FOOD STANDARDS
Australia • New Zealand
Te Mana Kounga Kai – Ahitereiria me Aotearoa

AUSNUT 2023 – About the classifications

September 2025

Overview

AUSNUT 2023 provides the food composition data used in the 2023 National Nutrition and Physical Activity Study (ABS, 2025) to translate reported food and dietary supplement consumption into intakes. It also includes supporting information to help interpret the data and compare results with previous surveys.

Developing the food and dietary supplement classification system

The food and dietary supplement classification system is used for reporting food and dietary supplement intakes from the study. It is largely based on the system developed for reporting food, nutrient and dietary supplement intakes from the 2011-13 Australian Health Survey (AHS), with modifications to reflect changes to the food supply and reporting requirements of the 2023 study.

Details of the modifications are described in the Comparisons with the 2011-13 AHS classification system section. For a copy of the final version used for the study, refer to AUSNUT 2023 – Food and dietary supplement classification system (Excel, 77KB).

1. Food and dietary supplement classification system structure

The classification system is based on a three-tiered structure which combine to form a unique individual level ID:

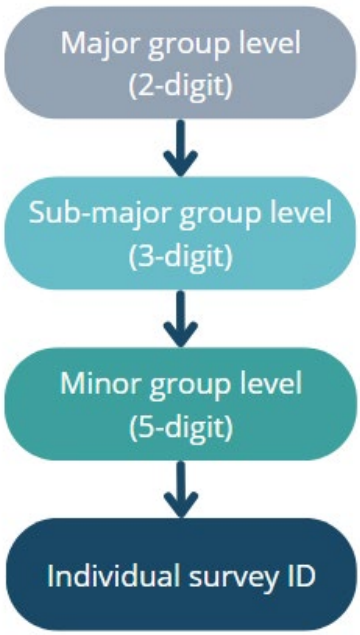

Figure 1: Food and dietary supplement classification system structure

The major group level (2-digit)

The first two numbers in the classification refer to the major group a food or supplement belongs to, based on its key ingredient. There are 23 major groups covering groupings such as beverages, cereals, meat, dairy, fruit and dietary supplements.

Examples of major groups are:

Code	***Group name***
19	**Milk products and dishes**
34	**Dietary supplements**

The sub-major group level (3-digit)

When the 2-digit group is read with the third digit, the group is referred to as the sub-major group. There are 133 sub-major groups. For foods, these take into account things like meat species, plant families and major variations in cooking or processing. For supplements, these capture the main supplement type.

Examples of sub-major groups are:

Code	***Group name***
19	Milk products and dishes
191	**Dairy milk (cow, sheep and goat)**
34	Dietary supplements
341	**Vitamin and/or mineral supplements**
344	**Other nutritive supplements**

In the 2023 study, consumption patterns were reported at the major and sub-major levels in the food and nutrients publication.

The minor group level (5-digit)

When the first five digits are read together, it represents the 'minor' groups. There are 502 minor groups. They start to separate foods based on whether or not they are fortified, their saturated fat or sugars content, and other production or processing considerations (e.g. whether cheese is ripened or not). For dietary supplements, they separate out by main nutrient content.

Examples of minor groups are:

Code	*Group name*
19	Milk products and dishes
191	Dairy milk (cow, sheep and goat)
19101	**Milk, cow, fluid, regular whole, full fat**
19102	**Milk, cow, fluid, reduced fat, <2 g/100 g**
341	Vitamin and/or mineral supplements
34108	**Vitamin C supplements**
34109	**Vitamin E supplements**
344	Other nutritive supplements
34401	**Fibre supplements**
34402	**Protein or amino acid supplements**

The individual food and dietary supplement level

Foods and dietary supplements are coded differently at the individual level.

Foods were allocated three additional digits, resulting in a unique 8-digit individual survey food identification code. The last three digits are a consecutive number allocated to foods after they have been grouped into a logical order within a five-digit minor food group.

There are 3,741 individual foods which may represent specific varieties, flavours, fortification or preparation methods.

