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healthylife

Living healthy

2025

report



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WOOLWORTHS GROUP

Harnessing the
digital world
for better health

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About this report

The *Living Healthy* reports (2022–2025) are produced by Healthylife's Advisory Board. Healthylife is a Woolworths Group business, and these evidence-based documents provide an annual 'pulse check' on Australians' health. Their themes reflect the key health challenges and opportunities relevant to their times and represent the Advisory Board's thoughts on what 'next steps' could be taken to benefit Australians' health. The reports combine key statistics with unique Woolworths Group data, grouped into topics or 'pillars' with this year's being: Eat Healthy, Move and Sleep Healthy, Feel Healthy, and Stay Healthy.

The reports focus on health promotion and disease prevention, including how the environments in which we live, shop, work, play, sleep and learn influence our health. With significant investments in the digital space and a large national footprint, Woolworths Group creates physical and digital environments that help shape the health of its team members, suppliers and customers. The aim is for these to support good health and make it easier for us all to include healthy habits in our daily lives.

The reports share initiatives that showcase how actions align with both the Healthylife purpose – *To help everyone to live their healthy life* – and the Woolworths Group purpose – *We create better experiences together for a better tomorrow*. The reports also highlight areas for improvement and are useful reference guides for partners and policymakers.

The *Living Healthy Report 2025* focuses on how we can harness the digital world's potential to increase our years of healthy living and minimise its potential harm on health. We discuss how digital technology is contributing to shaping the health of our generations.

Acknowledgement of Country

Woolworths Group acknowledges the many Traditional Owners of the lands on which we operate and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We recognise their strengths and enduring connection to lands, waters and skies as the custodians of the oldest continuing cultures on the planet. We are committed to actively contributing to Australia's reconciliation journey through listening and learning, empowering more diverse voices, caring deeply for our communities and working together for a better tomorrow.

Disclaimer

This report does not provide health or medical advice and does not consider your individual circumstances, health or dietary requirements. No representation is made about individual improvements to health. The information published is not intended as a substitute for health or medical advice. If you have any concerns or questions about your health, you should consult with your general practitioner (GP) or other health professional.



Harnessing the digital world for better health.

Overview

Rapidly changing digital environments are reshaping health as we know it. With information at our fingertips and the constant circulation of health advice and digital tools available, the time is ripe to harness the digital world to benefit our health.

Guardrails and regulations in place will help to prioritise health and wellbeing, and to minimise harm.

To help everyone live their healthy life is our goal.

Eat healthy

Move & sleep healthy

Feel healthy

Stay healthy

Outlook



Harnessing the digital world for better health



Australians are living longer and want to lead healthier and more productive lives. However, one in two are living with a chronic health condition and, on average, we live 11 years in poor health. We need to harness the full potential that digital tools offer to help our health catch up with our longevity, build healthier communities and reduce the burden of disease.

Digital technology is integrated into every facet of our lives as illustrated by the 94.9% of Australians identifying as internet adopters. Those of us aged 16–64 years spend an average of 6 hours 14 minutes online each day. Our digital environments, much like our physical ones, impact our health by influencing how we live, shop, work, sleep, play and learn. For instance, maintaining good health requires nourishing food, and we know that many people make their grocery purchasing decisions online.

Untapped opportunities

These environments present untapped opportunities for health promotion. Understanding the digital spaces people visit online and the tools they use is critical if we want to harness them to create supportive environments for health. However, digital technologies also come with challenges, with the spread of misinformation and the promotion of unhealthy behaviours.

The *Living Healthy Report 2024* highlighted some of the digital world's challenges for our future generations' health. It found physical activity is declining while recreational screen time is rising. Social media can provide a platform to connect, share interests and express ourselves creatively, but it can also negatively impact our mental health and wellbeing.

Future generations will experience health care differently as we evolve in this landscape. We are seeing increased access to health care via telehealth, but the variable quality of health services and information available online highlights a critical question for the health industry: How can we harness the digital world's potential to enhance health outcomes while mitigating its risks?

The key lies in shifting funding to emphasise prevention over cure; viewing health as an investment, not an expense. This requires an 'ecosystem' approach, where institutions outside the traditional healthcare sector pursue opportunities. Woolworths Group, including Healthylife, is an important and influential part of this ecosystem in both our digital and physical environments.

The digital world is here to stay and it is not inherently good or bad. It provides tools that we can harness to support more years of healthy living. We need to evolve our digital experiences to ensure they serve us well. Evidence-based information and services that are accessible to all, together with ethical guardrails and ongoing research, are essential to ensure the digital world works for, not against, our health.



Key findings



Shifting shopping habits



- ✓ **Digital shopping growth:** Weekly visits to Woolworths Group's digital platforms surpassed in-store transactions, rising 19.7% in F24.
- ✓ **Health promotion opportunities:** Digital platforms are key for promotional health information.
- ✓ **Guardrails on promotions:** Ensure safeguards around health-related promotions.

Dietary challenges



- ✓ **Dietary cost and gap:** We aren't following the Australian Dietary Guidelines for at-home eating, citing barriers like price, time and unhealthy food promotions despite our data showing a healthy shop can be cheaper than the average shop.
- ✓ **Impact of apps:** Tools like Food Tracker by Healthylife can positively influence healthy food purchases.

Screen time and physical activity



- ✓ **Excess screen time:** Australians (16–64 yrs) average 6hrs 14mins online daily, exceeding recommended limits.
- ✓ **Health tracking tools:** 56% of people¹ use health trackers, yet physical activity is below recommendations.
- ✓ **Activity ROI:** Every \$1 spent on boosting physical activity could yield a \$3.11 return.

Sleep health



- ✓ **Health priority:** Sleep health is the most common health priority (44%).^{1,2}
- ✓ **Light impacts sleep:** As well as screen lights, home lighting can impact sleep.

Health information



- ✓ **Seeking advice:** We vary how we like to find health advice between online sources and in-person, with a health professional.¹
- ✓ **Quality control:** Digital platforms provide opportunities to create access to accurate information that supports primary care.



The Healthylife Advisory Board outlines its suggestions in the 'next steps' section on page 64 of this report

1 IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.
2 Most common priority not including food-related.

Key statistics

Eat healthy

The perceived high cost of healthy food and the promotion of unhealthy food are barriers to a balanced diet. Data shows a healthy food shop can be cheaper and incentives can drive healthy purchases.



65%

of people said price is the number one factor when online shopping for healthy food and drinks¹

~8%

cheaper to purchase a healthy food shop compared to the average Australian food shop²

10%

average increase in both fruit and vegetable serves³

➔ See page 14



Move & sleep healthy

Australians like to use digital health tracking tools to support healthy behaviours. To be effective, these must be evidence-based, have data interpreted correctly and include health professional support.

56%

of people use digital health tools to track aspects of their health¹

25%

of people who track their health track steps¹

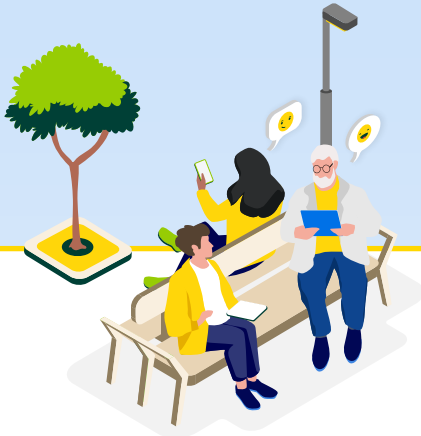
44%

of people report improving sleep as a health priority^{1,4}

➔ See page 30



1. IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.
2. Adjusted Woolworths Supermarket and Metro Data.
3. Fruit and vegetable serves bought by those participating in the Food Tracker by HealthyLife National Fruit & Veg Challenge.
4. Most common priority not including food-related.
5. Growing up digital Australia: phase 2 technical report (28 Apr 2021).



Feel healthy

Understanding how we use our time on screens is key to ensuring it positively influences our mental wellbeing and sense of connection.

30%

of people reported spending more time looking after their mental wellbeing as a health priority¹

33%

of people reported nurturing relationships with friends, family and community as a health priority¹

90%

of Australian parents feel they are negatively distracted by digital technologies⁵

➔ See page 44

Stay healthy

People are embracing digital technologies to access health information and care, hence the importance of it being high quality and evidence-based and accessible to all.



32%

of people read advice online from articles to find health information¹

16%

of people get health advice from a health professional via telehealth¹

21%

of people seek advice from qualified health professionals on social media to find health information¹

➔ See page 52

We're committed to health



Welcome to the **fourth edition** of the *Living Healthy Report*, brought to you by Healthylife, part of Woolworths Group.

Digital technology has so many interactions in our daily lives and is inherently influencing our health and health outcomes. The focus for this year's report on the intersection of health and the digital world reflects our commitment to making health easier and more accessible for all.

At Healthylife our purpose is: **to help everyone live their healthy life**. Digital innovation is transforming the way we approach health, bridging gaps in accessibility and empowering individuals with tools and information. As Woolworths Group works towards its health goal – **Make health easier for all Australians and New Zealanders** – this report highlights the opportunities and challenges in leveraging digital technology to improve health outcomes.

The urgency of this topic is evident. With more digital touchpoints across Woolworths Group than in-store, customers are increasingly turning to online platforms for everyday needs. This shift represents an unprecedented opportunity to make a positive impact at scale, especially as digital solutions can overcome some traditional barriers such as location and availability of resources.

Over the past year, Healthylife has made significant strides. From enhancing our website for easier access to health information and products, to expanding our telehealth services and incentivising healthier eating with Food Tracker through Everyday Rewards, we're actively working to create a healthier future for all.

Our Healthylife Advisory Board continues to guide us by identifying areas for advocacy and improvement within Woolworths Group and the wider community. While we've achieved much, we recognise there's always more to do. By embracing digital innovation, we can continue to address unmet needs and drive meaningful change to our communities.

Ananth Sarathy

Chief Executive Officer, Healthylife



Welcome to Healthylife and our Advisory Board

Healthylife is a health expert and evidence-led business for health, wellness, telehealth and pharmacy needs. Our purpose is to help everyone live a healthy life. We pride ourselves on delivering easy-to-understand information and trusted products and services. Our health team and Advisory Board ensure our initiatives are science-based.

To date, we have invested significantly in curating our product range, offering free health information and an automated nutrition tool, Food Tracker. Food Tracker makes it easier to understand a Woolworths supermarket shop's nutritional balance, comparing it to the Australian Dietary Guidelines. The Healthylife team and Advisory Board advocate to government, industry, partners and the public to improve our health and wellbeing.



The Healthylife Advisory Board

All our Advisory Board members are qualified health professionals in their fields, bringing many perspectives and experiences. They are:



Simone Austin

Chief Health Officer, Healthylife

Chair of Advisory Board,
Accredited Practising Dietitian



Dr Dinesh Palipana

Emergency Department Doctor

Lawyer,
OAM



Dr Moira Junge

Registered Health Psychologist

Chief Executive Officer,
Sleep Health Foundation



Dr Rob McCartney

**Chief Medical Officer,
Woolworths Group**

Occupational and
Environmental Physician



Sarah Gray

**Chief of Health Operations
and Innovation, Healthylife**

Registered Pharmacist
and Nutritionist



A new era for health

We are at a defining moment in history: the last generations to know life before digital technology, while shaping a future where it is embedded in our lives. Whilst we welcome the benefits, we must ensure its influence supports rather than compromises our wellbeing.

'Digital natives' – those born 1981 to present – are Australia's largest demographic. These young people have been born and raised in the digital era; to them, using technology is as familiar as speaking their native language. They are guided by 'digital immigrants' – their parents and teachers – who role-model many behaviours, including screen use. The challenge is that these role models are also learning about the impact of technology on their own health.

We are in an era where talking about digital behaviours, such as how much time we spend on social media or screens and their impacts on our health, are commonplace. Digital environments are yet another area for us to navigate on our health journeys and we need support in understanding how they influence our wellbeing.

As I write this report, I am optimistic that we will harness the digital world's potential to reduce chronic disease. I believe that to be successful we must take an ecosystem approach wherein the commercial, not-for-profit and government sectors work together.

This cooperation will involve supporting each other to enable healthy behaviours from a young age and get health promotional tools into Australians' hands, while putting in place guardrails that prioritise health.

We can't afford to ignore data and statistics. For example, we know that if every Australian ate one more serving of vegetables a day we could reduce

the risk of long-term illness by 14%. Our data tells us we are still only purchasing around half (2.8) of the recommended 5 servings of vegetables a day, however we have *Food Tracker* initiatives demonstrating how digital tools can help us achieve better outcomes.

We must also be bold with social media, to ensure health messaging is effective. To my delight, we have already seen success in this area, with the 'Cucumber' and 'Dense bean salads' viral recipes increasing vegetable purchases. **My aim is to see more digital content with healthy recipes and the joys of going to bed early go viral!**

With all the information and tools available in today's world we need to be both digital and health literate. This is a tough call for many, but the time is right for us to take a deep dive into the digital world and its influence on our health.

I'm excited to learn how we can best harness this technology to support people and make sure digital environments are safe and accessible to maximise years of healthy living.



Simone Austin
Chief Health Officer, HealthyLife



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"Digital environments are yet another area for us to navigate on our health journeys and we need support in understanding how they influence our wellbeing."

10%

average increase
in fruit and veg
serves bought
using Food Tracker ¹

44.7%

of nutrition-related
social media posts
contain inaccuracies ²

¹ Fruit and vegetable serves bought by those participating in the Food Tracker by Healthylife National Fruit & Veg Challenge.

