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EATING WELL WITH CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE

A Resource for Educators and Communicators



Canada 

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EATING WELL WITH CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE
*A Resource for Educators
and Communicators*

FOREWORD



Canada's Food Guide defines and promotes healthy eating for Canadians. It translates the science of nutrition and health into a healthy eating pattern. The Food Guide emphasizes the importance of combining healthy eating and physical activity. By following Canada's Food Guide, Canadians will be able to meet their nutrient needs and reduce their risk of obesity and chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis.

Educators and communicators play a vital role in helping Canadians to understand and use Canada's Food Guide. *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide – A Resource for Educators and Communicators* provides background information, tips and tools to complement each recommendation in Canada's Food Guide. The 🔄 **Put it into Practice** notes encourage educators and communicators to share their own experiences and ideas with their audiences. The 🍷 **Tips for Consumers** are designed to help individuals apply the recommendations of Canada's Food Guide to their own lives.

This resource can be used to:

- Write and talk about the importance of eating well.
- Develop or advocate for nutrition policies.
- Create new tools and resources.

Resources and information on Canada's Food Guide and related topics can be found at www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide.

Individuals with special dietary requirements may need additional guidance from a health care professional.

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1

INTRODUCTION—
THE EATING ENVIRONMENT

The home, community, workplace and school all have a strong influence on individual food choices. In helping people to use Canada's Food Guide, it is important to think about how the environment influences food choices.

Some aspects of the environment make it easier to eat well:

- The marketplace offers innovations such as convenient pre-washed, ready-to-eat vegetables which make it easier for people to include nutritious foods in their diet.
- Most prepackaged foods carry a Nutrition Facts table to help people make informed choices.
- The changing cultural profile of the country encourages the availability of a variety of ethnically diverse foods and cuisines.



The environment can also create challenges to eating well:

- Busy schedules often mean people have less time to shop for food, prepare meals and eat with their families. People rely more on pre-prepared foods and meals made outside the home.
- Canadians are exposed to many different and sometimes conflicting nutrition messages everyday.
- Food is readily available at all times and everywhere.

Family and peers also influence the way people eat. Parents are role models in helping children to develop a taste for healthy food. Taking the time to savour food and enjoy meals together helps to make eating pleasurable and helps children develop a healthy attitude toward food. As children grow, their peers become more of an influence. Children, however, still look to their parents and other adults around them for direction.

Despite the challenges to eating well, it is possible for people to adopt healthy eating practices. Canada's Food Guide gives practical tips about healthy eating to children, teens, adults and seniors from all cultural groups. Educators and communicators are in a position to influence the choices people make.



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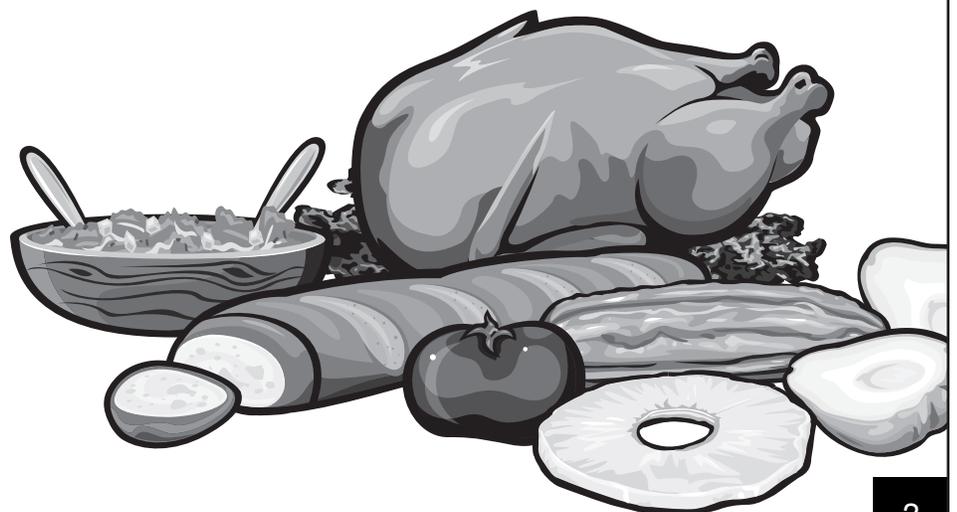
A HEALTHY EATING PATTERN FOR CANADIANS

Eat the recommended amount and type of food each day.

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide describes what **amount** of food people need and what **type** of food is part of a healthy eating pattern. The eating pattern in Canada's Food Guide includes foods from each of the four food groups – Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives, and Meat and Alternatives – plus a certain amount of added oils and fats.

Following the eating pattern in Canada's Food Guide will help people:

- Get enough vitamins, minerals and other nutrients.
- Reduce the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis.
- Achieve overall health and vitality.



What is the eating pattern based on?

The healthy eating pattern is based on extensive scientific evidence. It was developed by looking at different combinations of amounts and types of food to find an eating pattern that meets nutrient needs. The eating pattern was also evaluated against evidence that links certain foods with reduced risk of chronic diseases.

The eating pattern meets the nutrient standards called Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs). The DRIs summarize research findings about the amount of each nutrient and calories needed for good health and the prevention of chronic disease, while avoiding the negative effects of consuming too much of any individual nutrient.

The eating pattern in Canada's Food Guide falls within the DRIs' Acceptable Macronutrient Distribution Ranges (AMDRs) for carbohydrate, protein and fat in the diet. The table below shows the AMDRs for three different age groups.

Acceptable Macronutrient Distribution Ranges:

Age group	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL CALORIES FROM		
	CARBOHYDRATE	PROTEIN	FAT
1-3 years	45 – 65 %	5 – 20 %	30 – 40 %
4-18 years	45 – 65 %	10 – 30 %	25 – 35 %
19 years and over	45 – 65 %	10 – 35 %	20 – 35 %

WHAT AMOUNT OF FOOD SHOULD PEOPLE EAT?

Canada's Food Guide recommends how many Food Guide Servings people should eat from each of the four food groups, plus a small amount of added oils and fats. The recommended number of servings is different for people at different stages of life and is different for males and females. The recommended number of Food Guide Servings is an average amount that people should try to eat each day.

RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF FOOD GUIDE SERVINGS PER DAY									
	Children			Teens		Adults			
	2-3	4-8	9-13	14-18 Years		19-50 Years		51+ Years	
	Girls and Boys			Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
Vegetables and Fruit	4	5	6	7	8	7-8	8-10	7	7
Grain Products	3	4	6	6	7	6-7	8	6	7
Milk and Alternatives	2	2	3-4	3-4	3-4	2	2	3	3
Meat and Alternatives	1	1	1-2	2	3	2	3	2	3
<i>The eating pattern also includes a small amount (30 to 45 mL or about 2 to 3 tablespoons) of unsaturated fat each day.</i>									

People who are at a healthy weight but need more food, such as those who are very active, should be encouraged to choose extra servings from the four food groups to continue to follow a healthy eating pattern that is lower in fat, sugar and salt.

