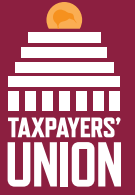


The 2023 Nanny State Christmas Feast



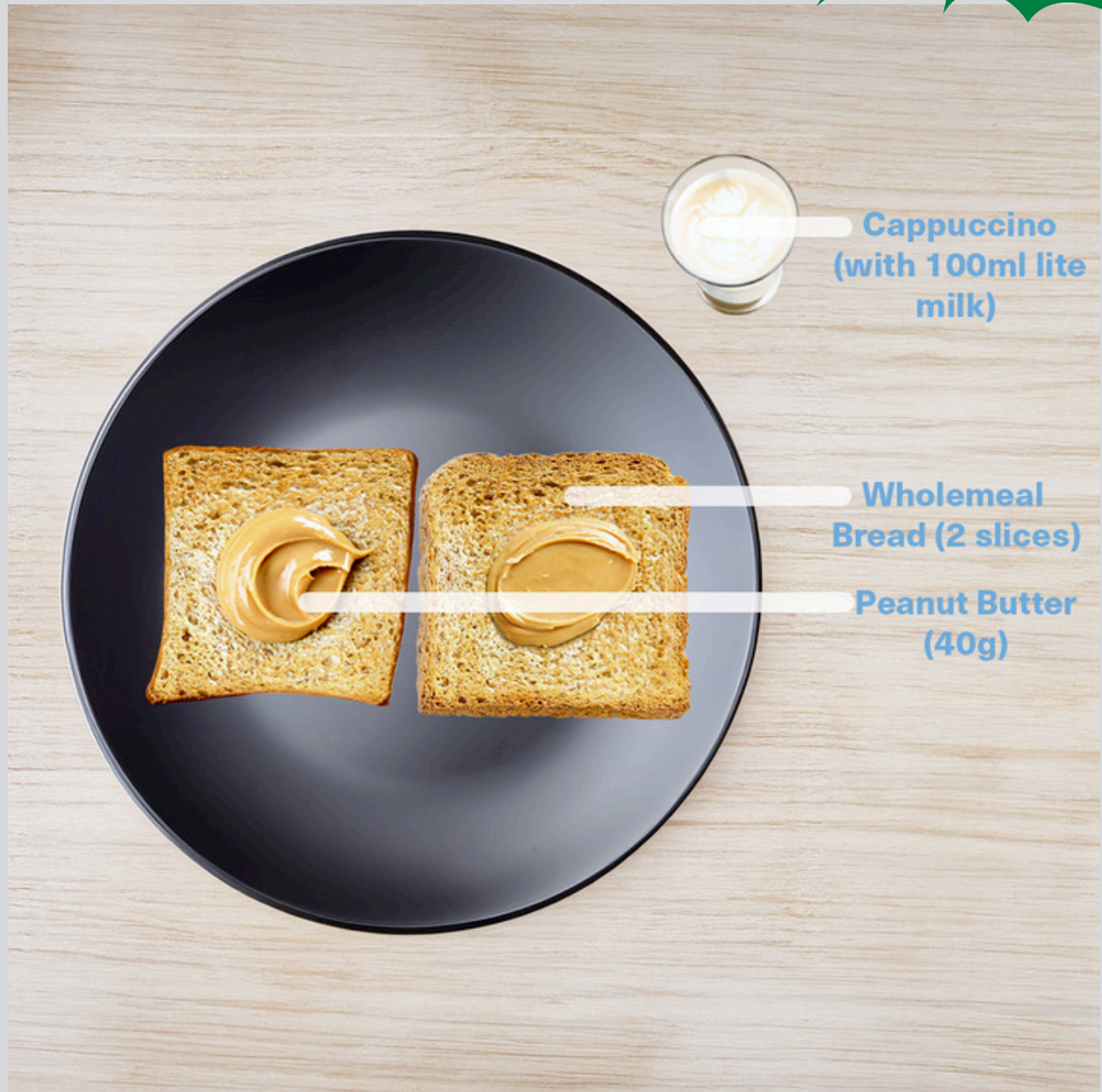
Introduction

Christmas is one of the most special times of the year, as families from far and wide gather to enjoy each other's company, generally over a day of shared food and drink.

