

“The land is the mother, and we are of the land; we do not own the land, rather the land owns us. The land is our food, our culture, our spirit, and our identity.”

Dennis Foley, a Gai-mariagal and Wiradjuri man, and Fulbright scholar



Artwork by Tanya Saldanha for Metro South Health.

Metro South Health recognises and pays respect to the traditional custodians of the land and waters – the Yugambeh, Quandamooka, Jaggera, Ugarapul, and Turrbal peoples – and to Elders, past, present, and emerging.



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The Beginning

The City of Logan is the epicentre of cultural diversity in South East Queensland, with each community bringing their unique flavours and culinary traditions to the table. Many refugee communities settle in Logan.

In 2021, Logan's refugee communities asked for help with cooking unfamiliar vegetables and meals their kids were asking for. This was the beginning of the Community Champions Cooking Program to promote and support healthy eating for Logan's refugee communities. Community Champions were recruited and completed training modules on healthy eating, food safety and cooking skills. The Champions have been supported to plan, shop, cook, serve and eat healthy meals with weekly cooking programs throughout the community. As well as improvements in eating healthy meals with more vegetables at home, the program enhanced social connections, employment and training opportunities and improved English language skills. The program's success is a result of the commitment and dedication of the Community Champions and the strong partnership with Logan's multicultural service providers.

Treasured recipes have been shared from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Australia. The recipes are full of flavour, with aromatic spices, interesting vegetables and fresh herbs. Each dish tells a story, reflecting the history, traditions and creativity of its community.

Preparing, cooking and sharing cuisines cultivates a sense of belonging and creates a cultural memory. To capture this memory and as a legacy for future Community Champions, the *Healthy New Communities Cookbook* was created. This cookbook promotes cultural identity and celebrates the flavoursome cuisines of Logan refugee communities.

As well as documenting the delicious food from around the world, our cookbook includes family-friendly recipes requested by our refugee communities. These healthy, tasty recipes aim to help communities eat well, feel well and live well.



“Cooking my food makes me happy. I remember things about my family. I love sharing my food with the other ladies. It makes my heart go very big and feel so proud when everyone eats it and tells me it's yummy.” Khup

Cooking without a Recipe

Many people from around the world learn to cook from an early age, taught by family. They learn to cook using their senses to guide their cooking rather than by reading and following a recipe.

We had to incorporate specific measurements and serve sizes in our *Healthy New Communities* cookbook to help others replicate the delicious cuisines of Logan's refugee communities. However, we recognise that many of the dishes aren't traditionally documented into recipes and the intuitive cooking has been passed down for generations.

Cooking with what you have and trusting your instincts indicates a skilful and confident cook. Providing healthy food to your family is rewarding and satisfying. Logan's refugee families bring so many amazing skills, talent and knowledge to our community.

Intuitive cooking

[*ad occhio*] Italian for "cooking by eye" without precise measurements.

This type of cooking uses instinct, experience, and sensory cues (taste, smell, sight, touch and sound) to create dishes, rather than strictly following recipes. It emphasises creativity and flexibility in the kitchen, allowing for adjustments based on available ingredients, equipment and personal preferences.



"We don't measure our food. We just know what to do. Back home, we didn't use chopping boards, we cut vegetables in our hands." Farhia



"I cook by feel or looking at the dish and add more if it needs it. I don't use recipe for my Zomi food – my mum taught me how to cook." Zam

Healthy Eating Tips

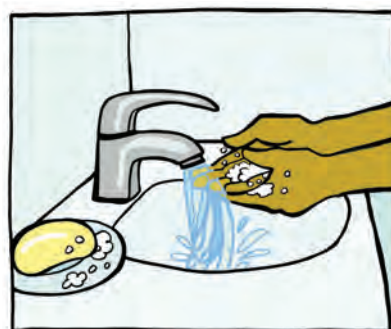
- Eat a variety of foods every day. A healthy diet has vegetables, fruit, lean meat, beans, legumes, nuts, eggs, milk, yoghurt, cheese, rice, bread, pasta and other grain foods.
- Eat lots of vegetables and fruit, which keep us healthy. All vegetables and fruit provide different benefits so eat as many colours as possible.
- Choose wholegrains, like wholemeal flatbread or brown basmati rice.
- Choose low-fat milk, yoghurt and cheese.
- Cut fat off meat.
- Drink lots of water all through the day. Limit sugary drinks.
- Limit foods with too much sugar, fat and/or salt.
- Don't eat too much.



Food Safety Tips

Before cooking or eating

- Wash hands well with soap and water.
- Keep kitchen clean.



Separate raw and cooked foods

- Use separate cutting boards and utensils for raw and cooked foods.
- Store raw foods separately from cooked foods in the fridge.



Cook thoroughly

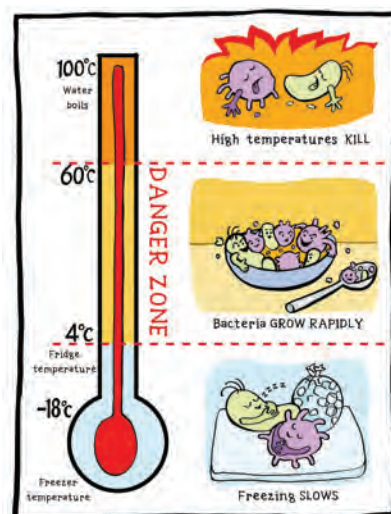
- Cook food well to kill harmful germs.
- Reheat leftovers until very hot (more than 60°C).



Keep it cold or keep it hot

Germs spread very fast if food is kept in “temperature danger zone” of 5–60°C.

- Do not leave cooked food at room temperature for long:
 - if less than 2 hours, you can put it back in the fridge
 - between 2 and 4 hours, eat it straight away
 - after 4 hours, throw it away.
- Keep hot cooked food very hot (more than 60°C) right up to serving.
- If reheating cold food, reheat it quickly to very hot.
- Do not thaw frozen food on bench. Thaw in fridge or use microwave.
- Keep leftovers in the fridge for 2–3 days or freeze for 6 months.



Wash fruit and vegetables

- Wash fresh fruit and vegetables under running water.
- It is safe to cook chicken without washing it first.