² <https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12966-024-01565-y>



Digital Australia

A quick look at 'digital Australia' indicates how crucial digital technology is to our nation's health:



25.12%

of social housing tenants were mobile-only users in 2021 compared to **9.6% of the general population**



SOCIAL MEDIA

86.5%

of Australian adults use social media platforms

APP USAGE

1.1b

app downloads (all apps) by Australian users in 2023

VIDEO STREAMING

91%

of Australian adults used a device to stream video content at home



SCREEN TIME

6h 14m

is the average time typical Australian internet users (16–64 years) spend online each day

1h 51m

is the typical Australian social media user's daily time spent using social media

DIGITAL vs IN-STORE

25.4m

weekly product searches on Woolworths' website and app, and digital visits now exceed in-store visits



Digital inclusion

Digital inclusion means ensuring people can access and use the internet and other technology to improve their daily lives. In Australia, 1 in 4 people are digitally excluded, according to the [Australian Digital Inclusion Index](#). The Index uses survey data to measure digital inclusion across three dimensions of Access, Affordability and Digital Ability to identify the critical barriers to inclusion.

Reducing disparities in access increases opportunities for all to enjoy the health benefits the digital world offers. Often taken for granted is the cost of the internet and digital devices that can result in unequal access to these resources across socioeconomic layers. This may also include digital ability that is of most concern to those aged over 75.



People with disability



Ensuring people living with disability have equitable [digital access](#) is essential for equitable health care. Digital content must be readily available through enabled devices to open the digital world, which includes apps, information, wearables, mobile devices, transport modalities and more. The [Centre for Accessibility Australia](#) outlines a number of barriers people with disability may face when accessing digital technology. These include not being able to see, hear or move, or not being able to process some types of information easily or at all.

First Nations Australians



First Nations Australians are strong digital technology users and have well-recognised use cases of how to engage digitally to improve health, particularly where cultural factors have been considered. However, First Nations Australians still experience a [digital gap](#) in most areas [regardless of remoteness](#). [Digital access](#) is of particular concern for those living in remote and very remote areas, where infrastructure for digital technology is less consistent than in metropolitan regions.

CALD backgrounds



People with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, which includes the [30.7%](#) of the Australian population born overseas (as of 2023), may experience [challenges in accessing](#) the digital world for health. Given the rapid development of digital health services, CALD Australians should soon have better local access to advice in their languages.

The digital environment influencing our health

The fast-moving digital world is shaping our communities with new environments where we live, sleep, play, shop, work and learn.

Digital environments are not always visible in the way physical environments are. We can be engaged in different digital environments to others while sharing the same space. The challenge is to make our digital and physical environments work together to support positive health outcomes that are accessible to all.

Benefits and challenges

The positives of the digital world are manifold: it allows for individualisation and the ability to connect with anyone from almost anywhere. However it makes other aspects of life tricky, such as how parents monitor content's appropriateness and how individuals protect their own wellbeing. In our physical world, potential threats may be obvious from a distance, giving adults time to intervene. On digital devices and social media platforms, threats can approach undetected and the consequences are not always immediately clear.

Social skills

The digital environment provides an opportunity for socialising via online forums and chat functions and to develop relationships across vast geographical distances and cultures. The digital environment, however, can impact our ability to develop in-person social skills, distract us from deeply engaging in conversations and miss the beauty and health benefits of the outside world. It is also difficult to escape and disconnect from the online world, where cyberbullying or fear of missing out can impact our mental wellbeing.





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Eat healthy



The perceived high cost of healthy food and the promotion of unhealthy food are barriers to a balanced diet. Data shows a healthy food shop can be cheaper and incentives can drive healthy purchases.

65%

of people said price is the number one factor when online shopping for healthy food and drinks¹

~8%

cheaper to purchase a healthy food shop compared to the average Australian food shop²

10%

average increase in both fruit and vegetable serves³

1. IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.

2. Adjusted Woolworths Supermarket and Metro Data.

3. Fruit and vegetable serves bought by those participating in the Food Tracker by Healthylife National Fruit & Veg Challenge.



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Household purchasing



What are Australians purchasing?

In recent years how we buy our food and get cooking inspiration have changed dramatically. From online food and grocery delivery and the abundance of unhealthy food advertising, to social media's mix of information, misinformation and inspiration. These influences make it crucial to understand the digital world's impact on healthier eating. What hasn't changed as dramatically is the composition of the household food shop for at-home eating, across all retail (i.e. not restaurants or cafés), compared to the Australian Dietary Guidelines (ADG).

Our data shows the composition of the household food shop for at-home eating, across all retail, **does not contain sufficient daily serves of any of the core food groups compared to the Australian Dietary Guidelines (ADG) for adults 19–50 years**. For adults aged 51–70 years it only meets the Meat and alternatives food group for women 51–70 years.

3.3%

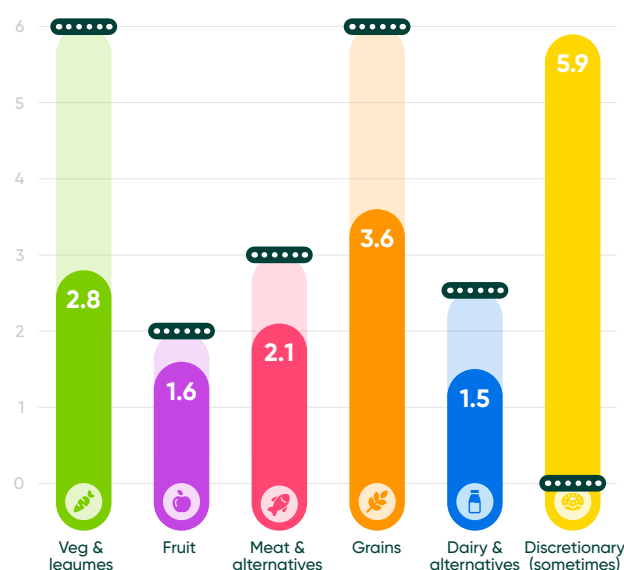
decrease in
average serves
purchased for
discretionary
foods in 2024
(5.9 serves)

6.1 serves in 2023



The food group serves Australians are buying

for at-home eating, per person, per day, 2024



ADG-recommended serves per person, per day, based on male 19–50 years. Data period 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024.

Vegetables increase; discretionary decreases

We still have a long way to go to reach the recommended 5–6 serves of vegetables a day. However, the Vegetables and legumes food group showed promising results, with a slight increase in the number of serves purchased from an average of 2.5 per person per day in 2022 and 2023 to 2.8 in 2024.

Another positive is discretionary foods' reduction from an average of 6.1 serves per person, per day to 5.9 serves. However, at around one-third of total serves, these foods still contribute more serves than any other group. Our health can benefit if we rapidly increase the proportion of core to discretionary foods.

The Grains and cereals food group reduced from 3.9 serves per person per day to 3.6. Concerning when Australians are not hitting the 48g wholegrain Daily Target; and a diet low in wholegrains and high-fibre cereals is considered the second-highest dietary risk contributing to the total burden of disease in Australia.

What causes these purchasing shifts is difficult to determine.

Factors may include: price, availability, promotion and online influences such as viral recipes. The increased use of Glucagon-like peptide (GLP-1) and related drugs for obesity may alter food preferences and reduce food intake, possibly changing purchasing behaviours.

It is not a matter of Australians ticking off the recommended serves daily, rather it's achieving a consistent balance over weeks and months. Understanding what drives change is important so we can harness digital tools to shift us closer to recommended dietary intakes.



Serves purchased

per person, per day, compared to the Australian Dietary Guidelines

FOOD GROUP	RECOMMENDED SERVES ¹		PURCHASED SERVES				
	MALE	FEMALE	2024	2023	2022	2021 ²	2020 ²
Vegetables & legumes	6	5	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.7
Fruit	2	2	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6
Meat & alternatives	3	2.5	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.3
Grains	6	6	3.6	3.9	3.8	4.0	4.0
Dairy & alternatives	2.5	2.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7
Discretionary (sometimes)	(0–3)	(0–3)	5.9	6.1	6.0	6.8	6.7

¹ Australian Dietary Guidelines recommended serves per day, 19–50 years. Data period 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024.

² These years were impacted by purchasing during the COVID pandemic.

Top contributors to food groups

based on Australian Dietary Guidelines serving sizes



Vegetables & legumes

Potatoes	12.0%
Tomatoes	8.5%
Frozen vegetables	6.6%
Canned vegetables	6.4%
Carrots	6.3%
Lettuce	5.9%
Brassica vegetables (e.g. broccoli)	5.0%
Onions	4.9%
Avocados	4.8%
Legumes	4.7%



Fruit

Juices (100% fruit)	17.3%
Bananas	16.3%
Apples	9.5%
Melons	7.5%
Grapes	5.5%
Dried fruit	5.2%
Oranges and lemons	5.0%
Strawberries	3.9%
Mandarins	3.8%
Coconut water	3.2%



Meat & alternatives

Poultry	23.9%
Beef	15.5%
Eggs	8.6%
Hot food (e.g. roast chicken)	8.3%
Lamb	6.2%
Nuts	6.0%
Pork	5.2%
Seafood	4.6%
Spreads (e.g. peanut butter)	3.4%
Legumes	2.5%



Grains

Bread	36.0%
Breakfast cereals	14.1%
Rice	11.8%
Pasta	9.4%
Flour	6.6%
Noodles	3.8%
Other bread (e.g. muffins, crumpets, fruit loaf)	3.6%
Biscuits (savoury)	2.6%
Mexican foods	1.3%
Chilled meals	0.9%



Dairy & alternatives

Milk (dairy fresh)	36.6%
Cheese (dairy)	34.6%
Yoghurt (dairy)	7.7%
Longlife milk (dairy)	7.0%
Longlife milk (plant-based)	4.1%
Flavoured milk (dairy)	3.8%
Breakfast liquid	2.0%
Custard	0.7%
Cheese on pizza	0.6%
Plant-based milk (fresh)	0.3%



Discretionary (sometimes)

Biscuits	9.1%
Butter and margarine	7.6%
Chips	7.2%
Ice cream	6.5%
Chocolate	5.3%
Sugar	5.0%
Soft drinks	4.5%
Frozen chips/wedges	3.4%
Cream	3.3%
Muesli bars	2.3%

Based on Woolworths Supermarket data 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024.
Percentages are total serves purchased for that food group.



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Did you know?

Snacking on vegetables is a good way to hit 5 serves a day. Punnets of 'Snacking carrots' have gained traction with 3.4 million units sold in 2024, compared to 290,000 in 2020.¹

Insights from 2024 purchasing data¹

- ✓ Potatoes held the number one spot in Vegetables. Frozen vegetables moved into position three, swapping with carrots; however the percentage contributions from frozen and canned vegetables and carrots is very similar.
- ✓ Legumes' contribution to both Vegetables and Meat and alternatives was similar to previous years. A diet low in legumes is the number one contributing dietary risk factor to the burden of disease in Australia; we need to eat more.
- ✓ Dairy milk (fresh and longlife, unflavoured) contributes 43.6% to the Dairy and alternatives category compared to plant-based varieties contributing 4.4%.
- ✓ Coconut water makes the Fruit serves top 10; while 100% fruit juice remains number one, but reduces its percentage contribution by around 2%.

¹ Based on Woolworths Supermarket data 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024.

Cheaper to shop healthy

We calculated the average cost per serve of each of the Australian Dietary Guidelines’ five food groups using Woolworths Supermarket average prices for the period 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024. We also calculated the cost for the average household food shop across all retail environments for at-home eating, based on the average ABS household of 2.5 people (1.8 adults, 0.7 children) and a healthy household shop based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines.







Our data shows the average ABS household spend to be \$242.58 per week on a food shop for at-home eating (\$233.63 in 2023), using average cost per food group serve. This shop does not meet the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Discretionary (sometimes) foods contributed on average 37% of total spend and 34% of total serves. If Australian households’ shopping aligned with the ADG there could be an 8% saving at a spend of \$223.56 per week (\$216.05 in 2023). There is potential for further savings if seasonal produce is favoured, lower-cost items and brands are chosen and some discretionary foods are replaced with core food groups.

In comparison to 2023, the cost of discretionary foods has increased an average \$0.06 per serve, as has fruit; whilst vegetables and legumes have increased \$0.05 per serve. The other core food groups have remained within a \$0.01 range with three of the core food groups cheaper per serve than discretionary foods. Although the cost of vegetables increased, so too did the number of serves purchased. This raises the questions: How much does cost contribute to what we buy in practice vs. theory? Did the rising cost of discretionary foods contribute to their slight decrease?

A big opportunity lies in increasing the cheapest core food group – Grains at only \$0.32 per serve – where we’ve seen a decrease in average serves purchased, falling away from hitting targets. Wholegrains should be promoted as the healthier option of the Grains food group.

Weekly household shop cost

per serve, per week

FOOD GROUP	AVERAGE COST PER SERVE ¹	HEALTHY SHOP		AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SHOP ³	
		SERVES/WEEK ²	COST/WEEK	SERVES/WEEK	COST/WEEK
 Vegetables & legumes	\$0.70	93.8	\$65.69	51.8	\$36.30
 Fruit	\$0.98	35.0	\$34.35	28.7	\$28.41
 Meat & alternatives	\$1.24	46.9	\$58.13	37.1	\$46.24
 Grains	\$0.32	100.1	\$31.53	65.1	\$20.54
 Dairy & alternatives	\$0.77	43.8	\$33.85	27.3	\$21.24
 Discretionary (sometimes)	\$0.84	0	0	107.1	\$89.85
Total number of serves	–	319.6	\$223.56	317.10	\$242.58

1 Costing based on Woolworths Supermarket average prices for the period 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024.
2 Healthy shop – recommended serves as per the Australian Dietary Guidelines.
3 Household based on ABS average household composition of 1.8 adults, 0.7 children (0.9 each of 19–50 male, 19–50 female, 0.7 of 9–11 male).



Food influences

Barriers to healthy eating

Our report shows a variety of reasons that act as barriers and enablers to healthy eating. Price is the top reported barrier, with 35% reporting eating healthy foods as expensive despite our data showing it can be cheaper to eat healthy compared to the average Australian food shop.