WHAT TYPE OF FOOD SHOULD PEOPLE CHOOSE?

The **type** of food that people eat is just as important as the amount. Canada's Food Guide provides direction on specific foods to choose within each food group. Guidance to direct people's choices includes:

- Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.
- Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice.
- Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.
- Drink skim, 1% or 2% milk each day.
- Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often.
- Eat at least two Food Guide Servings of fish each week.
- Include a small amount of unsaturated fat each day.
- Satisfy your thirst with water.

In addition, Canada's Food Guide encourages people to choose foods **lower in fat, sugar and salt**. Guidance to support these choices includes:

- Choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.
- Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar or salt.
- Select lower fat milk alternatives.
- Select lean meat and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or salt.
- Limit foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar or salt.

Lower in fat

Canada's Food Guide encourages people to choose lower fat options to reduce the total amount of fat in their diet and reduce the amount of saturated and trans fats they consume. Higher fat foods are often higher in saturated and trans fats. These kinds of fats put people at higher risk of cardiovascular disease.

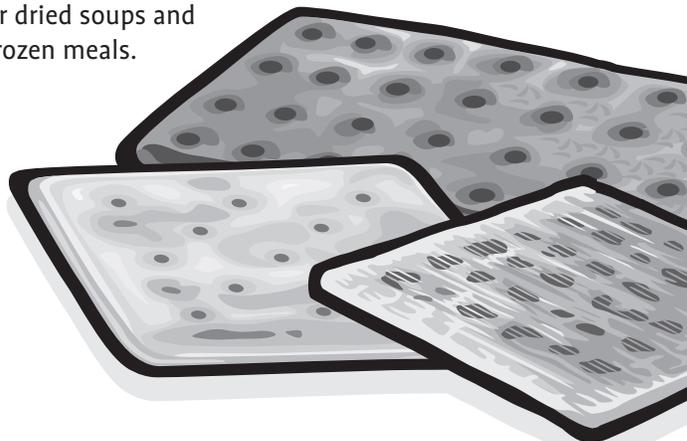
People should try to limit the amount of saturated and trans fats that they eat. Saturated fats are found in fatty meats, higher fat milk products, butter, lard, shortening, hard margarines and tropical oils such as coconut and palm oil. Trans fats are found in many deep-fried foods, fast foods, salty snacks and baked goods made with shortening or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. People can find the total amount of fat and the amount of saturated and trans fats in food by looking at the Nutrition Facts table on the packaging.

Lower in sugar

Canada's Food Guide recommends eating foods lower in sugar to help limit extra calories in the diet. Baked goods and desserts, such as cakes, candies, chocolate, cookies, doughnuts, ice cream, muffins, pastries and pies, and sweetened cold and hot beverages, such as energy drinks, fruit flavoured drinks, soft drinks, sports drinks, hot chocolate and specialty coffees, can be high in sugar and should be limited.

Lower in salt

Most people get more sodium than they need, especially if they eat packaged, processed foods and meals made outside of the home. Some of the foods that can be high in sodium include snack foods, such as crackers, nachos, potato chips and pretzels, cheese, gravies and sauces, processed luncheon meats, canned or dried soups and frozen meals.



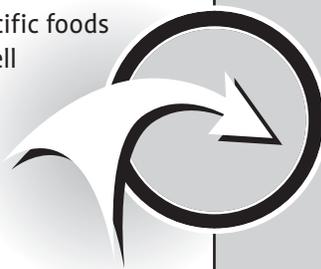
People should compare the Nutrition Facts table on similar products and choose the one that has a lower number for the % Daily Value of sodium.

More information on nutrition labelling is available by visiting: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/nutritionlabelling.

Canada's Food Guide recommends that people **prepare foods with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.**

Limit the use of high fat spreads, sweet sauces and salty seasonings. When cooking, try roasting, grilling, baking, stir-frying, steaming or poaching – all methods that require little or no added fat. For tips on preparing foods with little or no added fat, sugar or salt, see the  **Tips for Consumers** throughout Section 3.

The number of calories in the eating pattern in Canada's Food Guide depends on the specific foods or beverages that a person chooses, as well as how the food is prepared. For example, a person could choose to eat a bowl of muesli served with 2% milk which would contain more calories than a bowl of bran flakes with skim milk.



Nutrition Facts

Per 125 mL (87 g)

Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 80	
Fat 0.5 g	1 %
Saturates 0 g	0 %
+ Trans 0 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 0 mg	0 %
Carbohydrate 18 g	6 %
Fibre 2 g	8 %
Sugars 2 g	
Protein 3 g	
Vitamin A 2 %	Vitamin C 10 %
Calcium 0 %	Iron 2 %

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

The eating patterns of many Canadians may be quite different from the amount and type of food recommended in Canada's Food Guide.

A good exercise to help you teach Canada's Food Guide is to keep track or make a tally of the food you eat for a day or two. Compare the amount of food you eat in a normal day to the recommended number of Food Guide Servings for each of the food groups. Note the food groups for which you are meeting or exceeding the recommended number of Food Guide Servings. Also compare the type of food you choose to the type of food recommended in Canada's Food Guide. This exercise will help to identify what changes you can make to follow the healthy eating pattern. Refer to Section 3 for tips to help meet the recommended number of Food Guide Servings for each of the four food groups.

3

MAKE EACH FOOD GUIDE SERVING COUNT...

wherever you are – at home, at school, at work or when eating out



Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide encourages people to choose a variety of foods from each of the four food groups – Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives, and Meat and Alternatives – and to include a specific amount and type of oils and fats.

Foods are classified into the groups based on the following criteria:

- Foods originating from the same agricultural base.
- How foods traditionally have been classified.
- How people use foods (e.g., legumes were placed in Meat and Alternatives because people often use them as a substitute for meat).

Because the nutrient content of foods within a food group can vary greatly, no specific nutrient criteria were established for classification of food into food groups.

Enjoy a variety of foods from the four food groups.

To accommodate different food preferences, each food group includes a wide variety of choices. Eating different foods within each group will help people get all the nutrients they need.

The table below shows how each of the four food groups contributes a certain combination of nutrients to the healthy eating pattern.

SOME IMPORTANT NUTRIENTS IN THE FOOD GROUPS				
Key Nutrient	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives
Protein			✓	✓
Fat			✓	✓
Carbohydrate	✓	✓	✓	
Fibre	✓	✓		
Thiamin		✓		✓
Riboflavin		✓	✓	✓
Niacin		✓		✓
Folate	✓	✓		
Vitamin B6	✓			✓
Vitamin B12			✓	✓
Vitamin C	✓			
Vitamin A	✓		✓	
Vitamin D			✓	
Calcium			✓	
Iron		✓		✓
Zinc		✓	✓	✓
Magnesium	✓	✓	✓	✓
Potassium	✓	✓	✓	✓

WHEN TEACHING CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE...