Examples of individual foods are:

Code	*Group name*
19	Milk products and dishes
191	Dairy milk (cow, sheep and goat)
19101	Milk, cow, fluid, regular whole, full fat
19101001	**Milk, cow, fluid, rich or creamy (~4.5% fat)**
19101002	**Milk, cow, fluid, regular fat (~3.5%)**
19102	Milk, cow, fluid, reduced fat, <2 g/100 g
19102001	**Milk, cow, fluid, reduced fat (~1%)**
19102002	**Milk, cow, fluid, reduced fat (~1%), lactose free**

For the full food list with assigned classifications and IDs, refer to AUSNUT 2023 – Food details (Excel, 1.5MB).

Dietary supplements were identified at the individual supplement level by a 5- or 6-digit ID depending on the source of their nutrient data. The majority of dietary supplements are allocated their AUST-L number as their identifier. This is a unique numeric code found on a dietary supplement label which indicates the dietary supplement is listed on the TGA's Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG). A small number of dietary supplements were allocated a unique code by FSANZ, which used the 5-digit minor group followed by a sequential single digit. Further information is available in AUSNUT 2023 – About the dietary supplements (PDF, 430KB).

Examples of individual dietary supplements are:

5-digit code	***Individual code***	***Group name***
34402	344	Other nutritive supplements
34402	34402	Protein or amino acid supplements
34402	**329312**	**Swisse Beauty Collagen Balance Powder**
34402	**344021**	**Dietary supplement, protein or amino acid supplements, not further defined, powder**

2. Comparisons with the 2011-13 AHS classification system

Changes to the classification of foods since the 2011-13 AHS largely reflect changes in the food supply since that time and are summarised below by major, sub-major and minor food groupings.

The major group level

There has been no significant change in these broad groups since the 2011-13 AHS, noting that groups 33 – Reptiles, amphibia and insects and 34 – Dietary supplements have swapped codes.

The sub-major group level

The following changes have occurred since the 2011-13 AHS:

- Separation of fruit and vegetable drinks from 100% fruit and vegetable juices (113 and 114)
- Renaming of municipal and bottled water to recognise both flavoured and unflavoured varieties (118)
- Renaming of soy-based products to dairy milk substitutes to reflect the change in market and wider availability of dairy alternatives (204 & 205)
- Renaming of fruit, nut and seed-based confectionary to better reflect the products within the category (282).

- Creation of a group for de-alcoholised beverages to reflect the wider availability of products in this category (296).
- Removal of infant drinks as no AUSNUT 2023 foods were coded to this group (324)

The minor group level

There are a large number of changes in these groups since the 2011-13 AHS. Some of the more major changes include:

- The subdivision of mixed dishes based on the place of preparation (at home or outside the home).
- Combining of some categories previously subdivided by fat content to match products available on the market e.g. ice cream was previously subdivided into three categories, however it was reduced to two to better reflect products available at the time of the study.
- Inclusion of new groups to separate dairy and meat substitute types.
- Subdivision of meat substitutes due to the increased availability and variety in these types of products.
- Inclusion of new groups for teas and coffees prepared with dairy milk alternatives such as the cafe and takeaway styles of coffee.
- The rearrangement of some cereal bar categories to better reflect products available on the market.

Further information on changes to the food nutrient classification system is available on the ABS website.

Developing the Australian Dietary Guidelines (ADG) classification system

The ADG classification system is used to determine the amount of ADG food groups in each food to enable reporting of intakes from the study against the ADGs. It is based on the same system developed for reporting intakes from the 2011-13 AHS, with some minor tweaks to the cut off criteria for the breakfast cereal category.

Details of the modifications are described in the Comparisons with the 2011-13 AHS classification system section.

1. ADG classification system structure

The ADG classification system is based on a three-tiered structure:

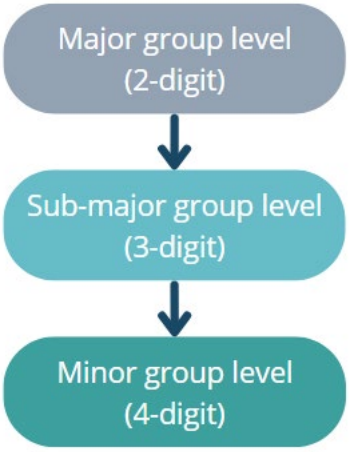

Figure 2: ADG classification system structure

However, the final classification code for a food may occur at the 2, 3 or 4-digit level, depending on the level at which the ADG serve size applies.