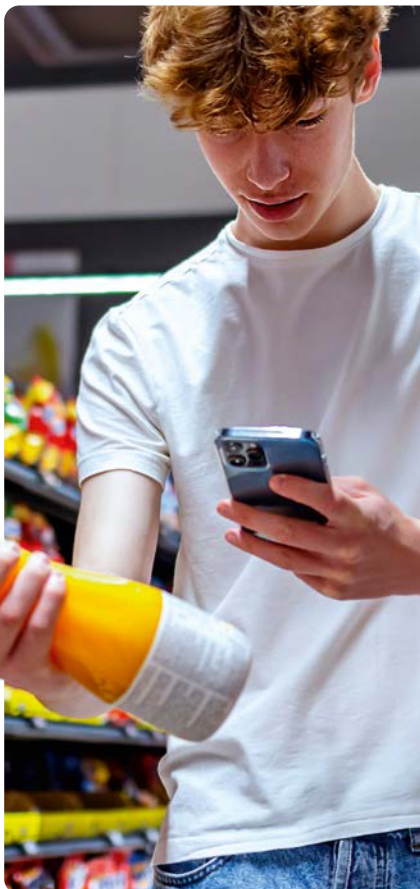
We also see price as the most important factor for 65% of people for online food shopping when choosing healthy food and drinks. Growth in snacking carrots and cucumbers shows convenience sometimes trumps price, as these conveniently prepared healthy options are more expensive per kilogram of produce.

65%

of Australians surveyed said price is the most important factor for online shopping

~8%

cheaper to purchase a healthy food shop compared to the average Australian food shop ¹



Top 5 influences

when choosing healthy food and drinks when online shopping ²

The convenience of online shopping for food and drinks is dictated by factors that also determine choices made in-store:

Price	<div><div></div></div>	65%
Promotions/specials	<div><div></div></div>	36%
Product ingredients	<div><div></div></div>	29%
Health Star Ratings	<div><div></div></div>	22%
Product nutritional information	<div><div></div></div>	22%

¹ Adjusted Woolworths Supermarket and Metro Data.

² IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.

Promotions drive purchasing decisions

Promotions in the shopping environment, whether online, on an app or in-store, influence both healthy and unhealthy food purchases. Supermarket merchandising that increases visibility of value-for-money food options, regardless of the food group, increases the likelihood of a purchase. Research has also shown front-of-pack labelling is more effective in influencing healthy food purchases than digital tools such as app scanners that provide nutrition information.

Reported motivators to eating healthy:¹



Want to maintain a healthy weight



Eating healthy makes me feel good

Reported barriers to eating healthy:¹



Healthy foods are expensive



Lack of time/busy/lifestyle

Meal planner for healthier childcare

The new Woolworths at Work™ Menu Plan & Order is a game-changer for early childhood education and care services. This online platform saves chefs and cooks valuable time. It helps to effortlessly create menus that meet Australian Dietary Guidelines for children aged 2–5, while also managing allergies, intolerances and budgets. By automating calculations and streamlining the ordering and purchasing process, Menu Plan & Order ensures consistency across centres and makes it easier to provide healthy, nutritious meals for children.²

Number of servings

— 60 +

1.80kg rice noodles

3kg beef chuck

5.70kg fresh or frozen vegetables

2kg firm tofu



Menu Plan
& Order

¹ IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.

² Menu Plan & Order is exclusively available to select Learn & Care Enterprise+ by Woolworths at Work™ customers – complimentary access is for a limited time only.



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FROM THE EXPERTS

"Eating more veg needs to be a top priority for nearly all of us if we are to increase our years of healthy living."



Simone Austin
Chief Health Officer,
Healthylife



Top 5 food priorities for the next 12 months

Of the top reported food priorities for the next 12 months, only around a quarter of people want to eat more vegetables. While it is the number one response, it's worryingly low given that 94% of Australian adults are not eating the recommended 5 vegetable serves per day. Our data shows they are purchasing 2.8 serves per day.

Data by AUSVEG shows if every Australian ate one more serve (75g) of vegetables per day we could reduce the risk of long-term illness by 14%. Modelling also suggests if we ate one more serve of vegetables daily by 2030, \$4.68 billion of value could be realised via improving our health, social, economic and environmental wellbeing. This includes economic benefits of growing vegetables and a decrease in healthcare costs (\$1.36 billion).



Eat more vegetables



Cooking more healthy meals at home



Eating more fruit



Reducing added sugar intake



Cutting down on confectionery

Case studies: Digital tools

How digital tools help us hit healthy eating targets

Digital tools can be used in various settings to support healthy behaviours including healthy eating. Here we explore a few case studies.

Showing kids where fresh food comes from

The Woolworths Fresh Food Kids e-Discovery Tours program helps Australian children understand where their fresh food comes from, with classroom-aligned curriculum, hands-on and digital activities for Early Learning stage kids through to year 6 of Primary School.

Students explore a virtual reality Woolworths store and engage in augmented reality activities, such as stepping onto a farm and seeing how fruit and vegetables are grown. More than 34,000 children participated in the program during F24.





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FROM THE EXPERTS

"It's a no-brainer to have health promotion investment in digital tools that remind us to eat 5 serves of veg a day."



Simone Austin
Chief Health Officer,
Healthylife



Food Tracker drives purchasing more vegetables with incentives

Food Tracker by Healthylife is a digital tool that Australians use to help them purchase a healthier balanced shop. It provides shoppers with insight into how their grocery shopping compares to the ADG, including how many serves of each of the core food groups and discretionary foods are purchased.

To nudge the shop to be healthier, more than 18,154 Woolworths customers joined Healthylife's national Fruit & Veg challenge. Incentives encouraged Food Tracker users to purchase more fruit and vegetables by rewarding them with 5x Everyday Rewards points for every dollar¹ spent on fruit and vegetables purchased at Woolworths from 8 May to 5 June 2024. **This saw on average a 10% increase in fruit and vegetable serves purchased.**² If this can be sustained, it has the potential to significantly improve dietary habits.

With 409,000 people signed up to Food Tracker, the challenge is to have more households using it regularly for the health and economic benefits it could bring to the community.

¹ Everyday Rewards (EDR) points can be collected from Woolworths and participating partners. Once a certain number of points are collected, it can be redeemed for money off shopping or converted to Qantas points. Every 2,000 Everyday Rewards points will save \$10 off a future shop.
² Fruit and vegetable serves bought by those participating in the Food Tracker by Healthylife National Fruit & Veg Challenge.

Woolworths Supermarket digital tools to support a healthier shop

The Woolworths Group 2024 Annual Report found that 25.4 million weekly product searches start on Woolworths web and app, and digital visits exceed store visits. 72% of people reported starting their journey with research online 'normally' or 'sometimes' before shopping in-store.¹ In F24, 26.1% of Woolworths Supermarket app users used the in-store mode each week.

Did you know?

Involving children in the meal planning process, looking up recipes, discussing new foods to buy, creating lists and budgeting through online shopping can be a great way to develop literacy and food literacy skills.

Woolworths Supermarkets provide online information and tools including:

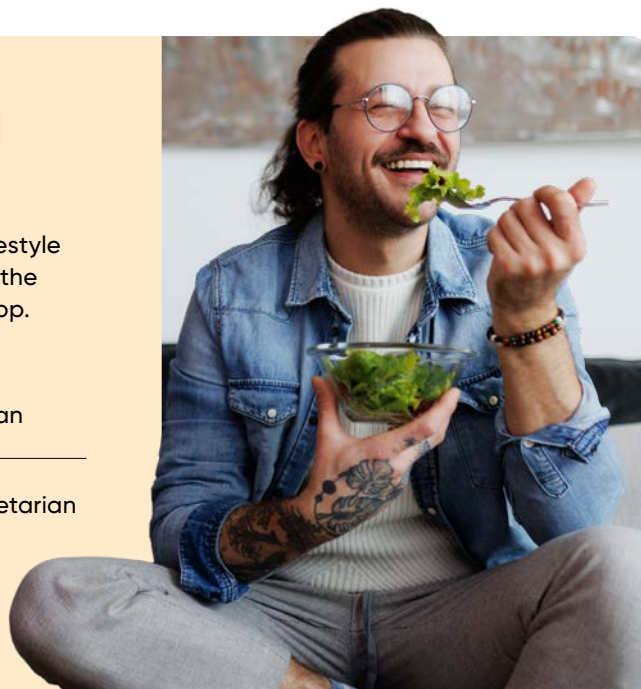
- ✓ **Product information** such as nutrition information and allergens
- ✓ **Health Star Rating (HSR)** displayed online for packaged foods where provided by the manufacturer
- ✓ **Product Finder** to help you locate a product in-store
- ✓ **Price and promotions**, including Best Unit Price Filter
- ✓ **Meal Planner tool** and healthier recipe inspiration
- ✓ **Shopping Lists**, used by 1.1 million customers on Woolworths Supermarket web and app each week in F24
- ✓ **Product Dietary and Lifestyle Filters** such as gluten free, high protein, low salt, whole grain
- ✓ Displaying **Healthier Options**

Top 5 Dietary and Lifestyle Filters

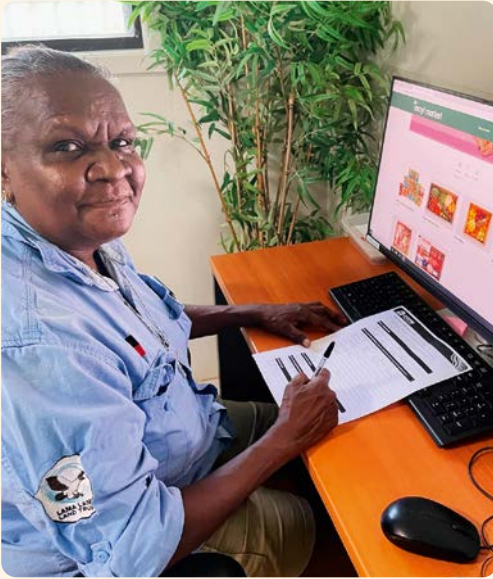
The five most utilised Dietary and Lifestyle Filters have remained the same over the past two years on the Woolworths app.

These are in order:

- GF** 1. Gluten Free
- V** 2. Vegan
- DF** 3. Dairy free
- VG** 4. Vegetarian
- LS** 5. Low sugar



¹ IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.



Mayi Market food delivery in Cape York

Mayi Market is a not-for-profit initiative by Cape York Partnership, offering Far North Queensland families access to 'healthy food at fair prices'. The platform makes it easy for customers to order boxes of nutritious food tailored to meet the needs of remote communities.

The digital platform empowers customers to shop at any time. This is complemented by an in-store experience for those who prefer face-to-face support.

Mayi Market is enhanced by the Cape York Partnership Pama Platform – a digital tool that supports money management, job readiness and social connectedness. It also provides 'Pama points' for various rewards, making it a service that supports holistic health factors.

Online healthier recipe inspiration

Hundreds of healthier recipes are available on the Woolworths Supermarket website and app. These recipes meet guidelines developed by Woolworths Group's Health & Nutrition team.

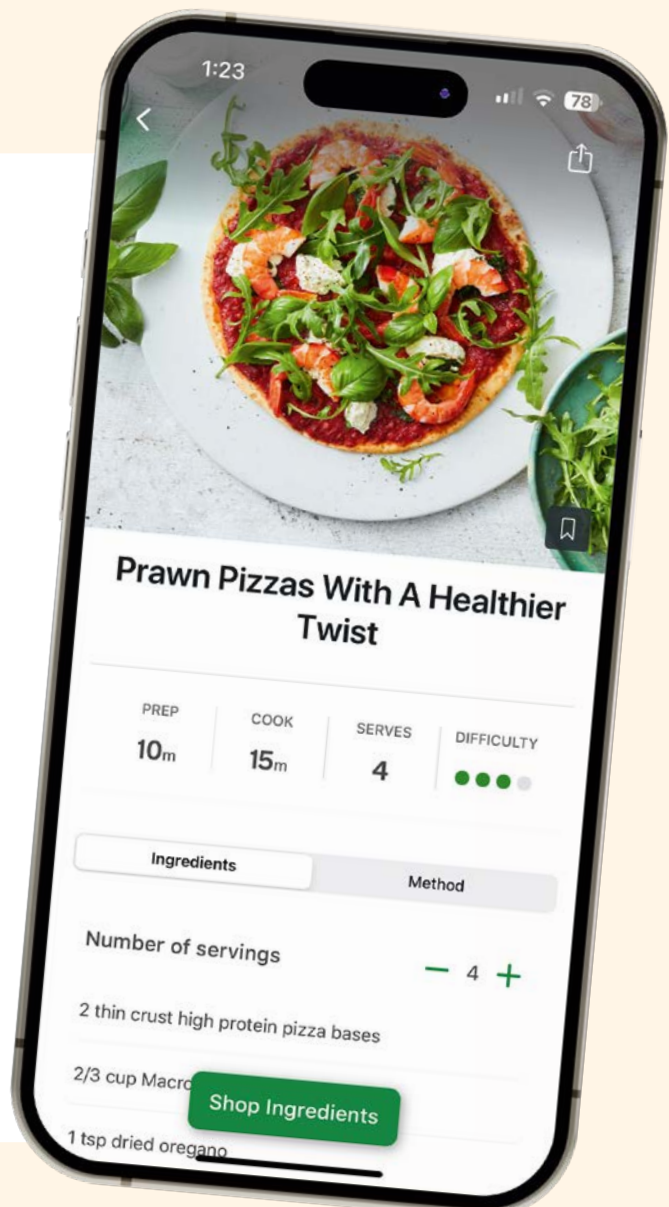
In F24, the most popular recipe collections on the Woolworths Supermarkets website were Healthier Dinner Recipes followed by Healthier Snacks and Healthier Traybake Recipes.