- Use the rainbow design to help communicate the recommendations. Explain that the different sizes of the arcs in the rainbow represent the proportion of each food group in the healthy eating pattern. Healthy eating includes a lot of vegetables, fruit and grains.
- Use the foods shown to reinforce the recommendations. Point out the broccoli and sweet potato, which are examples of dark green and orange vegetables.
- Point out that foods higher in calories, fat, sugar or salt such as cakes, french fries or ice cream, are not pictured as part of the healthy eating pattern.
- Your actions, such as snacking on fruit or serving healthy foods during events, can strongly support what you tell people about healthy eating and healthy living.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

In this section, you'll find  **Tips for Consumers** for each recommendation. These tips can help people follow the recommendations in Canada's Food Guide at home, school, work or when eating out. Share these tips when you talk about healthy eating. You can also share your own creative ideas. For more practical tips and interactive tools, direct people to visit Canada's Food Guide online at: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide.



VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

- *Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.*
- *Choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.*
- *Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice.*

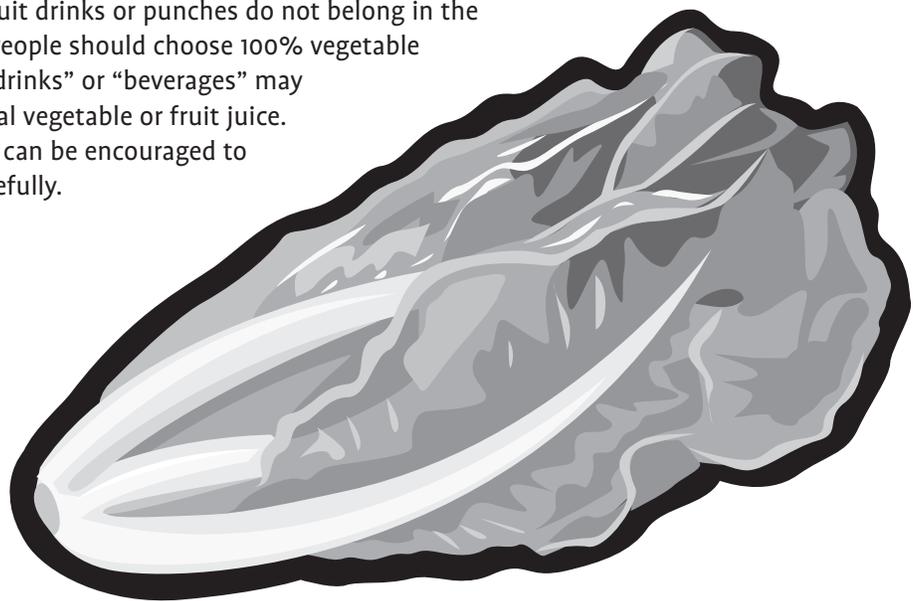


Vegetables and fruit have important nutrients such as vitamins, minerals and fibre. They usually are low in fat and calories. A healthy diet rich in vegetables and fruit may help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and some types of cancer.

Nutrients provided by vegetables and fruit include carbohydrate, vitamins A and C, potassium, magnesium and some B vitamins such as folate. The individual nutrients may explain some of the health benefits of eating vegetables and fruit. It is more likely, however, that the nutrients work together with other naturally occurring components in vegetables and fruit to provide the overall health benefit.

The Vegetables and Fruit food group is the most prominent arc in the rainbow on Canada's Food Guide, emphasizing the important role these foods play in a healthy eating pattern. This food group makes up the largest proportion of the Food Guide Servings in the healthy eating pattern and includes vegetables and fruit in many forms: fresh, frozen, as juice, canned and dried.

Some products with “vegetable” or “fruit” in their names or on their packaging are composed mainly of fat or sugar or are very high in salt. Fruit candies, vegetable chips, fruit jams or spreads, ketchup, as well as vegetable or fruit drinks or punches do not belong in the Vegetables and Fruit food group. People should choose 100% vegetable or fruit juices. Vegetable or fruit “drinks” or “beverages” may contain only a small amount of real vegetable or fruit juice. To make informed choices, people can be encouraged to read labels on packaged foods carefully.



MAKE VEGETABLES AND FRUIT SERVINGS COUNT

***Eat at least one dark green
and one orange vegetable each day.***

Dark green and orange vegetables are mentioned specifically because they are rich in folate and vitamin A, respectively. Eating these vegetables each day will ensure that people consume adequate amounts of these nutrients.

Dark green vegetables are important sources of folate. Examples include arugula, asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, collards, fresh parsley, green peas, mustard greens, romaine lettuce and spinach.

Orange vegetables are rich in carotenoids such as beta-carotene, which the body converts to vitamin A. These include carrots, pumpkins, orange-coloured squash and sweet potatoes.

Some orange-coloured fruit such as apricots, cantaloupe, mango and papaya are also important sources of carotenoids. People can eat them in place of an orange vegetable. Oranges, though a good source of nutrients such as folate and vitamin C, are not a good source of carotenoids.

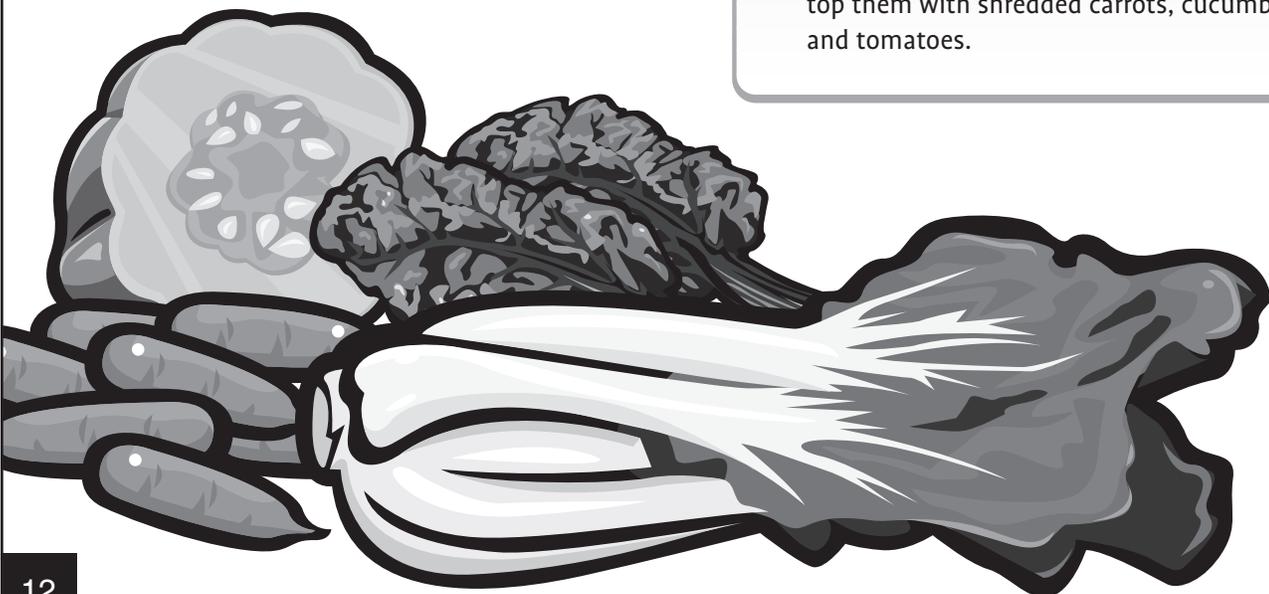


TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...

