



Have your questions answered! If you would like to have one of our experts answer your questions, email them to health@acpmagazines.com.au. Your questions will be forwarded to the relevant expert, whose answer will appear in a future issue of *Good Health*. No personal correspondence will be entered into by any of our experts.

Q How do I feed my family well on a reduced income?

To eat well and save money, plan your family's weekly meals. Write your shopping list using the following food guide and stick to it.

Around half of the average Australian food budget is spent on foods high in fat, sugar and salt, whereas this should ideally be limited to 10 per cent. Less than a quarter of our food dollar goes towards basic fruits, vegetables, legumes, breads and cereals, but this should ideally be at around 60 per cent. The remaining 30 per cent of the food budget is for meats, eggs and dairy products.

To work out the cost per kilogram of your foods, collect your dockets over a week and visit www.foodcentsprogram.com.au.



Q I have a gastric band and find I can't eat healthy foods like fruit, vegetables or meat. Any suggestions?

Many people experience poor food tolerance with a gastric band. If you can't eat healthy food, then something is wrong. There are some eating behaviours you need to follow for best tolerance with a gastric band. Prepare yourself a test meal of half a cup of cooked vegetables and half a cup of savoury cooked mince and follow these guidelines:

- ❶ Sit completely upright.
- ❷ Drink two glasses of water before the meal.
- ❸ Chop your food into pieces smaller than a five-cent coin.
- ❹ Take small mouthfuls.
- ❺ Spend time focusing on the taste and texture of the food, while chewing well.
- ❻ Relax and enjoy the meal.

If you cannot tolerate this meal, then your band is most likely too tight. See your surgeon to have it adjusted.

Q Is the food I'm eating giving me gas and causing bloating?

Gas building up during the day is often caused by poor absorption of carbohydrates. Common culprits include:

- Lactose in milk.
- Sorbitol in some fruits and sugar-free gums.
- Raffinose in cabbage.
- Excess fructose in honey and apples.
- Fructans in wheat.

These components travel through to the colon, where bacteria feed on them and produce hydrogen or methane. Some gas is passed as flatulence and some absorbed into your bloodstream.



Q Should I avoid carbohydrates after 6pm to lose weight?

There's no real scientific basis, but it can work for some. By making it a rule not to eat carbohydrates in the evening, you're stopping yourself eating sweets, which is what makes a difference for weight loss.

There's nothing wrong with having a yoghurt or some toast for supper, and these contain carbohydrates. Focus on the nutritional quality of your choice and the portion size rather than the presence of carbohydrates.



Amanda Clark is an advanced accredited practising dietitian with over 20 years' experience. She runs her own Gold Coast-based practice.