The five most popular healthier recipes on the Woolworths Supermarkets website and app were:

- 1 Crunchy Chicken Lettuce Wraps
- 2 Healthier Chicken & Rainbow Vegetable Wraps
- 3 San Choy Bow Bowls
- 4 Sunshine Smoothie
- 5 Healthier Zucchini Slice



Download the Woolworths app for more great recipes here

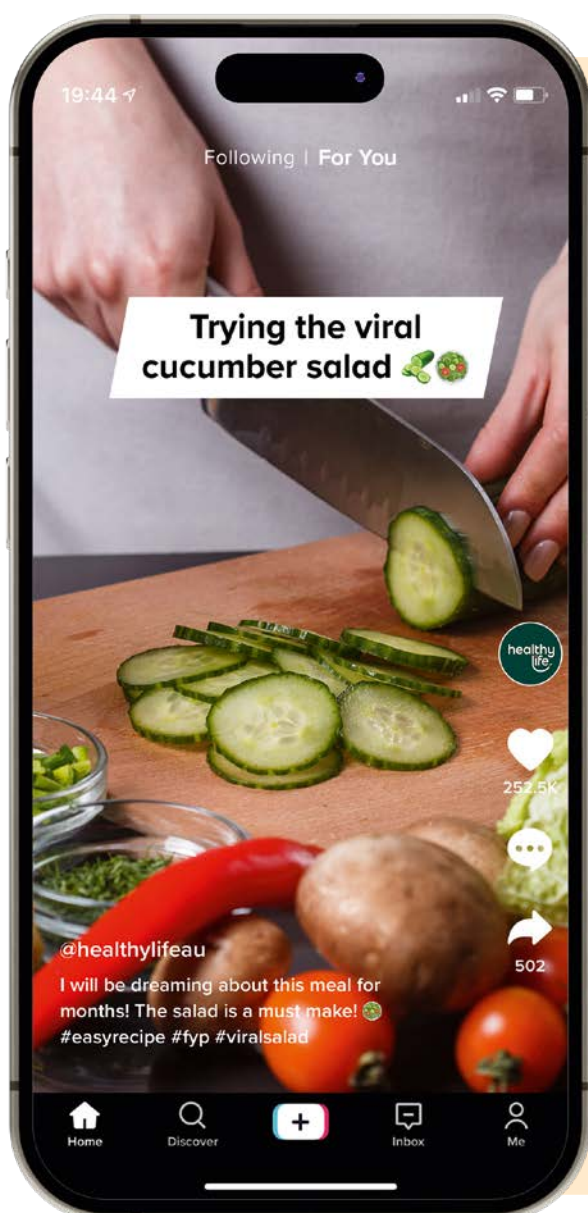


♥ Online influences

Harnessing social media for #healthyeating

Within the online space, social media provides a platform for sharing healthy recipes, meal ideas and nutrition information to inspire and support people to eat a healthier diet. However, finding science-backed nutrition information among all the noise and unhealthy food promotions can be challenging and tiring. We must learn how to harness the space for healthy eating.

Children and young people (14–25 years) see on average 23–24 unhealthy food and 6–7 alcohol ads online every day, with product marketing seamlessly integrated into their online lives (for example, in video games and on social media). Of nutrition-related social media posts, 44.7% contain inaccuracies and research shows that marketing harmful products to young people increases their consumption of those products. Yet, social media can also be used to promote messages around healthy behaviours, as the example below shows.



Viral creations drive innovations

When recipes go viral on social media they increase sales of ingredients. In Woolworths Supermarkets, increased sales have been seen for:

- ✓ **Cucumber salad:** This has driven sustained increases in cucumber sales irrespective of price
- ✓ **Lemonade and Gummy Bears:** Sales spiked with the timing of the TikTok recipe trend.

This presents an enormous opportunity to influence healthy eating behaviours. If marketed effectively, the promotion of healthy foods on social media platforms can bring us closer to eating in line with Australian Dietary Guidelines.

In the United Kingdom, Tesco supermarket is harnessing TikTok healthy eating trends, bringing the digital and physical environments together. Tesco launched in-store:

- ✓ Salad creation bays divided into three with a base, builder and a topper
- ✓ 'High in Protein' fixture in the dairy aisle specifically for in-demand yoghurt products.

The supermarket is also looking at trends such as popular cultural cuisines and jacket potatoes due to various 'spud bars' popping up.



Delivered meals: convenient, but not always nutritious

One of the digital world's most significant impacts on our eating habits is the ability to have meals delivered to our doorsteps within minutes via online ordering. The demand for convenience and the rise of digital technology has driven online food delivery services, which now provide easy access to fast food and takeaway meals. These services have increased food outlets' reach and disrupted traditional food environments.

Research shows that 85.9% of popular foods for online delivery were classified as discretionary – meaning they are high in added salt, saturated fat or sugar, or low in dietary fibre.

Grocery delivery services such as MILKRUN have an opportunity to compete and deliver healthier food to your door. The design of Woolworths Metro stores elevates healthier foods, with plenty of quick and easy dinner options highly visible near the front of store. MILKRUN's most popular day for orders is Sunday, with 5–6pm the most popular time every day. Strawberries, bananas and beef mince are some of the most popular foods ordered.



FROM THE EXPERTS

"Should governments aim to get ahead of the curve and prohibit drones from delivering alcohol, or taking unhealthy foods to schools?"



Simone Austin
Chief Health Officer,
Healthylife



Healthy strategies for online food delivery

To support healthy eating, healthier food needs to be more readily available via the online food delivery service industry. Public health nutrition strategies and policies to make healthy changes could involve:

- ✓ Including online delivery platforms in current labelling policies that apply to other food outlets
- ✓ Encouraging display of Health Star Ratings across products and menus to inform better choices
- ✓ Offering a wider range of healthy meal and product options on delivery menus
- ✓ Implementing choice architecture where healthier options are set as defaults, highlighted on menus



Move & sleep healthy

Australians like to use digital health tracking tools to support healthy behaviours. To be effective, these must be evidence-based, have data interpreted correctly and include health professional support.

56%

of people use digital health tools to track aspects of their health¹

25%

of people who track their health track steps¹

44%

of people report improving sleep as a health priority^{1,2}

¹ IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.

² Most common priority not including food-related.



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Moving more

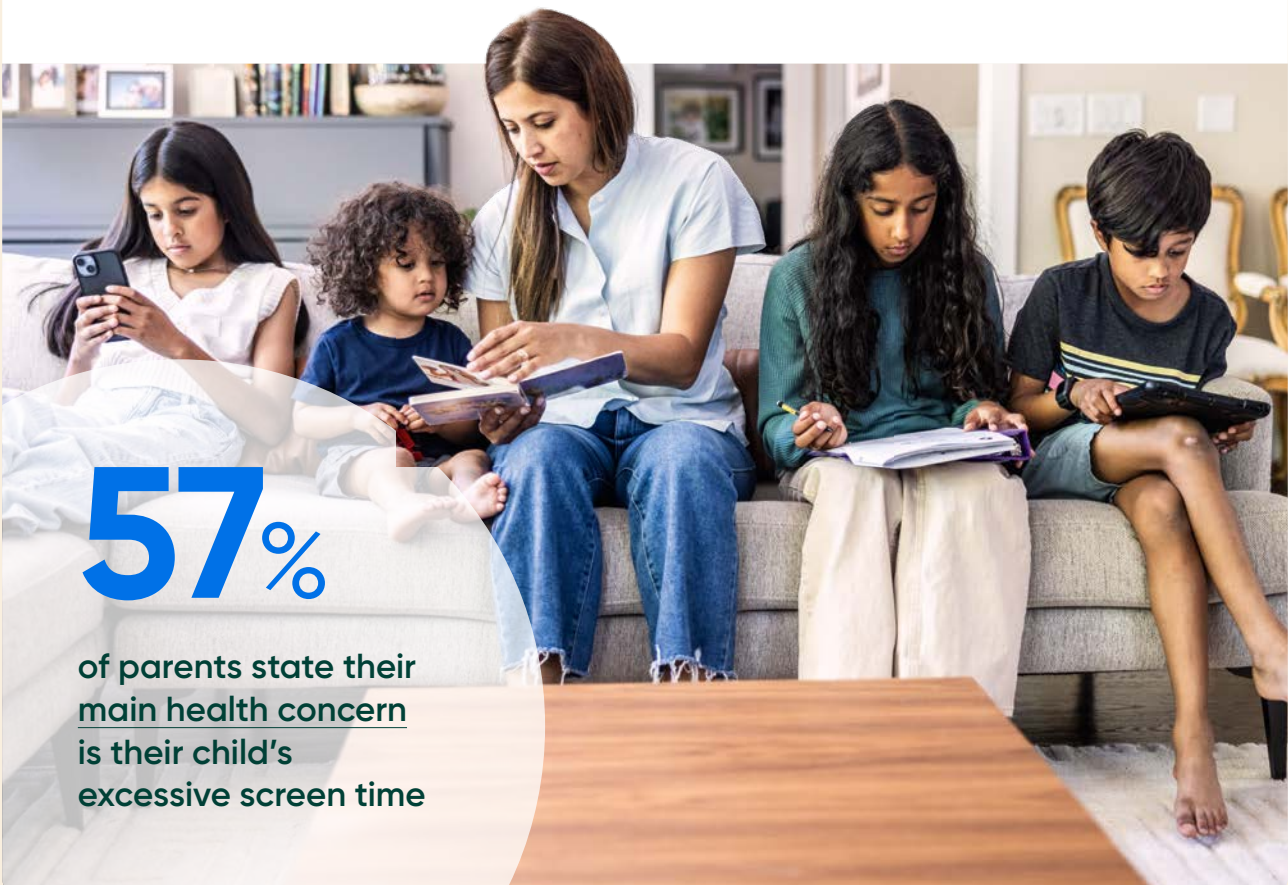
Digital tools to help us move more

Trends suggest that the Australian adults' physical activity levels have not changed significantly and do not meet the recommended Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines.

AIHW data shows in 2017–18 only 48% of adults (18–64 years) met the physical activity guideline of 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week and only 24% met the strength-based guideline (two sessions per week). For children, only 26% engaged in the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity, with Victorian Government data indicating that number is declining.

Adults reported the main barriers to exercise as other commitments and time restraints, however they spend on average 6 hours 14 minutes online every day. Social media users spend 1.51 hours on social media daily. Most Australian children engage in more screen time than is recommended, which is parents' number one health concern. With only 46% of parents reporting that their child spends a day without digital technology, work needs to be done to get our children offline and moving.

Research shows fitness apps, virtual training and wearable tracking tools can be effective in getting people moving and have great potential for health promotion, including in children and older adults. Activity trackers and apps lead to users, on average, taking 2,000 steps more per day, which is associated with benefits such as a lower risk of chronic disease. Harnessing the power of digital tools, fitness programs and AI-driven gym equipment may assist us to be more active.



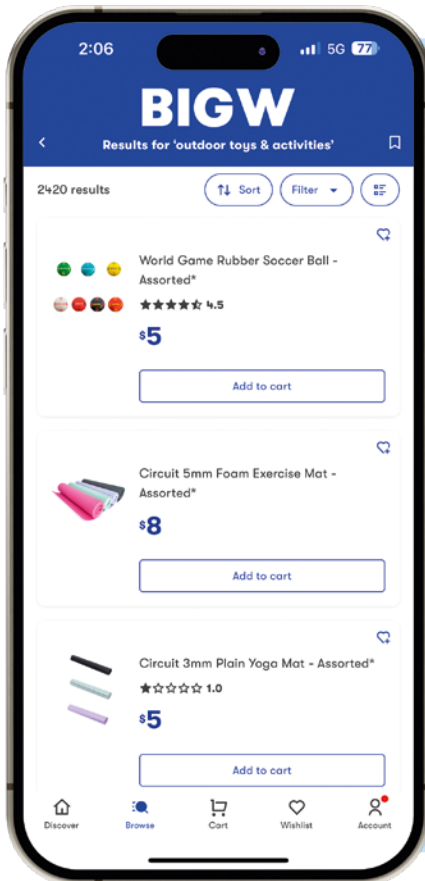
57%

of parents state their
main health concern
is their child's
excessive screen time



Making the outdoors affordable

Enjoying the outdoors is a great way to get us moving more and enjoying time away from screens. BIG W helps make outdoor activities more affordable with camping gear, fishing rods, sporting gear and attire. During 2024 calendar year, 2,685,001 sports balls and 186,735,676 books were purchased, supporting Australians to be active and enjoy time away from screens.



Top 10 BIG W Health-related searches online

Category page searches:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Outdoor Toys & Activities | 6 Children's Books |
| 2 Health & Beauty | 7 Women's Activewear |
| 3 Kid's Bikes | 8 Camping & Outdoor |
| 4 Pools & Spas | 9 Sport & Leisure |
| 5 Women's Swimwear | 10 Smart Watches & Fitness Trackers |

Search terms:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1 Pool | 6 Apple Watch |
| 2 Bike | 7 Swimwear |
| 3 Trampoline | 8 Basketball |
| 4 Scooter | 9 Soccer |
| 5 Camping | 10 Smart Watch |

The exercise industry's role

According to the AUSactive Digital Futures Research Report, which looked at the Australian exercise and active health industry, '53% of organisations said that digital will play a central or critical role in their future, but only 9% have a digital strategy that is up-to-date, complete, ambitious and supported with a roadmap'. Businesses that develop and enhance digital strategies can support more Australians in their physical activity journey and provide exceptional customer experiences.



FROM THE EXPERTS

"We must get people moving more. Harnessing the potential of digital technology to do so is key, however so is engaging people to enjoy movement that doesn't involve digital connection and screens."



Dr Rob McCartney
Chief Medical Officer,
Woolworths Group



Tracking health

Tracking health with digital tools

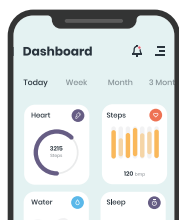
56% of Australians use digital health tools via phone apps and smartwatches to track aspects of their health according to the *Woolworths Food and Health Survey 2024*.¹ The survey showed that the most common data tracked is steps, at 25%.

Did you know?



There is even an app to 'Chart Your Farts', developed by the CSIRO to better understand flatulence patterns and concerns that can be related to dietary changes and gut changes.