**Eat at least one dark green
and one orange vegetable
each day...**

*You can do it, wherever you are – at home, at school,
at work or when eating out!*

- ✓ Experiment with recipes that call for different leafy greens such as beet greens, chard, chicory, collards and kale. Make a salad with spinach or arugula instead of iceberg lettuce.
- ✓ Use canned pumpkin purée to make a rich-tasting soup.
- ✓ Stir-fry broccoli, snow peas, red peppers and carrots.
- ✓ Pack a couple of apricots or some baby carrots and green and red pepper strips as a snack for school or at work.
- ✓ Consider buying packages of pre-washed and pre-bagged vegetables such as baby carrots, leafy greens or broccoli. You can quickly toss these into a salad, stir-fry or casserole.
- ✓ At the salad bar, load up on leafy greens and top them with shredded carrots, cucumbers and tomatoes.



Choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.

Most vegetables and fruit are naturally low in fat. Vegetables and fruit become high sources of fat when they are breaded, fried or served with cream-based sauces, whipped cream or butter. French fries, onion rings, salads with large amounts of dressing and fruit served with cream are just a few examples of higher fat choices. People can cook vegetables or enhance the flavours of a salad using a small amount of unsaturated oil, such as canola or olive oil.

Frozen and canned vegetables and fruit are a healthy and convenient option. Fruit in heavy syrup, however, has more sugar and adds extra calories. Choose unsweetened frozen fruit or fruit packed in juice. Canned vegetables usually contain added salt. People can rinse and drain canned vegetables to lower the sodium content. Some frozen vegetables come with added seasonings and sauces. Find the amount of fat and salt (sodium) in prepared vegetables by looking at the Nutrition Facts table on the packaging.

Benefit from eating vegetables and fruit at all meals and snacks.



TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...

Choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt...

You can do it, wherever you are – at home, at school, at work or when eating out!

- ✓ Steam or microwave vegetables with sliced ginger or garlic.
- ✓ Toss chopped vegetables with a small amount of olive oil and bake in the oven.
- ✓ Cook a main dish with lots of vegetables and a little bit of oil in a stir-fry or ratatouille.
- ✓ Serve a platter of raw green peppers, celery sticks and broccoli. Try them with dips made with low fat yogurt or low fat sour cream.
- ✓ Use fresh or dried herbs, spices, flavoured vinegars or lemon juice instead of salt to enhance the flavour of veggies.
- ✓ At the cafeteria, pick an apple, orange or fruit salad rather than a piece of pie or pastry.
- ✓ Ask for salad dressing on the side and use only a small amount.
- ✓ Avoid choosing fruit products with “sugar” or “syrup” near the beginning of the ingredient list. These foods can contain more calories per serving than unsweetened varieties.
- ✓ Look for lower sodium canned vegetables.
- ✓ When eating out, use the pepper shaker instead of the salt shaker.
- ✓ Substitute the french fries and poutine with healthier options such as a baked potato or salad with dressing on the side.

Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice.

Canada's Food Guide recommends that people choose vegetables and fruit more often than juice to get more fibre. It can help people feel full and satisfied, which may help reduce the risk of obesity.



**FOOD GUIDE SERVINGS FOR
VEGETABLES AND FRUIT**

What is one Food Guide Serving?

In general, one medium fresh vegetable or fruit or 125 mL (1/2 cup) cut-up is equivalent to one Food Guide Serving. One Food Guide Serving of salad or raw leafy greens is 250 mL (1 cup) and 125 mL (1/2 cup) of cooked leafy green vegetables. A Food Guide Serving of dried fruit is 60 mL (1/4 cup). A Food Guide Serving of juice is equivalent to 125 mL (1/2 cup).



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Common reasons for not consuming vegetables and fruit are “it takes too much time” and “it is too difficult to eat the recommended amount.” Despite your own busy schedule, you likely have a good understanding of the value of eating plenty of vegetables and fruit. Think about the strategies and tips that you use to reach your recommended Food Guide Servings for Vegetables and Fruit. Perhaps you start your day with a fruit-based smoothie or have cut-up fruit or berries in addition to a glass of orange or grapefruit juice. Or, maybe you make a conscious effort to include at least one vegetable at lunch. Maybe you keep your kitchen stocked with quick and easy frozen and canned vegetables and fruit such as frozen broccoli, frozen berries and peaches canned in juice. Sharing your list of strategies and tips can be useful and motivating. It can help teach consumers that, with a little planning, they can get there too.

GRAIN PRODUCTS

- *Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.*
- *Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar or salt.*



Grain products, particularly whole grains, are a source of fibre and typically are low in fat. Fibre rich foods can help people feel full and satisfied. A diet rich in whole grains may also help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Nutrients provided by grain products include carbohydrate, B vitamins (e.g., thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and folate), iron, zinc, magnesium and other components such as fibre. The health benefits associated with grain products cannot be attributed to any one nutrient. It is more likely that the nutrients work together with other naturally occurring components to provide an overall health benefit.

The Grain Products food group is represented with a prominent arc in the rainbow on Canada's Food Guide. This means that, relative to some other food groups, a large number of Food Guide Servings is recommended. Grain Products include all grains, cereals, pasta, rice and products made with grain flour (including corn flour).



MAKE GRAIN PRODUCTS SERVINGS COUNT

Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.

Whole grains and whole grain foods are composed of all three edible layers of the grain seed or kernel. Each layer provides a unique combination of nutrients. The outer bran layer provides all of the fibre as well as B vitamins, minerals such as magnesium, iron and zinc, phytochemicals and some protein. The middle endosperm layer accounts for the majority of the weight of the grain and is composed mostly of carbohydrate and protein. The inner germ layer provides B vitamins, unsaturated fats, vitamin E, minerals and phytochemicals.

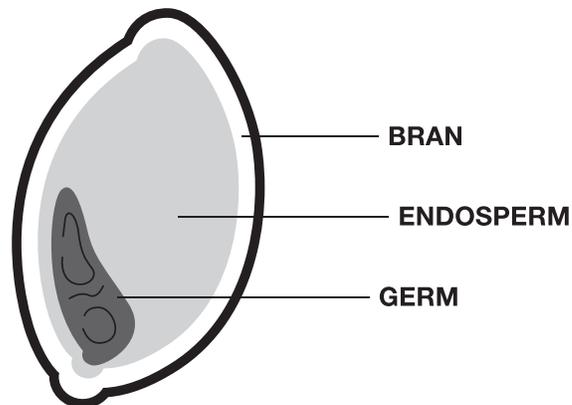
Examples of whole grains include amaranth, brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur, millet, pot barley, quinoa, spelt, triticale, whole oats or oatmeal, whole rye, whole grain wheat and wild rice. Whole grains can be eaten on their own or used as ingredients in products or recipes such as buckwheat in pancakes, oats in cereal, quinoa in a pilaf or whole grain wheat in bread.

