vitamin D, calcium and protein.

**Dr Sarah White:** Now let me pick up on something that we're hearing a little bit about at the moment. There's cost of living pressures, meat is expensive. So if we're telling people to get protein, but some of those meats are getting expensive, you mentioned legumes. Now, are they a good low-cost alternative, if we are making up dishes with some of those legumes?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** A hundred percent. And I recommend it all the time to people. In fact, you should see my pantry, Sarah. I have legumes everywhere. And they're canned. So of course you can buy the dried pulses as well and you can soak them and boil them and takes a little bit more time, but our canned legumes, all you have to do is drain away that juice and rinse it, and then they're good to go.

**Dr Sarah White:** And they're nutritionally just the same?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** They are fantastic. So obviously they're slightly different amino acid profile, which amino acids are the building blocks of protein, but they're plant protein. And we are not getting enough legumes in our diets, Australians aren't, and we need at least three serves a week. So whether it's baked beans on toast, or whether it's a beautiful curry that's made with some split peas or some lentils, or whether it's chucking some kidney beans into your Mexican taco mix, you can do so much with legumes. They also stretch your meal out further, so you'll feed the family for longer. They're rich in, so, going back to what we were talking about, protein, long lasting, sustained carbohydrates, they're rich in both of those. And they're also rich in fibre, which is essential for our gut health. So they are the trifecta.

**Dr Sarah White:** They're quite filling as well because they've got those carbohydrates, right?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Absolutely.

**Dr Sarah White:** And I must admit that I found it difficult to get into those legumes, because my mum never really cooked with things like chickpeas and lentils. She's a fantastic cook, but it was very much, not quite meat and three veg, lots of stir fries, but never really into that. Where do you go? Is there a really simple, easy place to get recipes that will help you create these dishes with ingredients that maybe you haven't used before, but are fantastic in terms of nutrition and also really good in terms of stretching the dollar? Where do you go for those?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Well, look, I actually work with the Heart Foundation and I can't not recommend the Heart Foundation recipe books and recipes on their website. And Jean Hailes, of course, you've got great recipes as well. Particularly go for the meat-free recipe book, which is available on the Heart Foundation website, and they use a lot of legumes. Dieticians Australia is another place where you can find healthy recipes that have meat-free options. So I think just look around, and I would say find a recipe, try it that works for you. Start simple, but also start with something that you know and love. So for example, it might be a spaghetti bolognaise, a family favourite, and instead of using the full amount of mince, you might like to use half mince and then you might like to use half canned lentils.

**Dr Sarah White:** Oh, that's a great tip, actually.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Throw them in.

**Dr Sarah White:** You'll barely notice it.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** And then you got money in your hip pocket, and you stretch the meal out, and more fibre in there, and the kids probably won't even notice it either. So, benefits everyone.

**Dr Sarah White:** Or if you're not used to taste yourself, it's a way of introducing really easily then.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Exactly, exactly. And the good thing about legumes is that they have quite a neutral flavour profile, which means they pair beautifully with big, bold flavours. So use all those beautiful herbs and spices to really enhance the flavour, and they are just a fantastic vehicle to add all that beautiful flavour in there, and really will help us meet our nutritional needs.

**Dr Sarah White:** You've inspired me to go and find, and I know that you can get a lot of recipes online, but I've also noticed that you can actually pick up quite inexpensive cookbooks even from some of the supermarkets, or those sorts of Target, Kmart type stores. They actually have pretty inexpensive cookbooks for vegetarians, and that would be exactly what we're looking for, right?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Yep, yep. And I make a beautiful lentil dahl at home, and it's so simple. I make it in less than half an hour.

**Dr Sarah White:** I love that.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** It's one of those meals that when I'm working late and I'm running to find something, I'll just whip it up, and it's got canned tomatoes in there, which, more canned foods as well, it's got sweet potatoes and it's just a really warm comfort meal. And it's nutritious and delicious.

**Dr Sarah White:** Now before you leave today, you're going to leave that recipe with me, Jemma, I'm telling you that right now. So we've covered a couple of foods already that are good for the hip pocket as well as the heart and the brain and basically the rest of the body. What would you say your top five foods for older women that are also budget friendly, what would those top five foods be?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Okay, so rolled oats would be number one, because they are the wholegrain. Porridge in the morning in the winter, or natural muesli in the summer. I make overnight oats at the moment with rolled oats, and I've got them in the fridge, ready to go in the mornings. My breakfasts are done a week in advance, just through overnight oats, so rolled oats. And rolled oats also contain beta-glucans, which helps to lower cholesterol. So an added bonus. Greek yoghurt, plain Greek yoghurt. It's got the calcium, it's got the protein, and it's full of nutrition, and it gives you an extra serve of dairy. So I'd highly recommend Greek yoghurt.