But with the Government's hundreds of pages of dietary and health guidelines setting out minimum and maximum daily intakes for a variety of nutrients and food types, it can be difficult for families to know whether their Christmas Lunch is sufficient to satisfy the ever-increasing demands of government health overlords.

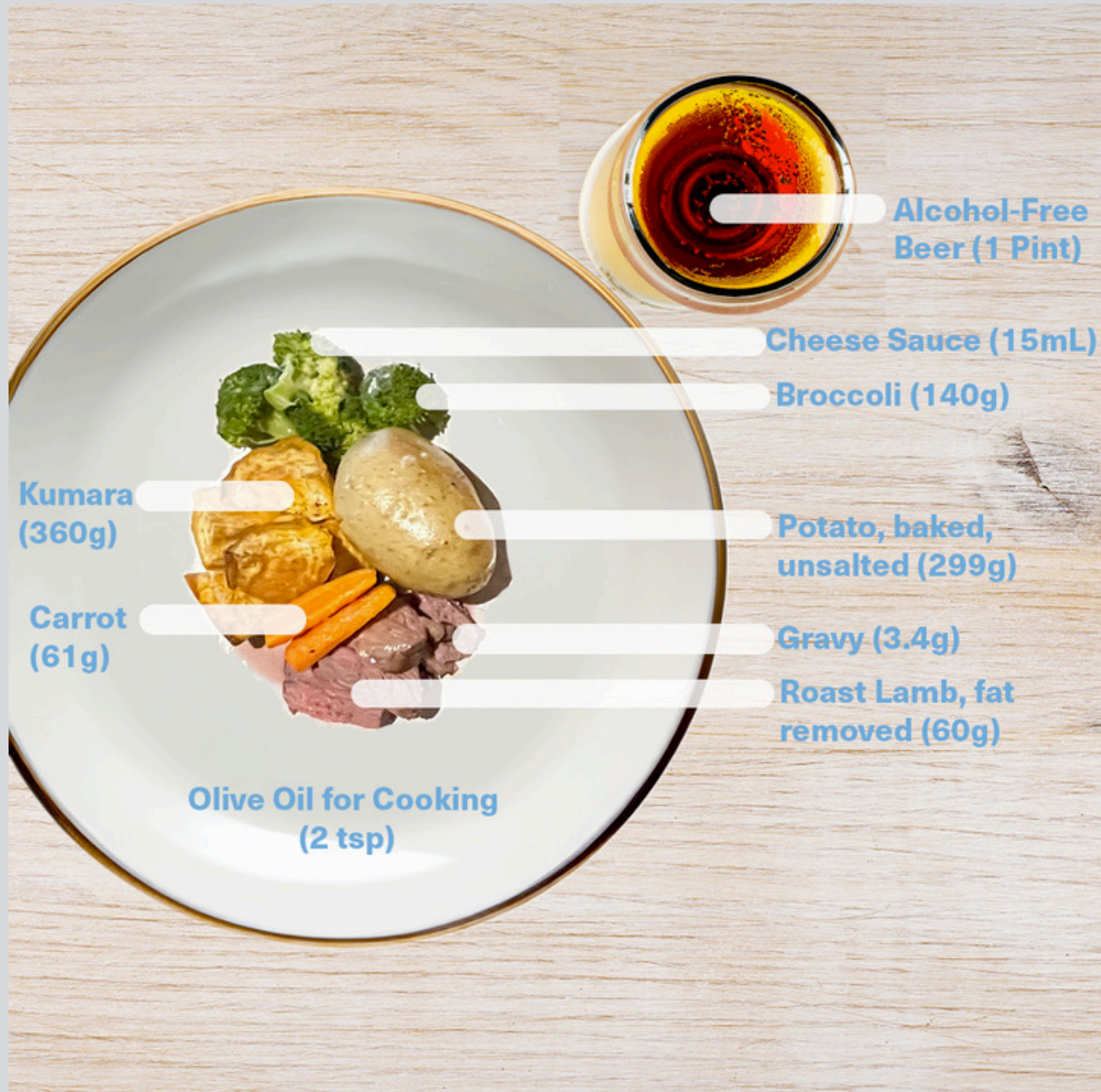
The Taxpayers' Union has attempted to demystify these complex guidelines and condense them down into a simple meal plan for a day's worth of eating and drinking on Christmas Day. We did our best to ensure this meal plan complies with the maximum daily intakes of sodium, sugar, protein, fat, carbohydrates and calories for a typical New Zealand male. However, given the complexity of these dietary guidelines, it is unlikely we were able to satisfy all the draconian measures required by the Ministry of Health.