People can find out if a product is made with whole grain by reading the ingredient list on the food label. Whole grain foods will have the words “whole” or “whole grain” followed by the name of the grain as one of the first ingredients. The beginning of the list could say whole grain wheat or whole grain oats.

What about refined grains?

When whole grains are refined, both the bran and germ layers are removed. This results in a loss of fibre, vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals. When wheat is milled to make white flour, for example, only the grain’s endosperm layer remains in the flour.

In Canada, non-whole grain breads and pasta are made partly or entirely with white flour that has been “enriched.” The enrichment process restores some of the minerals and vitamins such as iron and certain B vitamins to levels that approximate those in the original whole grain wheat.



TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...

Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day...

You can do it, wherever you are – at home, at school, at work or when eating out!

- ✓ Start your day with a bowl of oatmeal, whole grain cereal, or whole wheat toast.
- ✓ Try whole grains used in different cultures, such as bulgur, pot barley, quinoa and wild rice.
- ✓ Substitute brown rice in recipes that call for white rice, and use whole wheat pasta instead of regular pasta.
- ✓ Bake with whole wheat flour. In most recipes, you can substitute half of the white flour with whole wheat flour.
- ✓ Pick a cereal that is made with whole grains or bran, or one that is at least a “high source” of fibre.
- ✓ Look at the ingredient list rather than the colour of a food when you choose whole grain foods. Some brown bread, for example, is simply white bread coloured with molasses. The first ingredient should be a whole grain, such as whole grain wheat.
- ✓ Order pizza made with a whole wheat crust.

Imported white flour-based grain products, such as some types of pasta, may not be enriched. To find out if the pasta product has been enriched, people can look for these nutrients in the ingredients list: folic acid, iron, riboflavin, niacin and thiamin. Note that most rice also is not enriched with these nutrients.

Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar or salt.

Grain products typically are low in fat. People should limit the amount of fat added to these foods. They can use a small amount of oil or a soft margarine low in saturated and trans fats, on grain products such as breads or pasta or when they cook or bake.

Baked goods such as cakes, croissants, doughnuts, pastries, pies and most cookies and muffins will add extra calories, fat, sugar or salt (sodium) to the diet and should be limited. These foods are typically low in fibre and are not usually made with whole grains. People can use the ingredient list and Nutrition Facts table on food labels to compare products and make informed choices. Nutrition information for food purchased in coffee shops or restaurants is sometimes available on request from the vendor or on their website.



TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...

Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar or salt...

You can do it, wherever you are – at home, at school, at work or when eating out!

- ✓ Make sandwiches on whole grain bagels, baguettes, bread, buns and tortillas instead of croissants.
- ✓ Use the Nutrition Facts table on the packaging to compare ready-to-eat cereals and choose the ones that have less sugar.
- ✓ Trade the morning cinnamon bun for an English muffin spread with nut butter.
- ✓ Serve whole wheat pita bread with hummus instead of doughnuts or cookies as an after school snack or at workplace meetings.
- ✓ Keep cookies, cakes, pastries and pies for special occasions.
- ✓ Buy lower fat and lower salt (sodium) versions of crackers.



FOOD GUIDE SERVINGS FOR GRAIN PRODUCTS

What is one Food Guide Serving?

In general, one Food Guide Serving of Grain Products is a slice of bread (35 g), half a bagel (45 g), half a flatbread (35 g) such as tortilla, pita, 125 mL ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) of cooked rice or pasta or 30 grams of cold cereal. Because the volume (mL) of cereal that is equivalent to 30 grams varies depending on the type of cereal, people should refer to the Nutrition Facts table on the packaging. It will state the equivalent volume for 30 grams of the cereal in millilitres (mL) or cups.

People need to become familiar with the amount of food that makes up one Food Guide Serving of Grain Products. A pasta meal in a restaurant or at home can easily add up to four Food Guide Servings or more of Grain Products, depending on the portion size and whether bread is part of the meal. People can use a measuring cup to see what one or two Food Guide Servings of grains such as rice and pasta look like when served on a plate or in a bowl.



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

A common misconception is that grain products are full of fat. In fact, the opposite is true. Most grain products are naturally low in fat, but the way that we prepare and eat them can add extra calories and increase the total fat consumed. Think about the ways in which you control the amount of fat added to your favourite grains and grain products. Have you found or developed a new lower fat muffin or pasta sauce recipe? Do you spread your sandwiches with mustard rather than butter, margarine or mayonnaise? Or do you spice up noodles and rice with fresh herbs or curry spice instead of rich, creamy sauces? Share some of your own ideas and tips when you teach people about Canada's Food Guide.

MILK AND ALTERNATIVES

- *Drink skim, 1% or 2% milk each day.*
- *Select lower fat milk alternatives.*



The Milk and Alternatives food group provides calcium, vitamins A, D and B12, riboflavin, zinc, magnesium, potassium, protein and fat. Many of these nutrients are important for developing strong bones and reducing the risk of osteoporosis. The Milk and Alternatives food group includes milk, fortified soy beverage, canned (evaporated) milk, powdered milk, cheese and yogurt.

MAKE MILK AND ALTERNATIVES SERVINGS COUNT

Drink skim, 1% or 2% milk each day.

Canada's Food Guide recommends that people drink low fat milk (skim, 1% M. F. or 2% M. F.) each day. The fat content of other milk products varies widely. Drinking low fat milk is an effective way to consume protein, calcium, magnesium, riboflavin, vitamin A, vitamin B12, vitamin D and zinc while minimizing the amount of saturated fat and calories.

Fortified soy beverage can be used as an alternative to milk. They contain added vitamins and minerals to make them a nutritionally adequate alternative. People should look for the word "fortified" on the label when buying soy beverages.

People should drink 500 mL (2 cups) of milk every day because it is the main food source of vitamin D. Fluid, evaporated and powdered milk sold in Canada are fortified with vitamin D. Soy beverages with the word "fortified" on their packaging also contain vitamin D. This nutrient is also found in some other foods such as fatty fish, fish oils, margarine and egg yolks. Milk used in the production of other dairy products such as yogurt and cheese is not required to be fortified with vitamin D. For this reason, yogurt and cheese may or may not be sources of vitamin D.



Some rice, potato and almond beverages are fortified with calcium, vitamin D and other nutrients. Even when they are fortified, however, these types of beverages do not contain the level of protein found in milk or fortified soy beverage. Although some orange juices are sold with added calcium, with or without added vitamin D, they also do not provide protein and other important vitamins and minerals found in either milk or fortified soy beverages.

Select lower fat milk alternatives.

