Summary

- Less than 30 per cent of women eat the recommended intake of fruit, vegetables, legumes and fish
- Women are at greater risk of iron deficiency than men, due to their higher need for iron during menstruation, pregnancy and menopause
- Women are still expected to do more food work than men, leading to an unequal burden of stress and time
- Gendered social norms dictate that women adopt the role of family food gatekeeper, as well as conscientious and healthy consumer
- Being female is the strongest risk factor for the development of an eating disorder, and eating disorders are the third most common chronic illness among young women
- Women are more likely than men to experience food insecurity in Australia and worldwide
- Better quality diet and food security is associated with lower likelihood of depressive and anxiety disorders in women
- Women’s food access, behaviours and health outcomes are strongly influenced by the socio-economic determinants of income, education and location

We recommend:

- Development of a comprehensive and gender-sensitive national food and nutrition policy
- Strategies to increase access to, and affordability of, healthy food
- A holistic and gendered approach to food insecurity that addresses both its causes and impacts
- A gendered approach to health promotion that:
  - Not only focuses on individual behaviour change, but also addresses the multiple social and economic factors that influence women’s food and eating behaviours
  - Focuses on health, not weight
  - Challenges gender norms and practices that position food work as women’s work
  - Applies an intersectional gender lens to food-related health promotion campaigns and programs

Women and Food
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