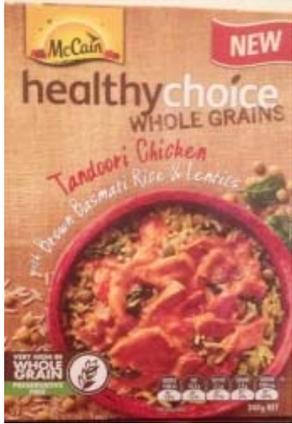


100 Healthier 'Ready meals'

By Caron Milham (Dietitian)



It is important to reduce our sugar intake to tackle the growing obesity and Diabetes crisis in Australia. More than ½ of adults and ¼ of children are overweight in Australia. Apart from the sugar we add ourselves there is an abundance of sugar already in many processed foods. Many people will be surprised to find there is even sugar in savoury ready meals. It is vital to check the amount of sugar in these products, as well as in other products. The challenge is to find the healthier alternatives but also bear in mind that some of the sugar can occur naturally in some ingredients (like dairy products, vegetables and fruit) and in other cases it may be added. It is the added sugar we are concerned about.

*1tsp sugar = 4 grams so a product with 32 g sugar has 8 tsp sugar. As a comparison, a can of coke has 36g sugar or around 9 tsp sugar.

Also, don't forget to check the amount of fat, saturated fat, protein, salt & calories as well. Some products may be very low in sugar whilst be over 10 % (even 20 %!) fat) whilst others may be high in sugars, say over 10 % sugar, yet be only 2% fat. Ensure adequate protein is also present in the 'meal' and that calorie / kilojoules are not excessive, particularly if you are watching your weight. These products listed below also contain less than 420mg sodium per 100g.

Understanding Food labels

Visit www.healthy-guide.com for more details on 'How to read labels- including **'Understanding Nutrition claims** and what they really mean', and how to read **'Ingredients lists'** and **'Nutrition Panels'**. More information on these topics as well as information on 'How to choose healthier products' and more healthier products in other food categories, can be found in my best-selling book **'The Australian Healthy Shopping Guide'** which can be purchased from this website.

There has been a huge increase in the last few years with the numbers and types of 'Ready meals' available. There are now over 300 Ready meals on the market and they can be purchased as frozen, fresh or packets/tins in the isles. Ready meals are advertised as 'complete meals' that can 'stand alone', without advertising on the package for/ needing the addition of, more ingredients like meat/ vegetables/pasta or rice for example. (Where possible though, you can always add more vegetables/ salads to your 'ready meal' if you wish!) . Some meals can be purchased as single serves, whilst others can serve 2, 4, 5 or even 6.

Cost varies greatly, from a few dollars for a packet/tin to nearly \$15 for a fresh 'gourmet' meal. Not all brands are available at all supermarkets, but some brands are available at many. All supermarkets chains had some healthier options. For a product to be analysed and therefore considered for the list below, a Nutrition panel had to be present on the package, as well as an Ingredient list.

There are over 100 healthier options overall and many of these have been listed below. If you find a product in the supermarket that is not on this list it may mean that it wasn't one of the healthier options. It may also just mean that it wasn't available to view at the supermarkets we visited/ or was out of stock. Use the guidelines on this website and in the book the **Australian Healthy Shopping Guide** to help you determine its suitability.

100 Healthier 'Ready meals'

Nutritional Aims

- Less than 10 g 'added sugars' serve (For a Serve equivalent to 300g Plus)(or less than 3.3% added sugar if the serve size is less) .
- Less than 4 % fat, less than 480 calories / serve and at least 15 g protein/serve.

BETTER CHOICES

Fresh

Deluca's – Lasagne;

Cucina's - Cibo –Pasta with beef Ragù;

SFera's - Gourmet Express Healthy +
- Scotch fillet & vegetables; Barramundi & vegetables; Barramundi grilled on a bed of spinach & brown rice; Yellow Chicken Curry

Sienna's

-Beef Ravioli With fresh Bolognese Sauce; Lasagne With fresh Australian beef

Latina – Italian Meatballs

Ready Chef – Homestyle cottage pie

Woolworths

- Tuna & Vegetable Penne Pasta Bake; Vegetable Dahl Curry; Lamb Rogan Josh
-

Ellies – Rustica – Spinach & Ricotta Cannelloni (Serves 4)