Breakfast



1. 2 wheatmeal slices with 40 grams of peanut butter
2. A 200ml cappuccino with 100ml of lite milk

Lunch



1. 60 grams of lamb roast, cooked with 2 tsp of olive oil and topped with 3.4 grams of gravy
2. 1 unsalted baked potato, 2 unsalted baked kumaras, a carrot and broccoli topped with 15ml of cheese sauce
3. A pint of alcohol-free beer

Dessert



1. 19 grams of pavlova, served with a banana, half a kiwifruit, a strawberry, and topped with 8 grams of whipped cream
2. Half of a piece of fruit cake, half of a fruit mince pie, with a side of $\frac{1}{4}$ of a scoop of vanilla ice cream (with no added sugar)

Allocation Breakdown

Item	Amount	Sodium (g)	Protein (g)	Fat total (g)	Carbohydrates (g)	Free Sugar (g)	Total Calories
Breakfast							
Peanut Butter	40g	0.142	9.6	19.6	5.2	3.4	249.2
Wholemeal Bread	2 slices (63g)	0.265	5.5	1.1	27	1.1	144.3
Cappuccino	1 cup (200ml)	0	0	0	0	0	5
Milk (lite)	100ml	0.041	3.3	1.5	4.8	0	45.9
Lunch							
Lamb Roast (lean)	60g	0.080	15.2	6.4	0	0	118.4
Olive Oil (for cooking)	2 tsp (9g)	0	0	9	0	0	81
Gravy	3.4g	0.133	0.5	0.5	1.4	0.9	15.7
Baked Potato (unsalted)	1 (299g)	0.030	7.5	0.4	63.2	0	286.4
Baked Kumara (unsalted)	2 (180g each)	0.130	7.2	0.6	74.6	0	332.6
Carrot	1 (61g)	0.042	0.6	0.1	5.8	0	26.5
Broccoli	1 stem (140g)	0.057	3.3	0.6	10.1	0	59
Cheese Sauce	15ml	0.068	0.1	0.3	1.3	0.3	9.5
Alcohol-free Beer	1 Pint (473ml)	0.040	1	1	16.9	0	82.94
Dessert							
Pavlova	19g	0.023	1.1	0	0	14	60.4
Fruit Cake	1/2 a slice (25g)	0.076	1.1	2.9	3	13.3	95.7
Banana	1 (118g)	0.001	1.3	0.4	27	0	116.8
Kiwi Fruit (green)	1/2 (69g)	0	0.8	0.4	10.2	0	47.6
Strawberry	1 (12g)	0	0.1	0	0.9	0	4
Whipped Cream	8g	0.005	0.3	2.2	0.7	0	23.8
Vanilla Ice Cream (No Added Sugar)	1/4 of a scoop (14.25g)	0.007	0.9	0.7	0.7	0	21
Mince Pie	1/2 a pie (27g)	0.072	1.4	3.6	8.2	11.4	116.4
Evening Snacks							
Mixed Nuts (unsalted)	30g	0.005	6.2	16.9	2.4	0	186.5
92% Dark Chocolate	25g	0.001	3.3	11.8	6.8	1.6	153
Alcohol-free Wine	1/2 a glass (75ml)	0.023	0.1	0.1	3.2	0	16.2
Wholegrain Crackers	4 (27g)	0.092	3.5	3	17.6	0.3	112.6
Cheese	12.5g	0.085	2.9	4.3	0.5	0	52.3
Chips (less salt)	40g	0.082	2.2	12.4	24	0.5	218.4
Total		1.5	79	100	316	47	2681

Ministry of Health guidelines

	Sodium (grams)	Protein (grams)	Fat total (grams)	Carbohydrates (grams)	Free sugar (grams)	Total Calories
Govt Max Allowance	2.0 grams	270 calories (based on 64g/day for an adult male) or alternatively between 405 and 675 calories (15 – 25% of total energy)	Between 540 and 945 calories (20 – 35% of total energy)	Between 1215 and 1754 calories (45 – 65% of total energy. Includes free sugars)	Between 135 and 270 calories (5 – 10% of total energy)	2,699 calories (for a 1.8m male, aged between 31-50, who undertakes light physical activity)
Total	1.5 grams	316 calories (79g) 11.7% of total energy	898 calories (100g) 33.3% of total energy	1262 calories (316g) 46.8% of total energy	187 calories (47g) 6.9% of total energy	2,681 calories (including caffeine, trace alcohol, etc.). While this is within the upper limit for our average male, females will need to reduce their intake to suit 2,078 calories.
Saturated Fat	Allowable amount: 10% of total energy Calculated amount: 5.5% of total energy					

It is Christmas after all!