Milk products with a high milk fat content (% M. F.) such as cheese and some yogurt will provide high amounts of fat, saturated fat and calories. Lower fat yogurt, with 2% M. F. or less, and lower fat cheese, with 15 % to 20% M. F. or less, can help to reduce calories and saturated fat intake. People should note, however, that most lower fat cheeses still contain a significant amount of saturated fat.

Ice cream, regular sour cream and table or coffee cream are higher fat choices. They contribute extra saturated fat and calories to the diet and should be limited.



TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...

Drink skim, 1% or 2% milk each day...

You can do it, wherever you are – at home, at school, at work or when eating out!

- ✓ Use low fat milk when preparing scrambled eggs, hot cereal, casseroles and soups.
- ✓ Create smoothies by blending low fat milk or a fortified soy beverage with a combination of fresh or frozen fruit.
- ✓ Have a glass of low fat milk rather than pop or fruit drinks.
- ✓ Pack milk in a reusable container with an ice-pack to drink with your lunch.
- ✓ Use low fat evaporated milk instead of cream or coffee whitener in coffee or tea.
- ✓ Mix chocolate milk with low fat white milk for less sugar.
- ✓ Drink lactose-reduced milk or fortified soy beverages if you have been diagnosed with lactose intolerance or lactose maldigestion.
- ✓ Make low fat milk or fortified soy beverage a permanent item on your grocery list.
- ✓ Try a latté made with low fat milk.

FOOD GUIDE SERVINGS FOR MILK AND ALTERNATIVES



What is one Food Guide Serving?

One cup (250 mL) of either milk, fortified soy beverage or reconstituted powdered milk counts as one Food Guide Serving. For canned (evaporated) milk, 125 mL (½ cup) is considered a serving. A Food Guide Serving of Milk and Alternatives also includes 175 grams (¾ cup) of yogurt or kefir (another type of cultured milk product) and 50 grams (1 ½ oz) of cheese.



TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...

Select lower fat milk alternatives...

You can do it, wherever you are – at home, at school, at work or when eating out!

- ✓ Mix fruit and whole grain cereal with lower fat yogurt or kefir for a nutritious breakfast or snack any time of the day.
- ✓ Use low fat evaporated milk instead of cream in soups.
- ✓ Serve lower fat vanilla or fruit-flavoured yogurt as a dip for fruit.
- ✓ Round out your lunch by including a cup of low fat milk or yogurt with your meal.
- ✓ Try a lower fat version of your favourite cheese. Replace half the cheese in a recipe with a variety of cheese that is lower in fat.
- ✓ Use varieties of hard aged cheese such as old cheddar or Parmesan. They can add a lot of flavour to dishes when used sparingly.
- ✓ Serve lower fat plain yogurt with canned fruit and a sprinkle of cinnamon.

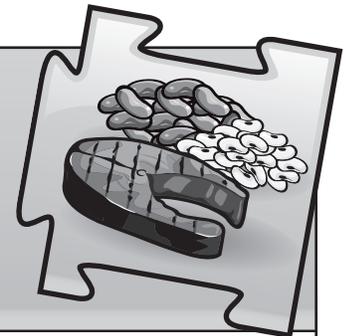


PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

At all ages, it may be challenging to get the recommended amount of Milk and Alternatives each day. How do you encourage your own children and family to drink adequate amounts of milk? Do you offer them milk at every meal instead of juice or soft drinks? Are you a role model for your family by drinking milk at meals? Do you make puddings, soups and oatmeal with milk? Every little bit counts. Think about your favourite and creative ways of making the Milk and Alternatives servings add up.

MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES

- *Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often.*
- *Eat at least two Food Guide Servings of fish each week.*
- *Select lean meat and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or salt.*



The Meat and Alternatives group provides important nutrients such as iron, zinc, magnesium, B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B6 and vitamin B12), protein and fat. Foods belonging to this food group include eggs, fish, legumes such as chick peas, kidney beans and lentils, meat, nuts and seeds, poultry, shellfish and tofu.

MAKE MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES SERVINGS COUNT

Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often.

To minimize the amount of saturated fat in the diet, Canada's Food Guide suggests that people regularly choose beans and other meat alternatives such as lentils and tofu. Legumes (beans, peas and lentils) are also sources of folate and fibre. Nuts and seeds are other types of meat alternatives and are relatively high in calories, but contain monounsaturated fats and essential polyunsaturated fats, which are beneficial for cardiovascular health.

TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...

Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often...

You can do it, wherever you are – at home, at school, at work or when eating out!

- ✓ Each week, plan a couple of meals using dried or canned beans or lentils.
- ✓ Add tofu, peas, beans or lentils to soups, stews and casseroles.
- ✓ Top a salad with beans, a hard cooked egg or nuts or seeds.
- ✓ For lunch at work or school, try bean salad, lentil and rice pilaf or a bowl of vegetarian chili or tofu stir-fry.
- ✓ Make your own trail mix by combining your favourite cereal with a handful of unsalted nuts and sunflower seeds.
- ✓ Add nuts to your vegetable stir-fry.
- ✓ Buy different types of beans and lentils. Have you tried navy beans or red lentils?
- ✓ When eating out, try different soybean-based foods such as tempeh.

Eat at least two Food Guide Servings of fish each week.

Eating fish helps reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. People are encouraged to eat at least 150 grams of fish each week.

All fish contain at least some omega-3 fats called EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid). People should get these fats through food because very little is produced by our bodies. Char, herring, mackerel, rainbow trout, salmon and sardines have very high amounts of these omega-3 fats. By themselves, EPA and DHA do not account for all the health benefits associated with regularly eating fish. It is likely that the omega-3 fats, the other nutrients found in fish and the displacement of high fat foods, contribute to cardiovascular benefits. Deep-fried fish or fast food fish sandwiches do not offer the same cardiovascular benefits. To get the greatest health benefits, people should cook fish using lower fat preparation methods.

For high-risk groups such as pregnant women and young children, refer to Health Canada's most recent advisory on safe fish consumption. Eating predator-type fish such as fresh tuna, shark and swordfish can lead to over-exposure to mercury. Refer to www.healthcanada.gc.ca for the latest information.

**TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...****Eat at least two Food Guide Servings of fish each week...**

You can do it, wherever you are – at home, at school, at work or when eating out!

- ✓ Wrap a fish fillet along with vegetables and herbs in parchment paper or aluminum foil and bake in the oven.
- ✓ Pack a tuna or salmon salad sandwich for lunch at school or work.
- ✓ Buy fresh or frozen fish such as cod, haddock, salmon or sole that has not been breaded, battered or deep-fried.
- ✓ Use leftover fish or canned fish to make mini patties or croquettes and serve with a low fat sour cream and chive dip.
- ✓ When dining out, order the catch of the day. Choose fish seasoned with herbs and lemon rather than a rich sauce.

Select lean meat and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or salt.