**Dr Sarah White:** That's my go-to dessert, plain Greek yoghurt and fruit.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Perfect dessert. Perfect dessert. And women over 50 need about four serves of milk, yoghurt or cheese every day. So the serves go up, and that's to keep our bones strong. So that extra serve of yoghurt, a serve is around a tub of yoghurt, or you can have a glass of milk or two slices of cheese.

**Dr Sarah White:** Some of those tubs are very large. Are we talking about small tub here I take it?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Yeah, about 200 grams.

**Dr Sarah White:** Okay, right, thank you, just checking.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Yeah. But it'll provide about 300 milligrams of calcium in one serve, so that's good.

**Dr Sarah White:** So rolled oats, Greek yoghurt. What else?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Yes. Okay, so I would say, legumes were going to be one, but I'll throw in one instead of them. And that would be eggs. Again, for the protein and a range of micronutrients, a range of vitamins and minerals in eggs. And they're so versatile. And the good thing is that we can eat seven eggs a week with no issues.

**Dr Sarah White:** It used to be a concern around cholesterol, but that is a myth that has been now busted.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Correct. Yes. And it's only, in fact, the Heart Foundation doesn't have a limit for healthy people with eggs. It's only if you have high cholesterol or a chronic condition that probably limit it to seven eggs a week. But that means you can still have one a day, which is fine. So don't be scared of eggs. Eggs are fantastic. Then I would say, tinned salmon. A fantastic source of omega-3, is good for our brain health, protein as well. Again, women, we need that protein, try to have some protein at each meal. And then also, frozen vegetables is a fantastic one to keep in the freezer.

**Dr Sarah White:** I've always wondered about that. So you can keep them in the freezer, just grab a handful or a chunk of whatever you need, and then nutritionally they're still fine?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Yeah, and look, obviously I would recommend choosing Australian first and foremost, but you've got them there ready to go. They're often snap frozen straight from the farm, so it means that the nutrients are locked in. And in fact, some studies have shown that frozen veggies have higher nutrient levels than some of our fresh ones that have been sitting on the shelves or have travelled long food miles to actually get to their destination. So in fact, frozen veggies can be just as nutritious, and throw them into your meals. And just have them there, I think, as something ready to go. Or maybe when you've run out of your seasonal veg.

**Dr Sarah White:** What about frozen fruit? Because when we're off-season, I kind of get a little bit sick of apples day in day out. Is frozen fruit okay too?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Absolutely. I mean, I've got frozen mango in my freezer at the moment, and I've had it there regularly throughout the year. Mango is one of my favourite fruits of all time. I mean at the moment now I can eat the beautiful fresh mangoes, but yes, frozen fruits, again, are perfectly fine. You can make a beautiful smoothie with them. You can do so much with them. So yes, even when certain berries might be quite expensive, have some frozen berries in your freezer and you'll still get all that nutrition.

**Dr Sarah White:** Oh, that's fantastic to know. Now let me ask you a question about sugar. We've heard so much about eliminating sugar from diets and how bad sugar can be. What's really going on there? What's your advice on that?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Oh, goodness me. Yeah, I could talk for hours about sugar, but I won't. Look, in simple terms, less is more when it comes to sugar, even sweeteners. So what happens a lot of the time, manufacturers will take the sugar out of foods and they'll throw in all these intense sweeteners, and I don't think that's really going to help our health and wellbeing overall. In fact, it makes us want to crave sweet foods even more. So we kind of need to just steer clear or limit the really super-sweet foods, whether they're sugar-sweetened or artificially sweetened or even naturally sweetened foods, and try to go back to basics. Focus on getting our sweet fix from fruits, fresh, beautiful fruit, all the fruits in season, even a bit of dried fruit is perfectly okay, and really get our sweet fix from whole foods. Again, Mediterranean diet.