Menu Italian

- 3 Cheese Cannelloni (Serves 5/ single packets); 3 Cheese Canneloni (Serves 1);
Beef lasagne (Serves 6/ single packets)

Frozen

San Remo – Restaurant Quality - Beef Ravioli with Classic Italian Sauce

McCains – Roast Chicken & vegetables; Roast Beef & vegetables; Roast lamb & vegetables;

On the menu – Roast range

– Roast beef; Roast Chicken

100 Healthier 'Ready meals'

- Spaghetti & Meatballs

Griff's – Curried Prawns

Amy's Kitchen – Vegetable lasagne with Wheat Pasta (6 individual frozen packs)

International Cuisine – Health & Vitality

- Green Chicken Curry; Beef in red wine sauce; Beef Stroganoff; Basil Chicken; Chicken Risotto; Vegetable Lasagne; Vegetable Cannelloni; Sundried Tomato; chicken & pasta; Shepherd's Pie; Tuna Mornay

International Cuisine – Spaghetti Bolognese.

Lean Cuisine

- Rich & creamy mushroom Tortellini
- Calorie controlled – classic- Vegetable cannelloni
- Homestyle - Classic chilli con carne with rice
- Steam - Penang Beef Curry with Rice; Indian Chicken Tikka Masala; Sundried tomato chicken with pasta; Indian Style Butter Chicken with Rice; Meatball Arrabiata with Pasta; Atlantic Salmon with pasta; Cheese & cracked pepper chicken with pasta
- Steam – Wholegrains
 - Mexican Chicken with brown rice & quinoa;
- 'Balanced serve'
 - Lamb & Rosemary hotpot; Creamy Chicken & Basil with spaghetti; Satay Chicken Noodles; Chicken & Chorizo Risotto; Spaghetti Bolognese
- 'Classic' options
 - Spinach & Ricotta Lasagne; Rich beef Lasagne
- 'Shapes' – Tuna Bake in a bowl

Authentic Asia – Chinese Style – Prawn Wonton Ramen With green choy sum

Weight Watchers – Beef Lasagne; Spaghetti & meatballs

Super Nature- Superfoods

- Thai beef with quinoa and brown rice; Homestyle Sweet Potato Cottage Pie; Split pea lentil dahl

The Good meal Co – Gluten free

- Creamy Tomato Fusilli with chicken & bacon; Butter chicken & Rice

Mc Cains

- Beef lasagne
- Healthy Choice
 - Creamy Chicken Carbonara; Spinach & Ricotta Ravioli; Beef Lasagne;

100 Healthier 'Ready meals'

- Wholegrain range
 - Mexican Slow cooked beef with brown rice and quinoa
 - Italian beef & chia meatballs; Malaysian Beef Curry With wild & brown rice
 - Chicken & Mushroom risotto;
 - Tandoori Chicken with brown basmati Rice & Lentils
 - Thai beef & basil stir-fry with brown rice & quinoa
 - Moroccan Lamb Tagine

McCains - Spaghetti Bolognese

Select – Chicken Satay with Rice

Woolworths – Delicious Nutritious – Four varieties including: Spicy Chimichurri beef and vegetables.

Coles – Honey mustard chicken; Shepherd's Pie

Syndian – Dal Makhani Curry

In Isles - Packets/tins

St Dalfour – French Bistro – Gourmet to go

Hormel – 'Compleats'

- Roast Beef & gravy (with mashed potato)
- Chicken breast & gravy (with mashed potato)
- Beef Stew made with potato & carrots

Plumose - 'On the go'

- Bolognese meatballs with Fusilli
- Italian- creamy red pepper & mushroom fusilli
- Mexican – Chilli wedges

Sunrice – Street Snack

- Chicken with a kick
- Chilli con Carne & Rice

Stagg – Chili – Lean beef Chili with beans

- Chunky beef chili with beans

Heinz – Beans- Creationz

- Fiery Mexican style beanz; Medium Salsa Chilli Beans; Mediterranean Style Beanz; Mild Curry Beans;

John West – Meals on the go

- Tuna & Rice – Savory tomato & onion; Thai green curry

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