To minimize the amount of saturated fat in the diet, Canada's Food Guide emphasizes lean cuts of meat and skinless poultry. Lean or extra lean cuts of meat include inside round roast, outside round roast, eye of round steak or roast, strip loin steak, sirloin steak, rump roast and lean and extra lean ground meat or ground poultry. Tenderloin cuts of meat can be lean if the visible fat is trimmed. Game meat such as bison, caribou, deer, elk and moose also tend to be lean.

Lean meat, poultry and fish become higher fat choices once they are fried or served with gravy or other high fat sauces. Instead of frying or deep-frying meats, Canada's Food Guide recommends baking, broiling, poaching or roasting them and allowing the fat to drip off. Luncheon meats, processed meats and sausages add fat and sodium to the diet. Canada's Food Guide recommends that people who eat these products choose lower fat and lower salt (sodium) varieties.

Shellfish such as clams, crab, lobster, mussels, oysters, scallops and shrimp are all generally low in fat and provide essential nutrients. Deep-frying or dipping them in butter sauce, however, adds fat and calories.



TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...

Select lean meat and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or salt...

You can do it, wherever you are – at home, at school, at work or when eating out!

- ✓ Tenderize lean cuts of meat by using a marinade or a slow cooking method such as stewing or braising.
- ✓ Remove skin from poultry before cooking or buy skinless pieces.
- ✓ Choose lean cuts of meat such as 'round' or 'loin.' If the cut of meat is not lean, trim off as much visible fat as possible. Drain fat from cooked ground meat.
- ✓ Use herbs and fresh salsas instead of salt to season and flavour fish, meats and poultry. Try rosemary with chicken or fresh mango salsa with pork.
- ✓ Make sandwiches with lower fat, unprocessed meats such as roast beef, pork, lamb, turkey or chicken.
- ✓ Limit higher sodium deli and luncheon meats such as corned beef, bacon, ham, hot dogs, pepperoni, salami and smoked meat.
- ✓ Try lean wild or game meats such as bison, caribou, deer, elk and moose.

FOOD GUIDE SERVINGS FOR MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES



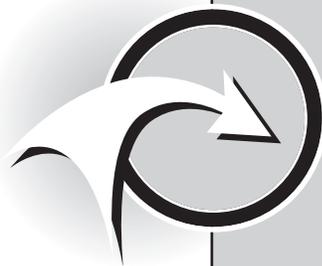
What is one Food Guide Serving?

For beans or tofu, 175 mL ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup) counts as one Food Guide Serving. A Food Guide Serving of Meat and Alternatives also includes 75 grams ($2\frac{1}{2}$ ounces) of cooked fish, chicken, beef, pork or game meat. For general reference, a Food Guide Serving of cooked meat, fish or poultry is also about 125 mL ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup). Two eggs, 60 mL ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) of nuts or seeds, 30 mL (2 Tbsp) of peanut butter or nut butters are all equivalent to one Food Guide Serving.

A full Food Guide Serving of Meat and Alternatives does not have to be eaten at every meal. In fact, having smaller amounts will allow people to enjoy a greater variety of foods from this food group. For examples of how people can incorporate variety and add up the Food Guide Servings for Meat and Alternatives, see the sample menus in Appendix A.

Vegetarians

The healthy eating pattern and guidance of Canada's Food Guide are suitable for vegetarians. To ensure adequate nutrient intakes of iron, zinc and vitamin B12, vegetarians can choose a variety of meat alternatives such as beans, lentils, eggs, tofu, soy-based meat substitutes, nuts, nut butters and seeds. Milk and fortified soy beverages also provide calcium, vitamin B12, vitamin D and protein.



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

When it comes to meat consumption, times have changed. Many of us grew up in households where meat took centre stage on the dinner plate. Today, a balanced meal includes smaller amounts of meat, more meat alternatives and a greater emphasis on vegetables, fruit and whole grain foods. How do you spread your Meat and Alternatives servings throughout the day?

Share your own experiences when you teach people about the array of choices in the Meat and Alternatives food group. One tip, when making a chili or stew, is to cut out half of the meat from the recipe and replace it with double the quantity of beans or other legumes. Another idea is to visually divide the dinner plate, fill half the plate with vegetables, a quarter with grain products and a quarter with meat or alternatives.



OILS AND FATS

- *Include a small amount of unsaturated fat each day.*



Oils and fats supply calories and essential fats and help our bodies absorb fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K. The **type** of fat consumed is as important for health as the total **amount** consumed.

Fats are composed of smaller units called fatty acids. These fatty acids can be saturated, trans or unsaturated (polyunsaturated and monounsaturated). The main type of fatty acids that a fat or oil contains is used in its description. Canola and olive oils, for example, are described as monounsaturated fats.

A number of foods contribute to the total amount of fat in a person's diet. Fat is naturally present in many foods such as meat, fish, cheese, nuts and avocados. A significant amount, however, comes from oils and fats that are added to foods. Often these fats are added during cooking such as oil used for stir-frying vegetables. Other fats are added at the table, including most salad dressings and sauces, mayonnaise or margarine.

A diet low in saturated fat and trans fat can help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. People should consume mostly unsaturated fats (polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats) such as vegetable oils, soft non-hydrogenated margarines and the type of fat found in nuts, seeds and fatty fish. These foods are important sources of essential fats (omega-3 and omega-6 fats) that cannot be synthesized by the body and must be obtained from the diet.

Include a small amount - 30 to 45 mL (2 to 3 tablespoons) - of unsaturated fat each day. This includes oil used for cooking, salad dressings, margarine and mayonnaise.

People should include a small amount of unsaturated fat as part of the healthy eating pattern that includes mostly lower fat foods. This will ensure people have enough essential fats. Consuming a larger amount of added fat is not recommended, as it will increase the total calories in the diet.



Use vegetable oils such as canola, olive and soybean.

Vegetable oils such as canola, olive and soybean contain mainly monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. These types of oils are emphasized in the diet for good health.

Choose soft margarines that are low in saturated and trans fats. Limit butter, hard margarine, lard and shortening.

Fats that are solid at room temperature such as butter, lard and shortening contain more saturated fats or trans fats than oils. Because saturated and trans fats are associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, these types of added fats should be limited. A few tropical plant oils such as coconut oil, palm kernel oil and palm oil are also high in saturated fats and should also be limited.

**TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...****Include a small amount of unsaturated fat each day.**

- ✓ When buying margarine, use the Nutrition Facts table to compare how much saturated and trans fats it contains. Choose a soft margarine that has 2 grams or less of saturated and trans fats combined in the Nutrition Facts table.
- ✓ In recipes, substitute unsaturated fats or oils such as oil or soft margarine low in saturated and trans fats for shortening, butter, stick (hard) margarine, lard or beef tallow.
- ✓ Instead of buttering bread or rolls, try serving them with balsamic vinegar and olive oil for dipping.
- ✓ Use a small amount of oil to sauté or stir-fry foods rather than deep-frying in oil. Deep-frying uses a large amount of oil, which is soaked up by the foods. It increases the overall calorie content of foods.