The major group level (2-digit)

The first two numbers in a classification refer to the major food group a food belongs to. The ADG classification system contains nine major food groups covering core food group foods such as grains, vegetables, fruit, dairy and dairy alternatives, meat and meat alternatives, unsaturated fats and oils and water. Along with classifications for mixed foods made up of multiple ADG food groups and foods that do not contribute to an ADG group.

All foods were assigned a 2-digit code. The only serve size applied at the major food group level is to 60 – Water.

Examples of major food groups are:

Code	***Classification name***	***Serve size (g)***
30	**Fruit**	**-**
40	**Milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives**	**-**
60	**Water**	**250**

The sub-major group level (3-digit)

When the 2-digit food group is read with the third digit, the group is referred to as the sub-major food group. There are 24 sub-major food groups that consider factors such as whether the food is fresh or dried, or its nutrient content. It is at this level that we start to see more of the serve sizes applied.

Examples of sub-major food groups are:

Code	*Classification name*	*Serve size (g)*
30	Fruit	
301	**Fresh/canned fruit**	**150**
302	**Dried fruit**	**30**
40	Milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives	-
401	**Higher fat (HF) dairy foods, fat >10 g/100 g**	**-**
402	**Medium fat (MF) dairy foods, fat 4-10 g/100 g**	**-**
403	**Lower fat (LF) dairy foods, fat <4 g/100 g**	**-**

The minor level (4-digit)

When all four digits are read together, it represents the minor food groups. There are 47 minor ADG food groups that consider the ADG serve sizes recommendations associated with some foods (such as milk, cheese or yoghurt), and other factors such as the level of processing.

Examples of minor food groups are:

Code	*Classification name*	*Serve size (g)*
40	Milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives	-
401	Higher fat (HF) dairy foods, fat >10 g/100 g	-
4011	**HF Cheese**	**40**
4012	**HF Milk powder only**	**26**
402	Medium fat (MF) dairy foods, fat 4-10 g/100 g	-
4021	**MF Milk**	**260**
4024	**MF Cheese, hard & soft**	**40**
4026	**MF Yoghurt, dairy based**	**200**

Refer to AUSNUT 2023 – Australian Dietary Guidelines classification system (Excel, 63KB) for the full version.

2. Serve sizes

The majority of serve sizes are based on those specified in the ADG summary document, which were assumed to reflect the serve size consumed, and not the purchase amount that may include inedible portion (e.g. apple cores, orange peel etc.).

Where a serve size was not specified, serve sizes were imputed from categories with similar key nutrients and consumption patterns. For example, dairy based desserts, such as custards, were assigned the same serve size as yoghurts.

Other points to note include:

- All serve sizes specified in millilitres were converted into a gram amount based on their density as consumption amounts in the study are expressed in grams e.g. 250 mL of milk is equivalent to 260 g.
- Cooked serve sizes were used for meats and fish, rather than the raw serve size to align with the cooked consumption amounts reported in the study.
- Foods assigned two different food groups (i.e. legumes and nuts) were assigned a serve size from each food group e.g. when legumes are considered in the vegetables group they are assigned a serve size of 75 g and when considered in the meat and alternatives groups they are assigned a serve size of 150 g.

3. Comparisons with the 2011-13 AHS classification system

The ADG classification system and associated serve sizes were largely unchanged from the system used in 2011-12. The only exception was the cut-off for total sugars in breakfast cereals which was reduced from <25 g to <20 g per 100 g (or <35 g to <22.5 g per 100 g for products with added fruit), to align with the refreshed criteria for discretionary foods.

Developing the criteria for discretionary foods

All AUSNUT 2023 foods were classified as either discretionary or non-discretionary. The principles and criteria for discretionary foods applied to the 2023 dataset were based on those used for the 2011-13 AHS dataset. The primary difference is that foods were classified at the 8-digit individual food level for AUSNUT 2023 rather than the 5-digit level to provide maximum flexibility when analysing the dataset.

Some criteria for specific categories were refreshed based on consultation undertaken by the ABS. For further information, see the ABS website.

References

ABS (2025) National Nutrition and Physical Activity Study 2023, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra. Available at About the Intergenerational Health and Mental Health Study | Australian Bureau of Statistics