If you feel that the above meal plan is somewhat stingy, just know that we took some major liberties in trying to fit the occasion – it is Christmas after all. The truth is, we found it difficult to ensure our meal plan met all the necessary energy criteria while also abiding by the required serving sizes of vegetables, fruit, grains, et cetera. We also recognize our meal plan has been modeled for a typical New Zealand male. So ladies, we are sorry, but to abide by the requirements of a typical New Zealand female, you will need to find around 600 calories to cut from this list to meet an intake of 2,078 calories. This whole exercise leaves one pondering what role the government should play, if any, in issuing dietary guidelines.



Our View



Those who value personal freedom are right to question the Government's role in issuing dietary advice at all. People have a right to make decisions about what they wish to put in their bodies. They should be allowed to weigh up the costs and benefits of eating certain foods against their personal needs and preferences. Such freedoms allow us to pursue what we value most, whether that be what tastes best, what is healthiest, or just whatever is cheapest.

Every day we see people make decisions that sacrifice their physical health for things that bring them more happiness or less sadness. We see this when people opt to drive rather than take the much safer alternative of walking, when they have a beer on a Friday after work instead of the state-recommended glass of water, or even when people want to relax with a cigarette during their smoko break at work. These kinds of trade-offs can only be made by individuals because it is impossible for the state, or anyone else to know what decision will make a person happiest.

Dietary guidelines put out by government departments, however, fail to consider such nuance. Instead, they narrowly focus on parameters and targets that are important to them while ignoring ones that may matter to the individual decision maker. As a result, our masters at the Ministry of Health continue to be dumbfounded as to why Kiwis, left to our own devices, choose to eat evil salted chips over a handful of unsalted nuts.

All of this is not to say there can be no room for government dietary guidelines. If done well, they could serve as a helpful and easily accessible resource for the taxpaying public without costing them an arm and a leg and demanding strict adherence. There is a strong case to be made for ensuring people have access to the information needed to make an informed decision before deciding what to consume. Periodically putting out simple and effective messaging on how everyday Kiwis can adjust their habits towards achieving healthier outcomes, represents better value for money than simply re-hashing similar guidance to that of other health authorities and governments.

Our View

Our current government diet guidelines, however, are not designed for general consumption. Instead, they are targeted towards health professionals, and are relatively unpalatable for the average reader. But how do they stack up as a resource for professionals? Well, compared to their competition, these guidelines quickly become an inferior source compared to the stream of newer research coming out of academia, and other large health organizations dedicated to such aims who provide health professionals with the most up to date dietary guidance.

