

# Small Changes, Big Wins: Why Everyday Food Choices Matter

The food we eat every day matters more than we sometimes realise.

In the middle of busy routines, long days, and the convenience of ready-made options, it is easy for food choices to become automatic. Yet these everyday decisions have a powerful effect on our health, both now and in the years ahead. The foods we choose can either help our bodies stay healthy and strong, or they can gradually increase the chances of getting sick.

That is the reason the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate, part of the Ministry for Health and Active Aging, has kicked off a nationwide campaign centred on ultra-processed foods.

This campaign is rooted in a simple but important goal: to support people in becoming more informed about the food they eat, to better understand what ultra-processed foods are, and to encourage practical, realistic steps towards healthier eating habits.

## Understanding What's on Our Plates

Ultra-processed foods are everywhere these days. They are convenient, aggressively advertised, and often designed to be visually appealing and easy to grab. Sometimes, they are even marketed as if they are a good choice for your health.

Many ultra-processed foods, though, are made with ingredients that bear little resemblance to what you would find in a typical kitchen. These can encompass a range of additives, preservatives, flavour enhancers, sweeteners, colourings, and other components. While these substances might make food more appealing, extend its shelf life, or simplify its consumption, they don't always contribute to its nutritional value.

Simultaneously, these consumables frequently exhibit elevated levels of sodium, sugars, and detrimental fats, coupled with a deficiency in essential nutrients. Regular consumption of such products can, consequently, foster obesity and elevate the likelihood of developing additional chronic ailments.

In contrast, choosing foods that are whole, fresh, and minimally processed can significantly support better health and overall well-being.

## A campaign centred on awareness and action

Over the coming months, the Directorate will be sharing practical information, educational materials, and clear guidance to help people make more informed food choices in their daily lives.

### The campaign is designed to help the public:

- better understand what ultra-processed foods are and why they matter
- learn how to identify them more easily through labels and ingredient lists
- make simple, achievable changes that can improve everyday eating habits.

The intention is not to overwhelm people with complicated advice, nor to expect perfection. Instead, the focus is on helping individuals and families take realistic steps that fit into everyday life.





**At the heart of the campaign is a clear and encouraging message:**

## **Small Changes. Big Wins.**

The idea is straightforward: significant health gains frequently stem from small, manageable adjustments. Cooking an additional meal using fresh ingredients, opting for water instead of sugary drinks, examining a product's label before buying it, or exchanging a processed snack for something healthier might not appear to be much on their own. Yet, these seemingly minor shifts can accumulate, leading to substantial improvements in well-being.

## **Supporting healthier choices in a practical way**

Awareness is important, but people also need practical tools.

That is why, alongside this campaign, a new recipe booklet has also been launched and is available on the HPDP website. It includes simple, accessible recipes based on whole and minimally processed foods, offering realistic ideas for healthier meals that people can prepare and enjoy in everyday life.

This is an important part of the wider message. Health promotion is not only about highlighting what may be harmful. It is also about providing positive alternatives, practical support, and the confidence to make better choices.

## **Prevention starts with everyday habits**

Prevention remains one of the strongest investments we can make in public health. While healthcare services continue to play a vital role in treatment and care, reducing the risk of disease before it develops is equally important. Helping people build healthier habits, improve awareness, and make informed decisions can have a lasting impact not only on individual wellbeing, but also on families, communities, and society as a whole.

Through this campaign, the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate is reaffirming its commitment to supporting the public with clear guidance, evidence-based messaging, and practical resources that place prevention at the centre of health.

When it comes to protecting our health, everyday choices matter.

And often, the journey towards better health begins exactly there — with small changes that lead to big wins.