**Dr Sarah White:** Not the lemonades...

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Not your processed sugars, not your soft drinks, not your lollies. Of course, I would never tell someone not to have a piece of chocolate cake on their birthday. I think that is the time to have some sugar, and really enjoy it, and savour that moment. But overall, again, when it comes back to our eating pattern, generally, let's focus on less of those processed sugars and more of the natural, the whole food sugars.

**Dr Sarah White:** So following on from that, and I'm really awaiting your views on this with great trepidation, what about caffeine?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Well, it depends where it comes from. If it's from an energy drink, no. Try to those. If it's from coffee, yes.

**Dr Sarah White:** Oh, phew!

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** I love this topic, because people always shout for joy when they hear that they can drink coffee and it's dietician-approved. So I recommend no more than four espresso shots in a day.

**Dr Sarah White:** Oh gosh, that's a lot.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** It might sound like a lot. But most coffees, if you go to the local cafe, it'll be at least probably two shots in there, if you're ordering a medium to a large. So keep an eye on that. And so, 400 milligrams is kind of the maximum recommended limit of caffeine, which roughly works out to be four coffees or four shots of coffee. Tea has about half the caffeine of coffee, so you can have a little bit more tea. But remember, your tea will still contribute to your total caffeine intake. Herbal teas are great because they don't have caffeine. Green tea does have a little bit of caffeine, but not as much as black tea.

So yes, you can have coffee, and it does actually have health benefits. The Heart Foundation does support drinking coffee, in moderation, for heart health benefits.

**Dr Sarah White:** Oh really?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Because the antioxidants in coffee, are heart health promoting. So it's because it comes from that coffee bean, so again, it's a little bit like chocolate in the sense that, I would say if there's one chocolate to eat, go for the dark chocolate.

**Dr Sarah White:** Oh, you're making me so happy right now, Jemma.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** And it's because there's health benefits in chocolate, but it comes back to the cacao bean. Just like coffee, it comes back to the coffee bean.

**Dr Sarah White:** Right. So you're going to say a little chocolate in moderation, dark chocolate. But I'm okay to have my coffee and if I make a plug for this if I may, if I have my cafe latte, I am getting dairy and I'm also getting hydration, right?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** And calcium as well for strong bones.

**Dr Sarah White:** Fantastic. I might have two. Okay. So let's talk about some of those diets that get bandied about, from, there's so many different types, it's almost hard to remember what they are. What's fact and what's fiction when it comes to these diets of the day? What should we be looking out for?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Okay, well, first and foremost, I would always say get your advice from a qualified professional. So when we're talking about diets, always see an accredited practicing dietician. If you're looking to go on a wellness journey and explore a healthier eating pattern, I think that's essential that we get our advice. And we're all different and unique, so what will work for one person won't work for another. So seeking that individualised advice is essential. I would also say, avoid any fad diets that are really restrictive. This time of year is when we see a lot of advertising. It is everywhere because it's that kind of thing—

**Dr Sarah White:** Getting ready for summer.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Exactly. And I think definitely avoid any restrictive diets. And I would say if there's one diet to follow, it would be the Mediterranean diet.

**Dr Sarah White:** I was going to ask you about this. It seems to be the one that keeps coming up all the time, and from people who really know what they're talking about, i.e. the nutritionist and the dieticians. What's the Mediterranean diet?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** So it's really, I mean it's the diet that the people of the Mediterranean eat, and it's that traditional eating pattern. I just came back from spending six weeks in Europe. I was eating Mediterranean every day and it was incredible. I ate so much beautiful seafood. But interestingly, the Mediterranean diet is mostly plant-based, so all fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, avocado, olive oil, they're all plants. And the Mediterranean diet is rich in them. It does also contain some fish and seafood. Two to three times a week, we should be having the fish and seafood for omega-3s to also support our brain health and our heart health. And chicken, and eggs in moderation. Less red meat. So red meat is not common in the Mediterranean diet, sometimes, but not on a regular basis. And less of those processed meats as well, and less of the processed foods in general.

So if it's in a package and it has a long ingredients list, it's definitely not a part of the Mediterranean diet. But the Mediterranean diet is brilliant. It's been ranked the number one diet for seven years now by the US News and World Report. And for a good reason, it increases our longevity, it reduces the risk of many chronic diseases like heart disease, type two diabetes, many cancers, and also helps with mental health. So it helps with depression, and boosts our brain health. So if there's one diet to follow, and it's not a diet, I don't like the word 'diet', diet is a bit of a dirty word. It's an eating pattern, and it's a traditional eating pattern. So that's the one to follow.