Devices used to track health¹



57%

Mobile phone app



46%

Smartwatch



22%

Wearable device

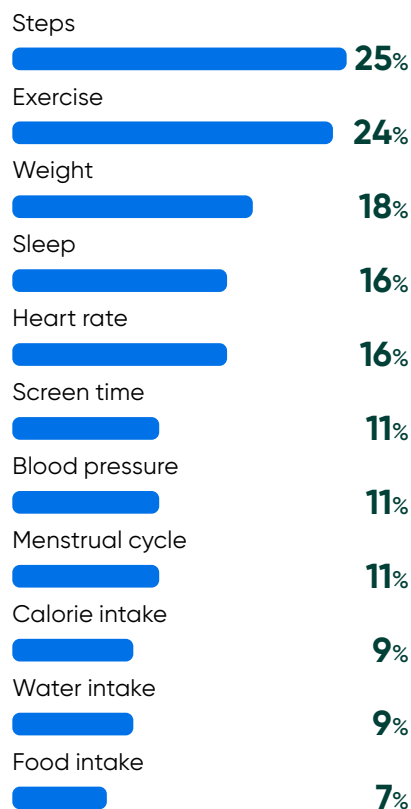
6% None of these

3% Other

Health aspects:

What we're tracking

Percentage of people surveyed¹ using a tool or app to measure:



¹ IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.



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Sharing data increases knowledge

More and more people are willing to use their devices to share health data with their health professionals. Pre-operative data collection can help predict possible complications for heart conditions and recent research suggests smartwatches could assist with identifying signs of conditions such as Parkinson's disease years before diagnosis. The increased ability for doctors to establish a more complete picture of an individual's health may alert them to potential problems. However we still need to be cautious of false positives and negatives, which could lead to unnecessary anxiety.

With the number of mobile health apps estimated from 54,000 to over 350,000, the government Digital Health Strategy is taking steps to support their safe and appropriate use in Australia.

Designing tools to be relevant to people and place is key. Recognising that we are not one homogeneous group, as the success of First Nations programs has shown. Too Deadly for Diabetes recognises the importance of regular check-ins for motivation and uses text messages with short videos in between face-to-face meetings.

FROM THE EXPERTS

"Digital health tools have the potential to identify signs of illness before it develops, which may cheaply and easily increase our years of healthy living."



Dr Dinesh Palipana
Emergency
Department Doctor



To track or not to track sleep?

Our survey¹ shows that 16% of people use sleep-tracking devices, but how accurate are the scores from wearables such as watches and rings? The apps use inputs such as sound, heart-rate variability and movement to estimate what happens during sleep, however research is conflicted on what can be measured accurately.



Commercial tracking apps claim to determine time spent in the light, deep and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep stages, as well as the number of awakenings. They are not medical devices however, so their data needs to be interpreted with caution. Research shows that commercial devices are good at detecting periods of sleep, but less effective at determining waking periods. This means trackers may overestimate the overall time a wearer spends asleep each night. Research also indicates that they are not yet sensitive enough to accurately detect sleep stages.

Sleep trackers offer many benefits such as increased motivation and accountability for sleep routines, although some users may become anxious and preoccupied with their sleep. More research is needed to verify wearables' reliability as they continue evolving, but for now sleep trackers remain a practical, cost-effective tool for monitoring individual habits. They can also highlight if professional assistance is needed, as health professionals can provide tools and sleep interventions that trackers cannot.



Healthylife ensures evidence-based online health information is available.
Sleep health information can be found [here](#)

Did you know?

The estimated total cost of poor sleep in Australia was \$66.3 billion per year. Sleep disorders alone were estimated to account for 3.2% of the burden of disease among Australians.

1 IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.



Technology for injury prevention and care

It is wonderful to see the digital world used to reduce injuries from manual tasks at work, such as lifting, carrying and repetitive work injuries. Woolworths Group ran a pilot Participatory Ergonomics Program using sensor technology and AI-powered video analytics to identify high-risk tasks in F24. These types of injuries – work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs) – are a leading contributor to Woolworths Group injuries.



Technology as a solution

It can be challenging to identify hazards and manage risks from a task-based perspective rather than a whole-job approach, but thinking about how changes affect a person's whole job is necessary to reduce exposure and develop effective solutions.

Woolworths sought to bridge the evidence-to-practice gap by implementing the Participatory Ergonomics Program. It was assisted by technology to identify WMSD hazards, visualise the risk factors and aid in identifying solutions that reduced risks. 'Ergo champions' were trained to collect data, which then highlighted the risks associated with performing the various tasks. Solutions were tested before being shared with the broader organisation for implementation.

Identified improvements

Examples of solutions include:

- ✓ A specialised trolley for moving the totes used to store and transport online orders
- ✓ An improved oven for the bakery that reduced sustained and awkward postures
- ✓ A modified holder for the device used in Grocery and Online to manage stock and order picking.

The technology empowered teams to visualise the change in risk exposure through implementing their suggested solutions. It provided immediate feedback that was easy to understand. This process achieved an average risk reduction of 54% in hazardous manual movements for the affected tasks.



Where to next?

We will continue to evaluate new technologies and AI-assisted tools that visualise problems and potential solutions. Woolworths Group will ensure programs bridge the evidence-to-practice gap and that data collection and evaluation methods best assist in continually improving the process and overall WMSD prevention programs.

Considerations

for assessing digital and mobile health interventions

Access



Benefits:

- ✓ Increasing access for people living with disability and those in remote geographical locations
- ✓ Receiving immediate feedback
- ✓ Information to support clinical decision making at our fingertips
- ✓ No waiting times
- ✓ Low cost/free



Data



Benefits:

- ✓ Availability of more data
- ✓ Easier to share data

Empowerment



Benefits:

- ✓ Becoming more active in our own health
- ✓ Alerts and reminders for medications, appointments, check-ups
- ✓ Connection and social support





Health literacy



Challenges:

- ✓ Misinterpreting and errors in data may lead to anxiety
- ✓ Navigating which apps/programs have been validated and have relevant science-based evidence
- ✓ Knowing who to trust: 'Influencers' and people claiming expertise



Healthcare professionals



Challenges:

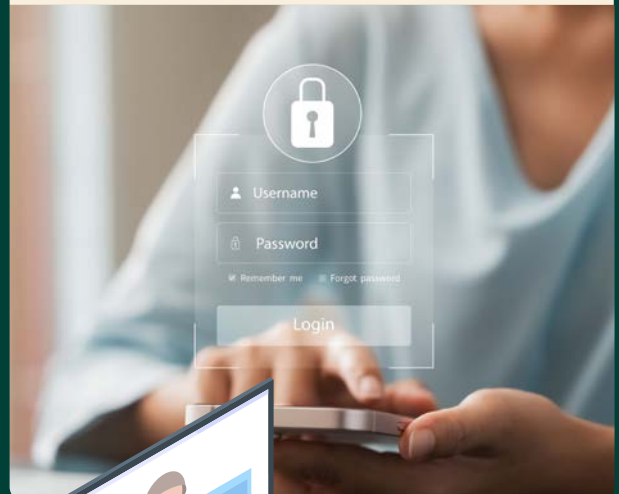
- ✓ Expert diagnosis and assessment not generally available in app
- ✓ Assessment and management of co-existing health challenges not easy without professional guidance
- ✓ Less capacity for in-person connection and social support

Privacy



Challenges:

- ✓ People not reading privacy policy before downloading
- ✓ Data breaches not found in face-to-face therapy



Case studies: Digital tools

Digital interventions for healthy behaviours

Digital tools can be used to harness healthy behaviours. These case studies show sport as an education tool for children, a movement tool for the general population and a workplace activity initiative.



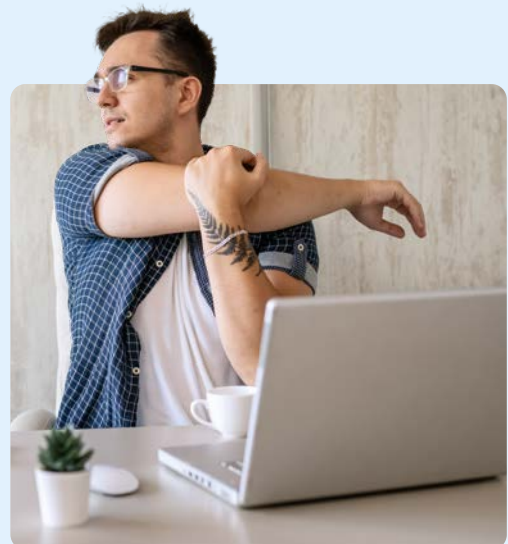
Incentives drive education with netball learning hub

The Pick Fresh Play Fresh Hub focused on creating fun and engaging content to educate netballers on the benefits of eating healthy. It contained games and quizzes with prizes to be won. The hub was promoted digitally, including by eDM (electronic Direct Mail), digital banners, social media and QR codes at on-ground activations.

The most popular activities were the Memory game (95.4% completion rate) and True or False (92.6% completion rate). Both featured nutrition facts written by Woolworths Group and Healthylife dietitians.

15 Minute Challenge incorporated into your daily routine

Lack of time is a barrier to being physically active, which makes workplace environments that encourage physical activity during the day so important. An app called the *15 Minute Challenge* provides a six-week online workplace physical activity program that encourages employees to record their activities in an app with gamification features. It encourages participants to do at least 15 minutes of daily exercise at work. Evaluations of the program show significant increases in physical activity and self-reported improvements in sleep quality, mood and overall health.





Digital tools like 10,000 Steps help Aussies move more

Digital physical activity programs, such as the free 10,000 Steps program developed by Health and Wellbeing Queensland, can effectively support people all over Australia to become more active, 24/7. In contrast, activity programs delivered face-to-face, while valuable, can be costly and impractical.

Features of a good digital program

There is convincing evidence for digital physical activity interventions' effectiveness, especially if they focus on walking in combination with activity trackers and implement effective behaviour change techniques. When they do, they can be scalable, cost-effective health promotion tools that reach thousands of people. The 10,000 Steps program has consistently implemented:

- ✓ self-monitoring (counting steps using activity trackers)
- ✓ goal setting (aim to reach a certain number of steps every day)
- ✓ social support (being active with friends, family and colleagues and tracking their progress)
- ✓ gamification (participating in virtual challenges, workplace tournaments, leader boards, awards).

This, in combination with a dedicated support team that keeps the program going by responding to user feedback and integrating new technologies, ensures the ongoing popularity of such programs. So far nearly 700,000 people have used 10,000 Steps, logging a total of 420 billion steps.

Why 10,000 Steps?

Most people already take 5,000 to 7,000 steps every day. It takes around 10 minutes to walk 1,000 steps non-stop, so to get the recommended 30 minutes of physical activity per day most people will need to add 3,000 to 4,000 steps. This will bring most people close to or over 10,000 steps to meet the physical activity recommendations.



Sleep healthy

Improving sleep health

Improving sleep health was the Woolworths Food and Health Survey 2024's¹ most-reported personal health priority, with 44% of respondents identifying it as a key non-food-related health focus over the next 12 months. Being active and increasing the time we spend exercising are also high priorities for Australians.

Top 10 holistic health priorities for next 12 months¹

Aside from food-related focuses, these are the top reported health priorities for Australian adults:



¹ IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.



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Surprising digital technology and sleep link

Sleep health and digital technology are meaningfully connected, but not necessarily in the ways you might think.

Blue light and home lighting

The link between digital technology and sleep tends to focus on the impact of blue light from our devices, however new research suggests this might not be the main concern. It is more likely that overhead lighting in our homes affects our sleep and circadian rhythms more so than the blue light from our digital devices. When considering the influence of light on sleep, all forms of artificial light and their brightness (measured by lux) are important. Generally, dimmer light is more helpful in promoting sleep.

Bedtime viewing

Screen time before bed will not necessarily impair sleep but screen time once in bed has definitely been associated with poor sleep. Using digital devices beyond one's usual bedtime may result in fewer hours of sleep, as may the type of content viewed. Digital technology used to relax and facilitate sleep is quite different to engaging in 'doom scrolling' or high-octane games that are stimulating and make us less ready for sleep.

Nighttime disruptions

Incoming alerts, ringers and notifications that occur during the sleep cycle potentially disrupt the natural sleep progression. The extent of these nighttime interruptions is growing as people feel the need to be connected 24/7, which makes disconnecting, muting notifications and keeping phones out of bedrooms critical.



FROM THE EXPERTS

"I'm excited by the opportunity to use digital tools for better diagnosis of sleep disorders along with providing personalised sleep coaching."



Dr Moira Junge
Registered Health Psychologist



Digital tips for sleep health:

- ✓ Set devices to 'do not disturb' or 'focus' modes, or keep them out of the bedroom
- ✓ Set limits for hours or usage, including before bedtime
- ✓ Use digital devices for calming, restful pre-bedtime engagement
- ✓ In the evening, use dim lights in the household

Feel healthy.

Understanding how we use our time on screens is key to ensuring it positively influences our mental wellbeing and sense of connection.

30%

of people reported spending more time looking after their mental wellbeing as a health priority¹

33%

of people reported nurturing relationships with friends, family and community as a health priority¹

90%

of Australian parents feel they are negatively distracted by digital technologies²

¹ IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.
² Growing up digital Australia: phase 2 technical report (28 Apr 2021).



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Online impact

Balanced engagement is more important than time online

Digital technology has great potential to support mental wellbeing, health assessment and treatment, but it can also negatively impact these areas.

It is simplistic to argue that the single major issue with our use of screens is the length of time we spend online when there are other powerful factors at play. Evidence shows that intensive digital media use during early childhood and adolescence can cause negative structural changes in the brain, for example. However, the evidence does not support common concerns that excessive use of digital technology causes mental health problems.

Instead, the concern is the content that they're engaging with. Australians may be strongly affected by how they interact with digital devices, including the websites they visit, the apps they download and the friends, influencers, groups and networks they follow. It's valuable for us all to identify if our 'real world' lives and connections support us to make healthy choices in our digital interactions.



