

13 October 2026***Audio grabs available****Cancer Council warns excess body weight is linked to thousands of cancer cases each year in Australia**

Around 5,300 cancer cases in Australia each year are linked to excess body weight, prompting Cancer Council Australia to use National Nutrition Week (12 – 18 October), hosted by Nutrition Australia, to urge greater action on diet, weight and cancer prevention.

AIHW data showed that 56% of Australian adults did not meet the recommended daily serves of fruit and 94% did not meet the recommended daily serves of vegetables. The same data showed 66% of Australian adults had overweight or obesity in 2022.

Jacinta Reddan, CEO of Cancer Council Australia says the scale of the cancer burden linked to excess body weight shows why prevention efforts must be treated with urgency.

"We know that obesity, physical inactivity, poor diet and alcohol contribute to increased cancer risk. Excess bodyweight is the cause of around 5,300 cancer cases in Australia each year and is linked to 13 cancer types, yet public awareness of these links remains low."

"Cancer Council Australia welcomes Food Ministers' decision to make the Health Star Rating mandatory and is calling on Food Standards Australia New Zealand to complete the change as quickly as possible. With fewer than half of products currently carrying the rating, Australians are still waiting for the consistent shelf-wide labelling they need to make healthier choices."

Clare Hughes, Chair of Cancer Council's Nutrition, Alcohol and Physical Activity Committee says focusing on what we can add to our plates can feel easier and more achievable than starting with restriction.

"Healthy eating doesn't need to be complicated. Small steps can make a meaningful difference, whether that's adding an extra serve of vegetables to meals, choosing fruit as a snack, or swapping to wholegrain options where possible.

"Cancer Council recommends following the Australian Dietary Guidelines by aiming for two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables each day, including legumes and beans, and choosing wholegrain foods where possible. These foods provide fibre and important nutrients, help support a healthy weight and can reduce cancer risk."

"Cancer prevention cannot rely on individual choices alone. Governments have a critical role in creating healthier food environments, including by restricting unhealthy food advertising to children, mandating the Health Star Rating and exploring how a tax on sugary drinks can improve overall health."

"We can all reduce our cancer risk by eating a healthy diet, being physically active, maintaining a healthy weight and reducing the alcohol we drink, but government policy also has a role to play in supporting all Australians to make healthy choices," Hughes added.

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Contact details

For all media enquiries and interview opportunities, please contact:

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For practical healthy eating ideas, recipes and meal planning tips, visit Healthy Made Tasty:

www.healthymadetasty.com.au.

About Cancer Council Australia

Cancer Council Australia is Australia's leading cancer charity, working to reduce the impact of cancer for all Australians. Cancer Council Australia works with its members, the eight state and territory Cancer Councils to:

- Undertake and fund cancer research
- Prevent and control cancer
- Provide information and support for people affected by cancer
- Shape and influence policy and practice

Find out more at cancer.org.au, or visit our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).