**Dr Sarah White:** And I was just about to say, 'diet' seems so misleading because really it is kind of like the Mediterranean eating style, right?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Exactly. And I mean, diets often are also associated with something that's short term and a quick fix. The Mediterranean eating pattern, it's a lifestyle. And this is why they live so long that they do, because they've been eating this way their entire lives.

**Dr Sarah White:** Now, is there somewhere that people can go for more information, because we, we've run through some things, but it's hard to remember when you're listening to a podcast or you might be walking or in the car. Where can people go for more information on the Mediterranean eating pattern?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Well, again, I would actually recommend the Heart Foundation website. So the Heart Foundation's heart healthy eating pattern is based on the Mediterranean diet, as well as the DASH diet, which is the dietary approaches to stop hypertension. They're two similar dietary patterns. The difference is that the DASH diet is more focused on stricter salt limits, because salt increases blood pressure. So, whereas the Mediterranean diet, it's more around—

**Dr Sarah White:** Doesn't have that restriction on the salt as much.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Exactly.

**Dr Sarah White:** But otherwise, pretty similar.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Pretty similar. So definitely the Heart Foundation's heart healthy eating pattern, the five key principles of that, it outlines what's included. So go there to find out more information.

**Dr Sarah White:** So let me ask about, we've talked about some of the really great ways to get really good nutritious food. How you know if you perhaps need to see someone for extra support around your diet? What would be some of the things that you might be noticing that prompts you to go and see a nutritionist or a dietician or perhaps your doctor? What are those sort of red flags that you start to worry about, Jemma?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Well, I think it's when we start to not feel 'ourselves'. I think, we may be lacking energy, we may be feeling really tired, fatigued. We may have gut issues going on. Maybe we're not going to the toilet as regularly as we usually would, or we're just not quite feeling ourselves. And so that's when I would seek that advice. A lot of people associate a dietician with needing to lose weight, but dieticians do so much more. We cover all challenges when it comes to food and nutrition, and we support people of all age groups as well.

**Dr Sarah White:** So it's actually, wouldn't be a bad idea to go and see a dietician or nutritionist as you get older to help work out that food plan. It's not about weight, it's about eating for good health.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** A hundred percent. I personally believe every person should have their own dietician. I mean, I'm a little bit biased, but I think that to get your nutrition right, it really does set you up for success. And long-term health and wellbeing, of course, accompanied with many other lifestyle factors. But when you look at, the leading killer of Australians is heart disease, and poor diet is the leading contributor to the burden of coronary heart disease.

**Dr Sarah White:** I think dementia is close to knocking off heart disease. And nutrition's also really important for brain health. We heard that from Dr Marita Long in another podcast from this same series. So there's a lot of incentives to eat well.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** That's it. And I think a lot of women, as we age as well, it can be harder to maintain a healthy weight, or we tend to store body fat a little bit more in the abdominal area.

**Dr Sarah White:** Yeah, good old menopause.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** That's it. And look, so that increases our risks of chronic diseases like heart disease, type two diabetes, and even cancers like breast cancer. So some women are looking for advice and support as they go through these normal changes that we all go through. And so I think, even the dementian piece, trying to keep our brains healthy, nutrition has a huge role. And interestingly as well, a lot of women think they have to cut all the fat out of their diet to be healthy and manage their weight, and that is absolutely proven wrong now. So low fat diets are very much for the past, we now need to include healthy fats in our diet.

And in fact, I never talk about calories anymore or counting calories. If you ask me how many calories something contained, I probably wouldn't be able to tell you, because that's very much the old way of thinking. We now know that it's not about how many calories we have, it's about the eating pattern we have, the foods, and how often we eat these nutritious foods as part of that dietary pattern. That's what matters the most. And when it comes to our healthy fats, we need them. We need–

**Dr Sarah White:** We're talking avocado—

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Avocado, nuts, seeds, olive oil. Going back to, we're talking about the Mediterranean diet. When I was in Europe and we were served these bread rolls at the start of our dinner, there was never any butter on the table. The only thing we were served with the bread roll was extra virgin olive oil.

**Dr Sarah White:** For dipping.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Yeah. And they just use it everywhere over in the Mediterranean. And it is one of the healthiest oils you can use in your cooking, with salad dressings, everywhere, really you can use it. And so the evidence now really demonstrates that we need these healthy fats in our diet, and in fact, if we don't have it, we can be at risk of some of these diseases.