1.51h

average time
social media
users spend on
their platforms
every day





Influential factors

There is more to the equation than time spent online and in a world where education, work and socialising often involve the digital realm, it's difficult to simply disconnect. Differentiating between types of technology use is important. An individual's motivations, goals, needs and predispositions need to be considered, along with their family, education, social background and support systems.

It's important to ask how our screen time, including the content and the platform, may be influencing aspects of our life such as sleep, movement, diet, work and socialising. We need to build on the positives of using technology for communication, social interaction, education and increasing equal opportunities and access.

Distraction and interruption

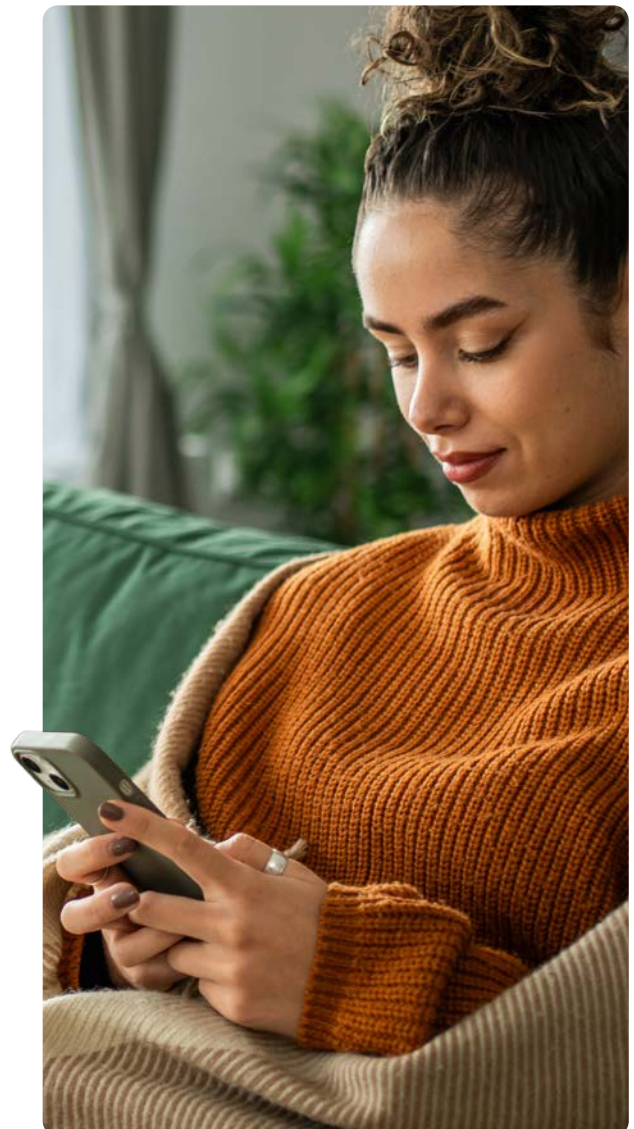
In whatever way we use digital technology, it is a source of distraction and interruption, fracturing our attention and increasing multitasking. It reduces our ability to focus on other important aspects of life, which in theory will affect our mental health and wellbeing.

Ninety per cent of Australian parents feel that they are negatively distracted by digital technologies. The most concerning issue may be that Australian social media users spend an average of 1.51 hours on social media each day. These platforms and apps are designed to capture and hold attention and can negatively impact young people's mental health and wellbeing by making it harder to pay attention to other meaningful activities that encourage a sense of self, purpose and meaning.

We should also ask ourselves what are we missing out on doing, or what aren't we doing, when we spend more and more hours online?

Did you know?

It is predicted that half of the world will be short-sighted by 2050, something that genetics alone can't explain. Viewing screens can reduce blinking rates, which is one of the main mechanisms for lubricating and protecting the eye. Try to take regular breaks from screens and look into the distance.



Social media and depression

Problematic Social Media Use (PSMU), including compulsive use despite unfavourable consequences to health, mental health and relationships, is being studied for its impact on depression. Research indicates PSMU may lead to depression and that depression may in turn increase PSMU, but results are ambiguous.

One concern is social comparison tendencies, where people compare themselves to other social media users' online personas. This can add to feelings of inadequacy and depression. Another issue is that for individuals already living with depression or anxiety, online interactions may expose them to negativity such as cyberbullying.

However, other studies show we shouldn't ignore social media's positive aspects, as community support may prove protective against depression as people can more easily find their 'tribe'.

We should look to shift societal norms and ensure education institutions and workplaces create cultures that support 'disconnecting'. Organisations such as Screen Sanity are important as they provide resources to help us manage screen time to benefit our health.

FROM THE EXPERTS

"Creating healthier social media feeds must be a priority as our social lives and information sources are increasingly online."



Dr Moira Junge
Registered Health
Psychologist



Did you know?

It can be challenging to find a balance of activities that don't involve screens, but sales of books, bikes and toys at BIG W continue to increase year-on-year.



Is screen time interrupting language development?

There's no question that use of electronic devices is relevant in our life, but research shows it may be causing technoference (habitual interference and disruptions to interpersonal relationships due to use of electronic devices) for Australian families.

The research found that parental use of electronic devices may be interfering with opportunities for talk and interaction between parents and children (12–36 months) in the home. A language-rich home is critical to children's language development. Research shows that for every additional minute of screen time (in general, parents on phones), children heard fewer adult words, spoke fewer vocalisations, and engaged in fewer back-and-forth interactions.

Families need to be made aware of this information along with support strategies that focus on ways to use screen time as an opportunity for interactive viewing that promotes language development.



Time online adds to loneliness and connectedness

Strong social connections are essential for good health, however the tools designed to bring us together can also drive us apart. As mentioned, the volume of digital distractions fragments our attention, making it increasingly difficult to create meaningful connections.

Social isolation (having few social relationships or roles, infrequent contact) and loneliness (a subjective feeling of lack of connection to others and a desire for more satisfying social relationships) are concerning issues in Australia, linked to poor physical and mental wellbeing and premature death.

In Australia, the frequency of social contact, in person or online, has been declining across all age groups for decades. The average person socialises with friends or relatives about once a month. Survey data shows **33%¹ of people see one of their health priorities being nurturing relationships with friends, family and community and 30%¹ want to spend more time looking after their mental wellbeing.** Finding the best way to use online mediums to help people with these priorities is the key.

Does social media cause loneliness, or do lonely people use social media to find connection? There is no conclusion yet on how social media impacts people's experiences of isolation and loneliness. Research shows the benefits of people feeling socially connected, particularly among adolescents looking for peers online. However, people who use social media to escape physical social interactions, or to maintain relationships, report more loneliness.

For people aged 50+, research found that social media enhanced communication with family and friends and aided creating new communities, with decreased depressive symptoms and positive wellbeing satisfaction. It is critical to understand that social media's influence on mental wellbeing differs for each of us.

FROM THE EXPERTS

"Blanket warnings about potential harms are not enough. If we want to harness the digital world for better health, we must be conscious of how we use it."



Dr Moira Junge
Registered Health Psychologist



1 IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.

Four ways

the Government is supporting healthy engagement

Youth mental health



The National Mental Health Commission has undertaken work to better understand the interplay between these factors, with a consultation 'Digital technologies and youth mental health'. The research shows:

- ✓ Young people already demonstrate considerable skill in navigating digital technology, including curating feeds and placing self-imposed limits on use
- ✓ Families and young people need support to safely engage online
- ✓ Adults need to model healthy engagement with digital technologies



Online gambling



A series of government reforms to tackle gambling include new mandatory minimum classifications for video games containing simulated gambling restricted to adults only (R18+), banning credit cards for online wagering and stronger disclaimers and messaging about risks and harms on gambling advertising.

Youth social media



The Federal government has introduced a social media ban for Australians under the age of 16 – a world first. However this may remove the positive connection social media can offer. Some social media platforms have proactively created 'Youth Safety and Well-being' guidelines to protect under-18s from content promoting disordered eating and low body image. These don't control the insidious content that can hide behind the facade of wellness information, however.



Safety online design

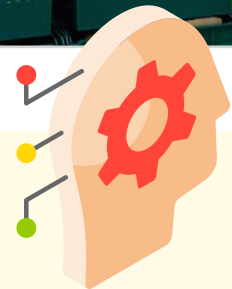


The eSafety Commissioner has developed Safety by Design guidelines for technology companies to help minimise online threats during the design phase, eliminating online harms before they occur.



VR training keeps team safer

A great example of how digital tools can be incorporated for the safety and wellbeing of the team include our virtual reality (VR) training initiative. Designed and implemented in F24 to support over 45,000 team members across Australian Woolworths Supermarkets, Metros and customer fulfilment centres, it provided tools to handle high-stress situations. As concerns continued with increasing acts of violence and aggression in stores these tools boosted confidence in de-escalation techniques to 89%.



Mental health and wellbeing tools

There is no shortage of digital mental health tools and people have been engaging with them for well over a decade. Popular health and wellbeing apps and sites include:



Smiling Mind

Builds mental fitness



Daybreak

Assists with problem alcohol intake



Feel Therapeutics

Supports mental health



Pod Squad

Health prevention apps for kids (5–12 years) and families



Black Dog Institute

Advice for mental wellbeing



GamblingLess

Helps with problem gambling



Screen Sanity

Information for families in the digital world



10,000 Steps

Encourages increased physical activity



Healthy Habits

Resources from RACGP



Food Tracker by Healthylife

Motivates healthy eating

Stay healthy

People are embracing digital technologies to seek health information and care, hence the importance of it being quality, evidence-based and accessible to all.

32%

of people read advice online from articles to find health information¹

16%

of people get health advice from a health professional via telehealth¹

21%

of people seek advice from qualified health professionals on social media to find health information¹



¹ IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.



Overview

Eat healthy

Move & sleep healthy

Feel healthy

Stay healthy

Outlook

+ Health advice

Where Australians seek advice

Making good health decisions relies on finding quality health information and working out how it applies to you. It is estimated that 38% of Australia's disease burden, and 49% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, could be prevented through a reduction in modifiable risk factors like diet, sleep and exercise. Therefore, accurate health information is vital.

Survey results show we vary on how we like to find health advice. The *Woolworths Food and Health Survey 2024* asked people to choose their top three preferred ways to find health information.¹

The most popular method (48% of respondents) was in-person advice from a health professional. Unsurprisingly, digital options were popular, with 32% reading advice articles online, followed by 30% asking friends and/or family and 21% seeking advice from health professionals on social media. Most of us use a combination of these methods.



32%

of people read
online articles
to find health
information¹



¹ IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.



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Chat function favoured over traditional calls

How we choose to access health support now heavily relies on chat functions. This is shown with Woolworths Group team members and their families accessing health and wellbeing support offered via the Sonder app. On average, 75% of support cases are via online chat and 25% are calls. Around 5,000 Sonder wellbeing articles are viewed per month.

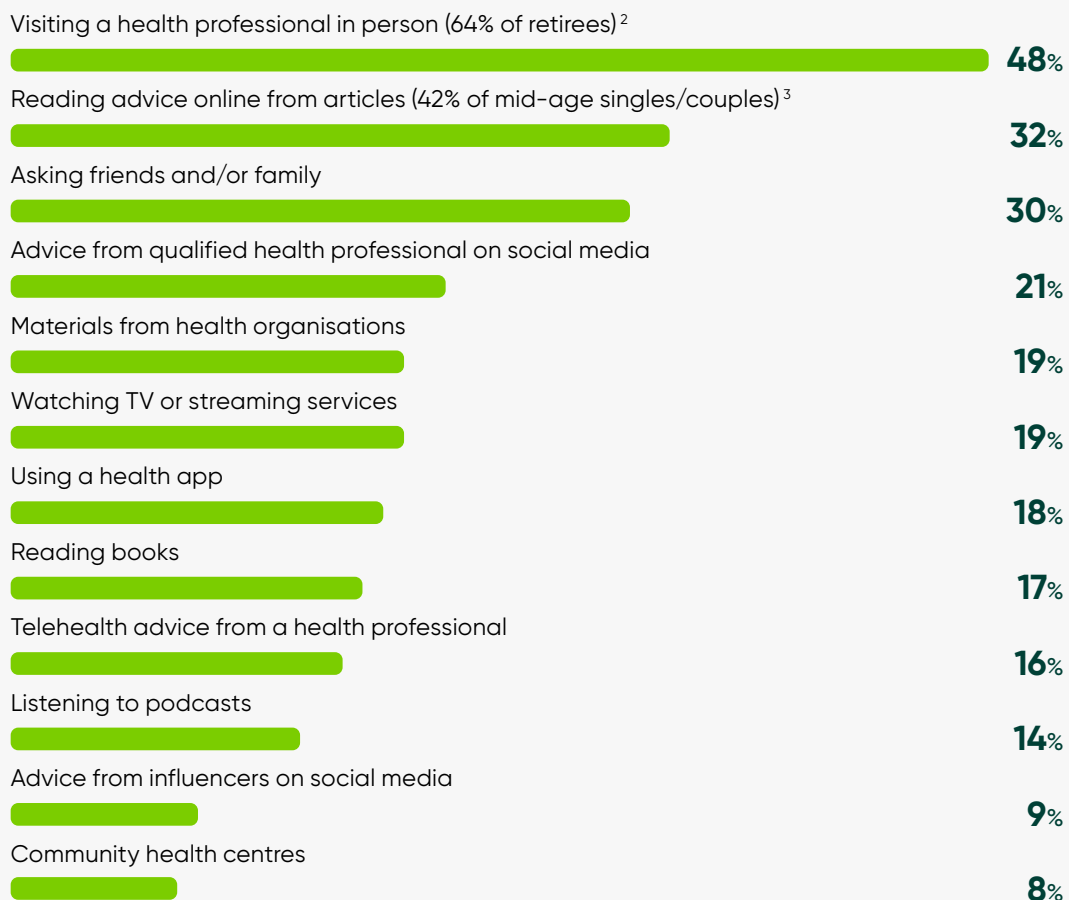
Online self-help information can also prompt people to seek further support, with 10% of members opening support cases after reading Sonder app content. Understanding how people prefer to use health services helps us to refine them and maximise engagement.

