



# Behaviours and attitudes towards consumption of cereal foods in WA, 2015

## Background

The Nutrition Monitoring Survey Series has been conducted in Western Australia (WA) since 1995 to investigate knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of West Australians relating to food, nutrition and the Australian Dietary Guidelines. The surveys include assessments of dietary change as well as barriers and promoters of dietary change. The most recent survey was conducted in 2015.

The state-wide telephone survey included 1207 participants. One third (33%) of respondents were male and two thirds (67%) were female. Ages ranged from 18 to 64 years, with almost half (45%) residing in the Perth metropolitan area.

Data were weighted for sample design and probability of selection in 2015. Post survey adjustments were made to compensate for under or over representation of gender, age or areas of residence using the 2014 Estimated Resident Population for WA people aged 18 to 64 years.

## Recommended intake of cereal foods

The Australian Dietary Guidelines<sup>1</sup> recommend that Australians should enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from the five food groups every day. Consumption of mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties is recommended, such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles. Energy dense cereal foods such as cakes, muffins, pastries and biscuits are not included in this group.

One serve of cereal foods is any of the following:

- One slice of bread
- Half a medium bread roll or flat bread
- Half a cup of cooked rice, barley or other grains
- Half a cup of cooked pasta or noodles
- One quarter of a cup of muesli
- Half a cup of cooked porridge
- Two thirds of a cup of wheat cereal flakes
- Three crispbreads

<sup>1</sup> Australian Government. Eat for Health. Australian Dietary Guidelines. Providing the scientific evidence for healthier Australian diets. National Health and Medical Research Council, Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2013

## Key results

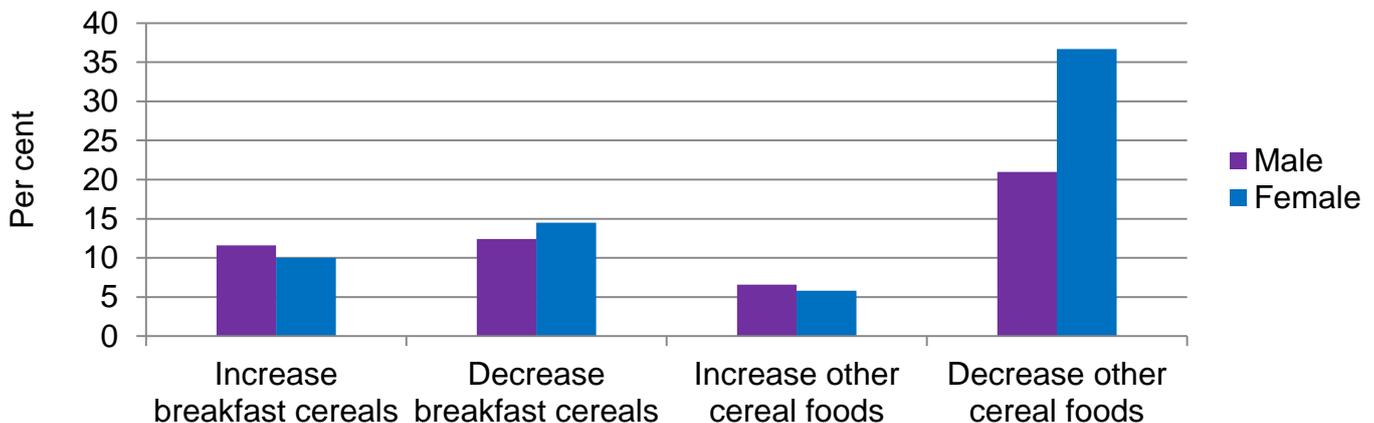
### Consumption of cereal foods on the day prior to the survey

- Two thirds (65%) of WA adults reported consuming bread on the day prior to the survey. Of those who consumed bread on that day, 34% consumed multigrain or wholegrain bread, 30% consumed white bread, and 24% consumed brown or wholemeal bread.
- One quarter (26%) of WA adults reported consuming rice on the day prior to the survey. Of those who consumed rice, 83% consumed white rice and 17% consumed brown rice.
- Almost half (44%) of WA adults reported consuming breakfast cereal on the day prior to the survey.
- There were no significant differences in bread, rice or breakfast cereal consumption by gender, age group or area of residence.

### Current attempts to change cereal food consumption in the last year

- Almost two thirds (63%) of WA adults reported that they already eat enough cereal foods and only 7% said they were trying to eat more.
- Similar proportions of WA adults reported having tried to either increase their breakfast cereal intake (11%), or decrease their breakfast cereal intake (13%) in the past 12 months.
- More than a quarter (29%) of WA adults reported having tried to decrease their consumption of 'other' cereal foods, such as bread, rice or pasta, in the past 12 months. Only 6% reported having tried to increase their consumption of 'other' cereal foods.
- Females were more likely than males to have tried to decrease their 'other' cereal food intake in the past 12 months (37% compared with 21%).
- Those aged 35 to 44 years (42%) were more likely to have tried to decrease their 'other' cereal food intake in the past 12 months than all other age groups.

Figure 1. Attempts to change cereal food intake in the last year, by gender, NMSS 2015



### Knowledge of health problems caused by not eating enough cereal foods

- One fifth (20%) of WA adults said they did not know what health problems were related to not eating enough cereal foods.
- Almost one in six (17%) said not eating enough cereal foods will not cause health problems.
- The most frequently mentioned problems reported for inadequate consumption of cereal foods were lethargy/low energy (21%), constipation/irregular bowel movements (20%) and not enough fibre (19%).

Prepared by the Chronic Disease Prevention Directorate, Public and Aboriginal Health Division

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