

Tips for Including Red Meat on the Menu

The *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning*¹ recommends that lean red meat is included on the menu at least 6 times per fortnight.

Lean red meat is an important source of protein, iron, zinc and vitamin B12.

Good sources of red meat include beef, lamb and kangaroo.

Including red meat on the menu **6** times per fortnight can be challenging, however it is possible. The following planning tips may help:

Mince

Mince is popular with children. It can be cheaper and easier to cook than other cuts of red meat. Consider the following tips when including mince dishes on the menu:

- Choose lean mince - heart smart or premium mince.
- Prepare mince in a variety of ways to provide different textures. For example, bolognaise, meat balls or rissoles, meatloaf, chow mein.
- Include a variety of beef, lamb or kangaroo mince dishes so that children experience different flavours.

Other cuts of meat

Encourage children to experience different meat textures by including at least two red meat dishes not based on mince, each fortnight, e.g. beef stroganoff, Mongolian lamb, lamb or beef stir fry, lamb or beef casserole/hotpot.

Cost and wastage

To avoid overspending and food waste, don't cook too much. When in care for 8 hours or more, children should be offered $\frac{3}{4}$ of a serve of meat each day.

- $\frac{3}{4}$ of a serve of meat = 50g of cooked red meat or 70g of raw red meat per child.
For example, to serve 40 children the recipe will need 2.8kg of raw, boneless lean red meat.

Refer to the *Ingredient Quantity Guide* tip sheet for more information on amounts of red meat.

Suggested cooking methods for meats (other than mince)

- Use a pressure cooker
- Cook meat in a slow cooker the day before e.g. beef chuck, lamb shoulder
- Roast meat slowly in a moderate oven e.g. beef blade roast, leg of lamb (This may need to be done the day before.)
- Braise or casserole cheaper cuts of meat e.g. chuck, blade, shin beef, diced lamb forequarter (This may need to be done the day before.)
- Stir fry with colourful vegetables e.g. use stir fry strips or prepare your own from boneless blade, round or topside steak, lamb round or topside
- Bake minute steak with a little stock, in a moderate oven for about 1.5 to 2 hours.

NOTE: If meat dishes are cooked the day before they are going to be served, safe food handling and hygiene practices must be followed.

¹ *Caring for Children: Birth to 5 years*, NSW Ministry of Health, 2014, page 92.