75%

of Sonder support cases are via online chat



Preferred source of health advice¹



1. IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.

2. Retiree = 66+ years.

3. Mid-age single/couple = 31–45 years.

FROM THE EXPERTS

"We must encourage people to seek advice from trained and registered health professionals online and in person to ensure they are following evidence-based recommendations."



Sarah Gray

Chief of Health Operations and Innovation, Healthylife

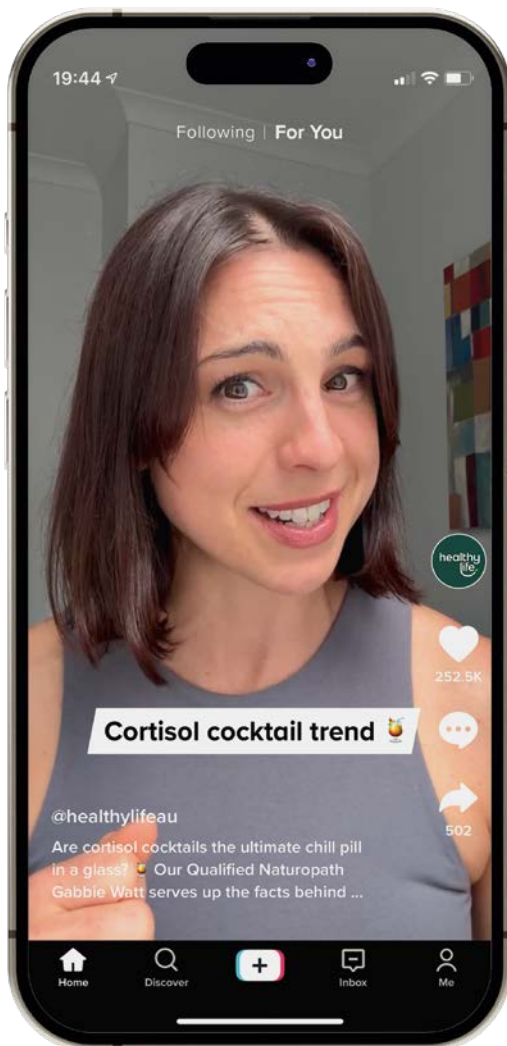


Image: Gabbie Watt, Healthylife Naturopath.

Spotting misinformation

Australians are increasingly seeking health information online. While misinformation is a challenge, social media platforms also provide opportunities to spread accurate information. Despite the volume of health information available only one in five Australians describe their health literacy levels as high.

It is important that we look at how accessible, understandable and accurate the information is. For example, it can be more difficult for those with sensory or intellectual disability to develop health literacy. Using easy to understand language is important. The Public Health Association suggests steps including:

- ✓ **Installing measures to make misinformation apparent to users**, which may include features such as a verified tick of a distinctive colour to allow easy identification of legally credentialed health professionals, or pop-ups to flag posts that contain misinformation (as we saw during COVID).
- ✓ **Work to improve health literacy** by encouraging credentialed health professionals to share content on platforms and link consumers from social media to healthcare services.
- ✓ **Allow public health researchers to obtain information from social media platforms** to enable greater understanding of social media impacts on physical and mental health, and then develop effective evidence-based health interventions.

Navigating the lack of consistent information is confusing and requires a high level of digital and health literacy. Although young people are 'digital natives' they have limited experience with the health system, such as knowing how to access care and navigate the options available, which is an important part of health literacy. In a 2024 survey, **36%** of Australians reported regretting a health decision made based on misinformation.

It is good to see partnerships such as the World Health Organization and TikTok collaboration aimed at providing reliable, evidence-based health information. Digital spaces such as social media platforms can be an effective way to increase health literacy, leading to improved health outcomes. We need to support people developing skills in both digital and health literacy to become digital health literate.

36%

of Australians reported that they regret a health decision made based on misinformation





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Healthylife uses social media to debunk misinformation

Social media is a dominant source of health information, with platforms like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube influencing how people approach their wellbeing. User-generated content (UGC), featuring personal experiences and relatable faces, has gained significant trust. Viral posts, marked by millions of likes and comments, amplify health trends – creating a perception of credibility through social proof.

Research highlights that people often judge credibility based on appearance or instinct rather than expertise. However, many of the trends being promoted online are not evidence-based and are popularised by individuals without health qualifications, increasing the risk of misinformation. While some trends encourage positive behaviour, others can be misleading or harmful.

At Healthylife, we recognise the power of these digital platforms and strive to provide clarity with our health experts writing hundreds of evidence-based online articles that are freely available to the community. Our trends-focused content unpacks popular health 'hacks' and delivers evidence-based insights in a relatable manner. This approach resonates strongly with our audience; these Instagram posts outperform other content (when compared to similar posts) by reaching more people and generating more followers.







By taking this approach, Healthylife ensures that science-backed information stands out amidst the noise, helping individuals prioritise safe, effective practices.

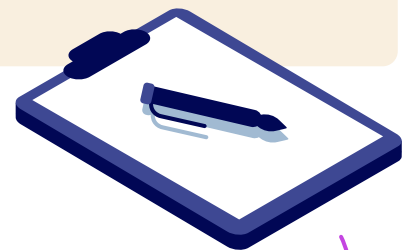


Digital health care

Digital health care is an important part of our digital world, with the potential to help people overcome challenges such as equitable access, chronic disease management and prevention and the increasing costs of health care. By enhancing the use of technology and data, it enables informed decision making, providing people better access to health information when and where it's needed. The National Digital Health Strategy's vision is to place people at the centre of a connected and digitally enabled healthcare system, to better serve the needs of Australians today and into the future. Digital health care can include remote health consultations and wearable and portable devices such as continuous blood glucose monitors, as well as online tools that can assist with monitoring sleep, movement, symptoms and measures such as heart rate, blood pressure and glucose levels.

Risks and questions about digital innovations to consider:

- | | |
|--|--|
|  How does the public know what's evidence-based? |  How is real and transformative impact measured? |
|  How are ethical standards and principles maintained? |  How do we balance the need for social connection as humans? |
|  Does digital data replace clinical decision making? |  What is the role of health care as we traditionally know it? |



Connecting the dots on health records

While Australians are using various health services, both online and offline and in various locations, access to a patient's complete health records in one space is as important as ever. This enables health practitioners to provide better, more streamlined and personalised care and an individual to have their medical history in one location. Currently an individual's health information is available to them and their healthcare providers via the Australian Government My Health Record tool, accessible online and via the *my health* app; however there is a way to go to have all information available in this tool.

As part of the National Health Digital Strategy, the Australian Digital Health Agency is expanding My Health Record to make information more accessible and discoverable. The National Health Digital Strategy's vision is 'Creating an inclusive, sustainable and healthier future for all Australians through a connected and digitally enabled health system'. With this said, Australia still has paper-based hospitals using fax machines. As noted by the cardiologist Professor Eric Topol, Director and Founder of Scripps Research Translational Institute, "*The digital world has been in a separate orbit from our medical cocoon, and it's time the boundaries be taken down.*"

FROM THE EXPERTS

"I want to see a world where we enjoy proactive instead of reactive health care with automated medicines and health reminders seamlessly integrated into our life."



Sarah Gray

Chief of Health Operations and Innovation, Healthylife





Telehealth



Telehealth will continue to grow

Following the dramatic and unprecedented shift in telehealth uptake during COVID, we now see phone and video services as accepted ways to address everyday healthcare needs. To demonstrate this, data from August 2023 to August 2024 showed that more than a quarter of all Australians sought care through telehealth services. From 13 March 2020 to 31 July 2022 more than 95,000 practitioners used telehealth services to deliver care. Consumers access these services for a wide range of needs including renewing regular prescriptions, discussing acute health concerns, talking with a nurse or allied health practitioner and obtaining a medical or carer's certificate.

Improving equity of access

There are several factors driving consumers to telehealth, with the main determinants being cost, wait times and lack of GP availability, especially in certain geographic regions due to Australia's growing GP shortage. Research suggests telehealth services for remote communities have numerous benefits, including reduced travel, greater access to specialist and allied health services, fewer missed appointments, better social and emotional wellbeing due to in-community care, improved clinical outcomes and reduced costs.

As residents of rural and remote areas of Australia face poorer access to healthcare services and significant inequities in health outcomes compared to their city counterparts, telehealth is an important tool to enable better health outcomes. Those living in outer regional, remote or very remote areas were more likely to report waiting longer than they felt acceptable for a GP appointment compared to those living in major cities (36.3% compared to 26.0%).

Telehealth can also improve equity of access for people with disability, for example without needing to navigate the complexities of community access, transport and arranging carers. As around one in six Australians live with disability, it is important that digital health is tailored appropriately. This is particularly so as only 31% of adults with disability in 2020 and 2021 rated their health as excellent or very good, compared with 68% of those without disability. Further, 7.6% of people with disability aged under 65 delayed or did not see a GP when needed because of the cost. Thus, as the

Digital Health Agency notes, 'digital health has the potential to help people overcome healthcare challenges such as equitable access'.

Telehealth can also have its challenges, particularly for those with low literacy or digital literacy levels having to learn new technological functions. This extra cognitive load can cause frustrations.

FROM THE EXPERTS

"Artificial intelligence will be adopted across all specialties to augment telehealth and options such as chatbots are likely to be the first touchpoint for consumers as they engage with the healthcare system."



Dr Rob McCartney
Chief Medical Officer,
Woolworths Group



Telehealth: an effective low-cost option

Following the pandemic, the Government dramatically reduced MBS (Medicare Benefits Schedule) funding for telehealth, leading to a reduction in GP clinic-driven telehealth services. At the same time, private telehealth providers emerged, with consumers paying a modest fee (from \$15+) for a medical consultation without any MBS funding associated.

By comparison, in March 2024, the average GP gap fee was recorded at \$44.10 for a standard consultation and \$62.70 for a long consultation. This was an 8% rise in costs year-on-year. With the rising cost of living, private telehealth services are well placed to meet consumer needs at a more affordable price.

FROM THE EXPERTS

"Telehealth will continue to grow and become an integral and essential component of primary health care throughout Australia. In the next few years consumers will have many more options for virtual health care and in some circumstances that may be the only viable option."



Dr Rob McCartney
Chief Medical Officer,
Woolworths Group



Telehealth availability

With predictions that Australia will be short of around 10,600 GPs by 2031, wait times only look to get longer, with rural and remote communities already waiting up to 12 weeks for a GP appointment.

ABS data shows that 60.9% of people were seen in four hours by a GP, while 27% of people waited over 24 hours to be seen for urgent medical care. Private telehealth services can offer access to GPs in as little as eight minutes via services such as Healthylife telehealth, offering a convenient solution when it comes to pressing health needs.





Telehealth development

While telehealth services can solve many problems, we can develop them further. Currently, telehealth consultations are not suitable for all consultations, such as when a physical examination is required. Using private telehealth services can also lead to fragmented care if continuity with one central GP or clinic is lost.

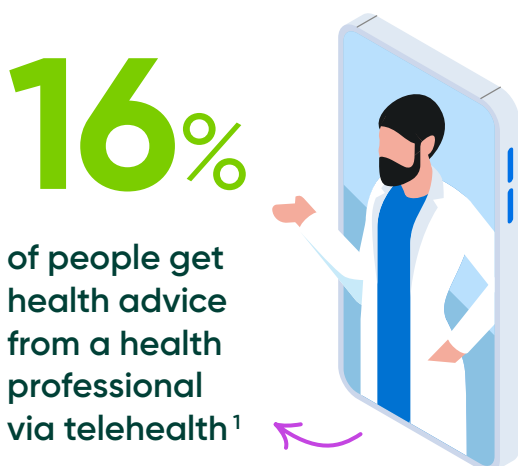
In addition, we lack centralised health data. With My Health Record still in its infancy, a patient's health records may be stored in many locations, making continuity of care a challenge. Additional MBS funding could support traditional GP clinics to offer more comprehensive telehealth services, as currently they can only offer them to the small, select group of individuals who will receive rebates. It should be noted that the Medical Board of Australia stipulates that, to be considered good practice, prescribing or providing health care should always be done with a direct, real-time consultation (in-person or via video or telephone).

Telehealth services can provide more than GP services. Allied health practitioners use telehealth to provide a range of services. Research suggests that in-person mental health care is not greatly superior to digital/online help, which can be a more cost- and time-effective approach. Telephone health coaching can also provide personalised support. The Wellness my Way program across the Maranoa community in Queensland begins with an online health and wellbeing assessment, followed by a personalised telephone coach to support developing a tailored health plan. It acts as a 'front door' to prevention programs online and in the community.



Healthylife telehealth

Healthylife has delivered more than 11,000 consultations since 2023 via our telehealth partners. We connect consumers to doctors with short wait times and offer a range of services including general consultations, prescriptions and access to medical or carers' certificates. With rising consumer expectations when it comes to fast access to products or services, we have developed a service that offers high-quality care in a location that suits, such as their home. Together with our pharmacy partner, Healthylife Pharmacy, consumers who are issued an e-script can access same-day shipping to selected locations and fast shipping all over Australia. This health service seeks to provide a seamless end-to-end journey for the customer.



¹ IPSOS, Annual Food and Health Survey 2024
Commissioned by Woolworths Australia, June 2024, n=2000.

FROM THE EXPERTS

"If used correctly, telehealth will be able to provide health access to otherwise marginalised populations, reducing health disparity."



Dr Dinesh Palipana
Emergency
Department Doctor



Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence – where does it fit in?

When Artificial Intelligence (AI) is mentioned we may picture images with too many fingers or text with floridly written descriptions, leading to questions about how AI can be used to improve health care. Health care requires enormous resources and it needs skilled and expert workers. While AI doesn't and can't replace those workers, it could support them to more efficiently provide services, improve access to care and possibly allow more time for the healthcare professional to connect with the patient.