**Dr Sarah White:** So it's really the processed food that we're trying to avoid, at the end of the day, isn't it?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Yes. And look, there is more and more evidence that's coming through around the links between ultra-processed foods and the links with disease later in life. I think ultra-processed foods, it's a very complex topic. In general though, less packets the better. I would say the more we can cook from scratch at home, I know it's not always possible, and I know there can be many constraints for a lot of people, but wherever possible, if we can cook simple meals at home from scratch, we're going to be a lot healthier.

**Dr Sarah White:** And I know there's a lot of help now available, but going back to those recipes as a working mother myself, it's sometimes, that time to cook from scratch, that's the issue. But there are things like meal subscription services. There's, even the major supermarkets have websites where they often have really simple recipes and they tell you exactly where to pick up all the different pieces and ingredients, and often they've got a dollar beside what it's going to cost you to make it. So there is help out there.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** There is. And I think some of those meal subscription services are helpful as well, because it gives us the ingredients in a box and then we can make them up quite easily. So it's combining a little bit of convenience, but with that home cooking. And yes, nutritious meals don't have to be complicated. And again, it's simple things like combining beautiful healthy fats with our vegetables and with herbs and spices to flavour them. I think that's why some of us hate various vegetables, because we grew up with them being over boiled and these grey, horrible things, and we associate that with these horrible childhood memories. But vegetables don't have to be bland and boring, and we can certainly get a lot of joy out of eating vegetables and healthy foods in general. So I'd encourage the listeners out there to experiment, try different food combinations, but start simple, and you don't have to be a master chef to eat well.

**Dr Sarah White:** Great. Now, one thing we haven't touched on at all, we've talked a lot about food, but what about staying hydrated, and this whole, I must admit I'm a little excited by the Mediterranean diet at the idea that I can have my glass of red wine. What have you got in terms of tips for drinking instead of eating?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Yes. So hydration is very important. So, eight cups is roughly the recommended guideline according to the Australian dietary guidelines for women.

**Dr Sarah White:** That's eight cups of water, not red wine.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Well definitely water is the drink of choice.

**Dr Sarah White:** Great.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** And it does include, in those eight cups, it can include other drinks like milk or tea or coffee, et cetera. But water needs to be the primary drink of choice. Tap water, it's free, it's accessible. Wherever you go, take a water bottle, have it on you. I've got one just over there in my bag. You saw me sipping on it earlier. So that's a good tip. Just make sure you've got a water bottle wherever you go. And of course, it depends on even where you are in Australia and the climate conditions, you might need more. If you're sweating a lot through exercise, of course you're going to need more. But yes, in terms of alcohol, look, that's probably one thing I would say 'less is more'. So there's certainly, I would say don't drink alcohol for health benefits. Keep it in moderation and focus on getting your water in first and foremost.

**Dr Sarah White:** Terrific. Well, look, we've had an enormous and wide-ranging discussion here, Jemma. Thank you. That's been immensely helpful. Do you have any sort of final tips for our listeners, something that we haven't covered today, or just your three top things you'd like people to take away?

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Well, I would say, cook more and eat less of those packaged foods and less takeaway. Focus on that Mediterranean diet first and foremost, get all those healthy fats in, get those veggies in, fruits, whole grains, legumes. We've talked about all those foods. And I think the final piece is probably, remember the joy in food.

**Dr Sarah White:** Great point.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Food brings us all joy. And we don't have to associate our healthy eating with restrictive diets. We can find joy in food, we can have a healthy relationship with food. We can enjoy food mindfully and intuitively and really savour it. Think about the process from farm to fork as you are eating your food and have that beautiful gratitude for the meals in front of you, and the experience that you have with other people, sitting at a table enjoying food with others. I think the social aspect is such an important part of health and wellbeing as well. So let's never forget the joy that food brings us.

**Dr Sarah White:** Oh, that's a great note to end on. Jemma O'Hanlon, thank you so much for joining us.

**Jemma O’Hanlon:** Thanks for having me, Sarah.

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**Information about Jean Hailes for Women’s Health**

Jean Hailes for Women's Health is a national not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the health of all women, girls and gender-diverse people. For free, evidence-based and easy-to-understand health information, visit [www.jeanhailes.org.au](http://www.jeanhailes.org.au).

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