



# Attitudes and knowledge about fat consumption 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.

## Recommendations concerning fat

The Australian Dietary Guidelines<sup>1</sup> recommend that adults should: limit their intake of foods containing saturated fat; and replace high (saturated) fat foods with foods containing predominantly polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat.

## Key results

### Frequency of trying to avoid foods high in fat

- Around half (46%) of WA adults said they 'often' tried to avoid foods high in fat, while 24% 'sometimes' tried and 20% 'always' tried.
- Those aged 55 to 64 years were more likely than younger age groups to report 'always' trying to avoid food high in fat (37%).
- Those classified as overweight were more likely than those classified as obese to never try to avoid food high in fat (8% compared with 1%).
- Those classified as a healthy weight were more likely than those classified as overweight to say they 'rarely' tried to avoid foods high in fat (11% compared with 1%).

### Use of poly- or mono-unsaturated fats when preparing food

- One third of WA adults (35%) had tried to change the type of fat included in their diet in the past 12 months.
- One third of WA adults (35%) reported that they 'always' choose mono or polyunsaturated fat when preparing food with fat or oil.

<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

- Around one quarter of WA adults (27%) said that they did not understand the terms mono or polyunsaturated fat; and another 4% could not remember what the terms meant.

### **Current attempts to eat less fat and fatty foods**

- Almost two in five WA adults (44%) said they 'already eat a diet low in fat' and 26% said they were 'trying to eat less fat and fatty foods'.
- WA adults aged 55 to 64 years were more likely than those aged 35 to 44 years to say they already eat a diet low in fat (54% compared with 38%).
- Those adults classified as obese were less likely than others to say they already eat a low fat diet (28% compared with 50% overweight and 53% healthy weight).
- Those classified as obese were significantly more likely to be trying to eat less fat and fatty foods than those of a healthy weight (36% compared with 14%).

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

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