Broadly speaking, AI systems run on algorithms that allow them to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision making and language translation. There are a number of different types of AI that could support health care:

- ✔ **Generative AI:** An example is an 'AI scribe', which runs during a consultation to create a clinical note, summary or letter for the medical record. This could allow the doctor to focus on their patient, lower administrative workload and decrease doctor burnout.
- ✔ **Computer Vision:** Systems have been trained on large sets of images to recognise changes in x-rays, CT or MRI images. Systems are being developed for skin cancer identification, for use in regional settings.
- ✔ **Natural Language Processing (NLP):** NLP deals with understanding and communicating in human language. Smartphone chatbots designed specifically for health care, in combination with machine learning, can provide therapy, education and virtual companionship for those who have additional needs, are affected by a health condition or are lonely. Further funding is developing them to work in settings such as to support people on the autism spectrum and to complement genetic counselling sessions.

FROM THE EXPERTS

"We need to use AI tools to solve the problems that they're best at to improve access for everyone."



Dr Rob McCartney
Chief Medical Officer,
Woolworths Group





There are some caveats to the hype surrounding AI. It is important to consider:

- ✓ **Accuracy:** AI systems are dependent on the right data being fed to them, as well as having learned the right processes to analyse them.
- ✓ **Accountability:** No system is without flaws. Who is responsible for the system's design, deployment, upgrades and security?
- ✓ **Transparency:** Understanding how AI systems produce their outputs can be difficult due to the way they use large data sets.
- ✓ **Privacy:** Where there is data, there are risks to privacy and concerns around consent and security. See also Ethical issues, below.
- ✓ **Use cases:** Every tool is designed for specific uses and care should be taken when moving beyond these.
- ✓ **Ethical issues:** Bias in AI outputs is a known problem. Using historical data can continue or exacerbate inequalities for minority groups. See also Privacy, above.

Australians are rightly concerned about quality control and the use of AI in their health care. The good news is that our regulators are monitoring how this digital technology can be harnessed for health. The Australian Government is investing almost \$30 million in researching how AI can be used to improve health care, designing mandatory guardrails for high-risk settings; and the Therapeutic Goods Administration regulates some healthcare AI as it is considered to be 'medical device software'.

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the National Medical Boards are working together to ensure that Australia's registered health practitioners are providing only best-practice, evidence-based services. Generative AI tools used in clinical practice will be audited and reviewed.

A recent National survey estimates that during the six months preceding June 2024, 9.9% of Australian adults (about 1.9 million people) used the AI tool ChatGPT to ask health-related questions. This is likely to be a conservative estimate given the rapid growth in AI technology and the availability of similar tools. Around half of the people were using it to find out about a specific health condition.

FROM THE EXPERTS

"Communication is a critical barrier and tools like AI may play a role in translating and simplifying language and deciphering facial expressions."



Dr Dinesh Palipana
Emergency
Department Doctor



Next steps

The Healthylife Advisory Board recommends a range of steps to harness the rapidly changing digital world's benefits. These steps aim to create safe and healthy online environments and experiences, and prompt us to seize opportunities to bring Australians more years of healthy living.

Evidence-based information

- ✓ **Misinformation:** Install measures to make misinformation versus credible apparent to users, for example tips on finding credible information and 'pop ups' to identify credentialed health professionals (and flag misinformation).
- ✓ **Digital tools:** Promote evidence-based digital tools that support health and can provide economical preventive health interventions.
- ✓ **Nutrition:** Expand online nutrition information at point of purchase; for example, nutrition labelling for online meal delivery services for easier identification of unhealthy food to help us move closer to the Australian Dietary Guidelines.
- ✓ **Sleep:** Provide evidence-based sleep health information to prevent digital technology eroding our sleep health.
- ✓ **Social media:** Harness social media's potential to create connections and support, and to help combat loneliness.

Guardrails

- ✓ **Forward planning:** Keep policies, education and regulations ahead of the curve on relevant issues, such as using AI responsibly, delivering alcohol and unhealthy food by drones and promoting scam awareness.
- ✓ **Responsible promotion:** Ensure therapeutic goods and medicine advertising complies with relevant codes and regulations.
- ✓ **Regulations:** Mandate standards and responsibilities for platforms and services such as telehealth and social media.
- ✓ **Advertising:** Reduce advertising of harmful behaviours in the digital environment, particularly those targeted to children, such as unhealthy food and drink, alcohol and gambling.
- ✓ **Privacy:** Mandate data privacy and security standards.

Access

- ✓ **Health messaging:** Harness social media platforms to reach intended audiences with simple, accessible information packaged in appealing ways.
- ✓ **Digital literacy:** Improve digital support for those not 'digital natives'. Upskill users and designers to increase awareness about the barriers people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and Indigenous communities experience when accessing digital health care.
- ✓ **Accessibility:** Ensure accessibility and quality of telehealth services, including regulations and funding.
- ✓ **Balanced engagement:** Support balanced engagement with screen use by providing resources for families and access to non-screen-based activities for everyone, such as green spaces and subsidised sport.



What Woolworths Group is doing with digital for health

Woolworths Group is committed to helping Australians and New Zealanders live healthy lives and live the Group purpose: *To create better experiences together for a better tomorrow*. It recognises that there is always room to improve and to align with its health commitments.

Healthylife and the wider Woolworths Group employ a range of healthcare professionals, including medical practitioners, dietitians, nutritionists, pharmacists, naturopaths, psychologists and more. Below are some of the digital initiatives happening in the business that influence health.

Healthylife initiatives

- ➔ Health products reviewed by health professionals: www.healthylife.com.au
- ➔ [Food Tracker](#) by Healthylife, a free digital tool designed to make healthy eating easier
- ➔ Free Healthylife [health programs](#)
- ➔ [Health articles](#) with expert advice and evidence-based information
- ➔ [Free 15-minute](#) telehealth consultations with qualified naturopaths for general health advice
- ➔ [Telehealth](#) offerings to consult GPs

Woolworths initiatives

- ➔ Fresh Food Kids [e-Discovery Tours](#)
- ➔ Partner with Life Ed to deliver the Fresh Food Kids Nutrition Program
- ➔ Healthier [recipes](#) and ideas
- ➔ Dietary and lifestyle filters for allergens, dietary preferences and HSR
- ➔ [Healthier Options](#) displaying online with the ability to add the healthier option to your cart
- ➔ [Lists](#) to help make shopping quicker, easier and smarter
- ➔ Woolworths Team member wellbeing services
- ➔ Pick Fresh, Play Fresh and Pick Fresh, Play Fresh interactive hub
- ➔ Cricket Australia: Woolworths Cricket Blast
- ➔ Surfing Australia: Woolworths Surfgroms
- ➔ Netball Australia: Woolworths NetSetGO
- ➔ Sonder for 24/7 financial, medical safety, psychological or physical support for team members and their families
- ➔ [Get your Woolies worth](#) helping to easily compare unit prices
- ➔ [Woolworths at Work](#) learning hub including healthy eating information
- ➔ 'I am here' team website linking team to services
- ➔ Everyday Rewards partnership with Bupa to reward purchase of fruit and vegetables

Our Woolworths Group leaders on health

Some of the Woolworths Group leaders share what they're passionate about when it comes to health in our digital era.



Ananth Sarathy
Chief Executive Officer,
Healthylife



"Digital technology is transforming the way we approach health. At Healthylife we aim to bridge gaps in accessibility and empower individuals with our tools, products and information to improve health outcomes."



Von Ingram
Managing Director,
W Living



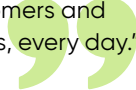
"We know that health is a priority for many people. As our digital touch points with customers and team grow, we continue to innovate our digital tools to help make health easier, more accessible and more affordable for everyone – supporting better health outcomes."



Simon Lowden
Chief Sustainability Officer,
Woolworths Group



"Digital technology has the potential to democratise health by making it more accessible, and convenient for everyone. By listening to our communities, leveraging the Group's unique strengths and expertise, and partnering with suppliers, government and industry, we work to help our customers and their families achieve healthier lives, every day."



Caryn Katsikogianis
Chief People Officer,
Woolworths Group



"We're embracing digital innovation and tools that we believe are key to making health and wellbeing resources accessible to all our team members, supporting their individual needs."





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Andrew Hicks

Chief Marketing Officer,
Woolworths Group



"Over the past 12 months we have introduced a number of new digital health tools – including the 'Healthier Options' feature to inspire smarter food choices – and integrated Healthylife's Food Tracker on our website and app. These efforts, alongside ongoing product reformulations, demonstrate our long-term commitment to helping Australians lead healthier lives."



Guy Brent

Managing Director,
Woolworths Food
Company



"We have the healthiest own brand portfolio and most recognised health brand Macro. We are enhancing the impact of this via our digital community 'Bunch' with over 85,000 customers and 35,000 team members to test, develop new products, to improve their health credentials and share healthier recipes created with our own brand products."



Annette Karantoni

Managing Director,
Woolworths Retail



"We're committed to empowering our customers and team members to prioritise their wellbeing. Through our digital platforms, including our apps and the Healthylife platform, we're providing easy access to resources like health tracking tools, telehealth and expert advice to make healthy living easier and more accessible for everyone, every day."



Faye Ilhan

Managing Director,
idX



"Our digital platforms are empowering healthier choices: top filters like 'Gluten Free', 'Vegan', and '5 Health Star Rating' make it easier for our customers to find options that meet their individual needs and preferences."



Daniel Hake

Managing Director,
BIG W



"At BIG W, we're all about offering affordable ways for families to create balance and be physically and mentally active. With quality sporting equipment and clothing along with board games, Lego sets and books, there is something to help everyone achieve balance in their lives."



Justin Nolan

Director,
Woolworths Metro



"Metro's goal is to be the easiest way for customers to find, shop and prepare what they need from Woolies for a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Our localised range offers great value meal options and nutritious snacks across our small stores through to other general health and wellness essentials."

How we built this report

The Advisory Board gathered information from many sources to understand our collective state of health, in our digital world. We focused on 'pillars' for good health and divided the report into four: eat, move and sleep, feel, and stay healthy.

Based on this information, we outlined what we believe would be effective 'next steps' and called for actions we can collectively be part of to support our next generation's health.

Food and drink purchasing and costing data analysis

We used Woolworths Supermarket aggregated transaction data 2020–2024, together with Woolworths market share, ABS household composition, the Australian Health Survey database 2011–2012 and a newly developed database on food group serves that the Food Tracker tool uses, to analyse Australian food and drink purchases for at-home eating across all retail outlets. We compared the number of serves purchased to the Australian Dietary Guidelines' (ADGs') recommended number of food groups and discretionary serves for Adults aged 19–50 years. We also calculated a Woolworths Supermarket average cost per serve for each of the ADG food groups and discretionary foods, from 1 November 2022 to 30 October 2023 and 1 November 2023 to 30 October 2024.

Based on the average number of serves purchased, we calculated the weekly cost of the ABS average Australian household (2.5 people: 1.8 adults and 0.7 children) and compared this to the average cost of a 'healthy' shop recommended by the current ADGs. The number of serves were based on male/female 19–50 years old; child 5–14 years old.

We also identified emerging trends and the largest grocery contributors to each food group and discretionary foods, based on Woolworths Supermarkets transaction data from 1 November 2023 to 30 October 2024.

Calculation process

The process to calculate the average per-person and household serves purchased was:

- 1 Analyse Woolworths' aggregated food and drink transaction data of over 935 million total transactions in the years 2020–2024 (~18 million weekly transactions). No individual transaction data was used and bulk purchases were excluded (300+ serves grains, 100+ serves other food groups).
- 2 Group purchases into five core food groups and discretionary foods.¹
- 3 Adjust Woolworths' data to account for food purchased at other outlets.
- 4 Adjust data per household to calculate the number of serves per person per day of the five core food groups and discretionary foods.
- 5 Compare the number of serves of each food group and discretionary foods per person to the recommended serves based on the ADGs.
- 6 To calculate the average cost per serve: For each food group we picked the top segments that contribute 90% (to exclude segments that are less relevant to the food group) of the total serves and calculated their weighted average cost per serve.

1 The database used to calculate the number of serves was prepared using an approach consistent with published data files available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Food Standards Australia and New Zealand used in the 2011–2013 Australian National Nutrition Survey. The Food Tracker tool uses the same database.



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Woolworths Group Annual Food & Health Survey 2024

We reviewed data from the Woolworths Group Annual Food and Health Survey 2024 insights. The survey involved 2,000 Australians aged 18–80 years recruited from IPSOS + partners research panel, Australia-wide, metro and regional areas in June 2024.

Other data sources

The report draws on data and expertise from many sources, including sales data, to see how we are purchasing from different businesses across Woolworths Group, along with other organisations, such as published academic research and government data.

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Glossary

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics.
ADG	Australian Dietary Guidelines.
AI	Artificial Intelligence: the theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence.
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.
Burden of disease	The loss of healthy life through premature death or living with ill health; the quantified impact of a disease or injury on a population.
Chronic disease	A long-lasting condition with persistent effects that can impact quality of life.
Core foods	Foods from the Australian Dietary Guidelines' five food groups.
Discretionary foods	Foods that do not fit into the five core food groups because they are not necessary for a healthy diet and are often high in saturated fat and added sugars, added salt or alcohol and low in fibre. These foods are often 'energy dense' and 'nutrient poor'.
HSR	Health Star Rating.
Digital technology	<u>Electronic tools</u> , systems, devices and resources that generate, store, share or process data as well as what some might refer to as digital technologies that include personal computers, smartphones apps, virtual reality and the Internet.
Digital environments, services and platforms	<u>Online spaces</u> that may allow access to and uploading, distribution and sharing of online content. These include, but are not limited to, social media services, designated internet services, or relevant electronic services (as defined in the <i>Online Safety Act 2021</i>), as well as search engines and gaming platforms.
Social media	Any online <u>social network</u> , which is a website or app that allows a user to create and share content online (e.g. TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn).
Technoference	Digital technology interference or 'noise'.

View the reference
guide online



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