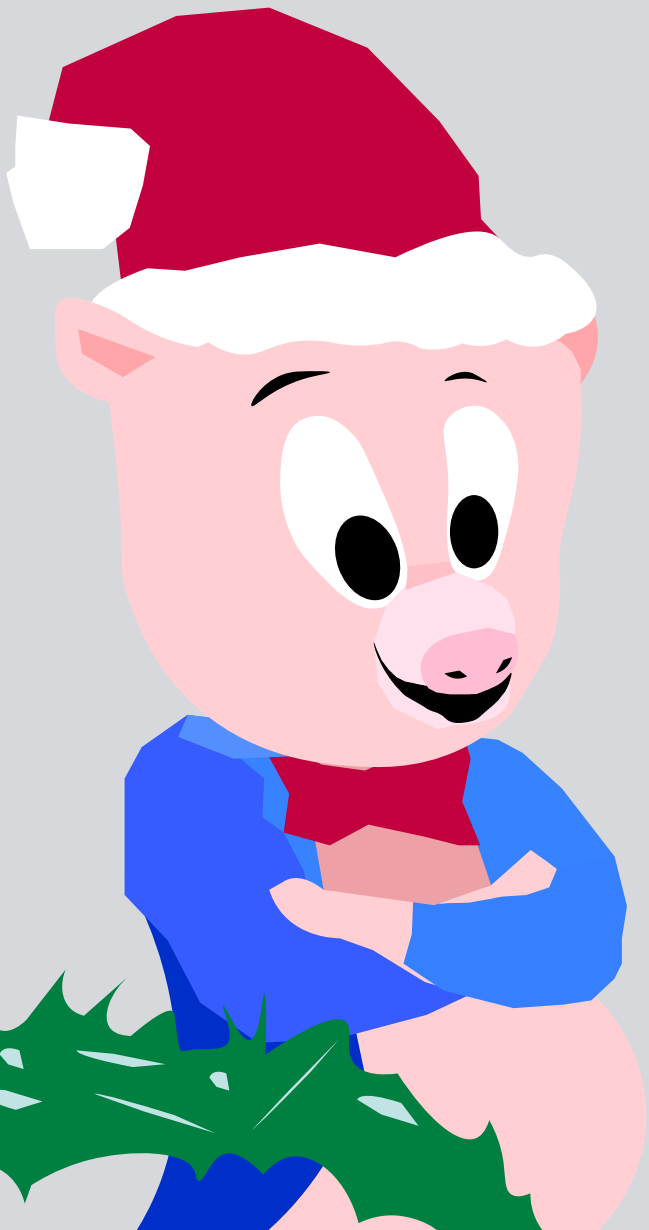
Despite quickly becoming outdated, these government guidelines can continue to embolden old information even long after it has been refuted. Such examples include persisting myths around the unhealthiness of certain fats and cholesterol, as well as continued mass confusion among the public around the health implications of eating an egg. When taking on the role of primary truth-teller, governments effectively divert attention away from more reliable sources and ensure bad information can continue to circulate.

So in our view, it appears government issued diet guidelines fail to satisfy both the public's need for accessible information on nutrition and the health profession's need for a reliable source on the subject. It is pertinent then that if there are any benefits from issuing dietary guidelines through government bodies, this needs to be weighed against the costs of doing so. For example, we saw the Ministry of Education scrap their recently designed 2020 school lunch guidelines and completely re-design them only two years later (with these new guidelines costing upwards of \$100,000).

Lastly, government dietary guidelines can also form the basis for introducing new regulations and taxes. If it can be shown, for instance, that New Zealanders consistently exceed their government sanctioned sugar allowance – this can serve as justification for introducing new taxes on sugar. Such use misses an opportunity to inform the public on how they can adjust their behaviours themselves and instead assumes an authoritative role in dictating how people should be making such choices. Dietary advice issued by the government should be just that – advice. If someone knows that sugar is bad for them and chooses to drink it anyway, despite knowing the risks, who are the government to tell them they can't do that, be that directly through regulatory limits on ingredients or indirectly by imposing financial barriers such as taxes.

Conclusion

So, while you enjoy your single spoonful of pavlova this Christmas, consider how your tax contributions could be better spent providing you with helpful, actionable, and realistic dietary advice. Until then, we at the New Zealand Taxpayers' Union wish you all a merry, but government approved, Christmas.



Notes

- Figures based on the Ministry of Health's Eating and Activity Guidelines and Nutrient Reference Values for Australia and New Zealand
- 2,699 Calories is based on a New Zealand Male, aged between 31 – 50 years old, who is 1.8m tall and undertakes light activity (a PAL of 1.6). 2,078 Calories is based on a New Zealand Female, aged between 31 – 50 years old, who is 1.6m tall and undertakes light activity (a PAL of 1.6). Taken from Nutrient Reference Values for Australia and New Zealand – Page 279
- Nutritional values are approximate and have been taken from products available from Countdown Supermarkets and from eatthismuch.com
- This list does not constitute dietary advice or serve as a substitute to recommendations made by a doctor, nutritionist, or other such health professionals

Authors



Connor Molloy is the Campaigns Manager at the New Zealand Taxpayers' Union. He studied a Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in Public Policy at Victoria University of Wellington. At the Taxpayers' Union, Connor is involved in a wide range of policy areas but has a particular interest in issues relating to lifestyle economics, climate change, corporate welfare and the digital economy.



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