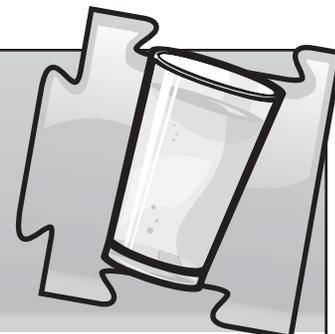
**PUT IT INTO PRACTICE**

Fat in food may go unnoticed and can add up quickly. We can, however, see and control the type and amount of oil and fat that we add to foods. People may need guidance in figuring out how to apply the recommendations about added oils and fats. Think about your own meals for the day. Write down what foods you prepared using added oil or what you served with salad dressing, mayonnaise or margarine. Doing a similar exercise may help consumers better understand how they can apply the guidance about added oils and fats in their daily meals. For examples of menus that include added oils and fats, see Appendix A.

It is also important to think about the type of oils and fats that you use. Have a look at the oils and fats you have in the cupboard or refrigerator. Are they the types recommended in Canada's Food Guide? If you use soft margarine, read the label to see if it is low in saturated and trans fats.

BEVERAGES

- *Satisfy your thirst with water.*



Canada's Food Guide suggests that people drink water regularly. It can satisfy thirst and promote hydration without adding calories to the diet.

The body naturally loses water throughout the day. These fluids must be replaced. Without adequate fluid intake, people can become dehydrated. This can lead to fatigue, weakness, headache, irritability, dizziness and even impaired physical performance.

People need more fluids when they are physically active. For most very active people, water is all they need to stay hydrated.

In hot weather, people also need more fluids. Those most at risk of becoming dehydrated are young children and older adults.

Soft drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks and alcoholic beverages can add a significant number of calories to the diet. These drinks may also contain caffeine or sodium. The ingredients list and Nutrition Facts table on the label will indicate if they contain sugar, fat, sodium or caffeine.

TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...



Satisfy your thirst with water.

- ✓ Drink more water in hot weather and when you are very active.
- ✓ Limit beverages that are high in calories and low in nutrients. These include alcoholic beverages, fruit flavoured drinks, soft drinks, sports and energy drinks and sweetened hot or cold beverages.
- ✓ Drink low fat milk and water with meals.

Fruit flavoured drinks are not nutritionally equivalent to 100% juices. If the name of the beverage includes words such as “punch,” “drink,” “-ade” or “cocktail,” it is not 100% juice.

In addition to sugar or syrups, sweetened hot or cold beverages may contain cream, whipped cream or other high fat ingredients. These ingredients increase the amount of calories provided by the beverage. Hot chocolate and specialty coffee drinks are examples of beverages that can contribute additional sugar, fat, saturated fat, caffeine and calories. The portion sizes for some of these beverages are very large, which can also increase their calorie content. The number of calories in beverages can add up quickly. To make informed choices, people can check the nutrition information, which is often available where these beverages are sold.



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Some people may make it a regular habit to drink beverages that add extra calories, fat and sugar to the diet. Some examples include a can of regular soft drink each afternoon or a beer before dinner. Think about what you drink in a day. Include your beverages in your food log for the day. Which beverages in your diet could be replaced with water or low fat milk?

COUNTING FOOD GUIDE SERVINGS



Canada's Food Guide provides examples of the amount of food that makes up one Food Guide Serving. The amount of food that a person eats in a meal or snack may be more or less than one Food Guide Serving. For example, two slices of bread in a sandwich count as two Food Guide Servings of Grain Products. Or, 125 mL ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) of milk in a bowl of cereal counts as half of a Food Guide Serving of Milk and Alternatives.

A Food Guide Serving is simply a reference amount to help people understand how much food is recommended every day from each of the food groups. In some cases, a Food Guide Serving may be close to what a person would eat at one sitting, such as one apple. Others may not. The serving amounts can be used as a consistent measure to compare how much people eat to what is recommended in Canada's Food Guide.

Portions of food are often large, especially those served to people eating out. A six-inch bun in a submarine-style sandwich, for example, is equivalent to about two or three Food Guide Servings of Grain Products. Similarly, a meal of steak, chicken or fish is usually more than one Food Guide Serving of Meat and Alternatives.

HOW TO COUNT FOOD GUIDE SERVINGS IN A MEAL

From beef lo mein to shepherd's pie to vegetable curry, meals typically consist of different foods from each food group. Counting the number of Food Guide Servings in a meal requires that people know what foods are in a meal, as well as how much of each food was used to prepare the meal.

The first step is to think about all the ingredients used to make that meal and then identify in which food groups they belong. Next, compare the amounts of the main ingredients in a portion of the meal to the amounts that make up a Food Guide Serving in Canada's Food Guide. This will provide an estimate of the number of Food Guide Servings in a portion of the meal.



Using beef lo mein as an example, here is how you would count the Food Guide Servings in the meal.

Main ingredients used to make one portion of Beef Lo Mein	Number of Food Guide Servings				
	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives	Added Oils and Fats
Chinese egg noodles 250 mL (1 cup) of cooked noodles		2			
Sirloin steak strips About 75 grams (2 ½ oz.) cooked				1	
Broccoli, red pepper, celery, onion 250 mL (1 cup) chopped vegetables	2				
Cashews 30 mL (2 Tablespoons)				1/2	
Peanut oil 5 mL (1 teaspoon)					1 tsp
Totals	2	2	0	1 ½	1 tsp



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Changing eating habits takes time and effort. It is important for people to recognize that each small change is a step in the right direction. The first step is to become familiar with the size of Food Guide Servings. A good way to learn about Food Guide Servings is to measure foods you eat for a day or two. Then compare the amount you eat in a day to the recommended number of daily Food Guide Servings for your age and sex. In doing this exercise, you will notice that it may be easier to achieve the recommended daily Food Guide Servings for some food groups than for others. For many people, consuming the recommended amount of Vegetables and Fruit is a challenge, while they are less likely to have difficulty consuming the Food Guide Servings recommended for Grain Products. Knowing how your diet compares to the amount and type of food recommended in Canada's Food Guide can help you set goals to improve your eating habits and provide insights on helping others to achieve their goals.

4

EAT WELL AND BE ACTIVE TODAY AND EVERY DAY

- Limit foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar or salt.
- Be active every day.

Both eating well and being active are essential to a healthy lifestyle.

Eat well

Follow Canada's Food Guide by eating the recommended amount and type of food each day. People should also limit foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar or salt (sodium) such as:

- cakes and pastries
- chocolate and candies
- cookies and granola bars
- ice cream and frozen desserts
- doughnuts and muffins
- french fries
- potato chips, nachos and other salty snacks
- alcohol
- fruit flavoured drinks
- soft drinks
- sports and energy drinks
- sweetened hot or cold drinks

Be active

To be active every day is a step towards better health and a healthy body weight. It is recommended that adults accumulate at least 2 ½ hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week and that children and youth accumulate at least 60 minutes per day. You don't have to do it all at once. Choose a variety of activities spread throughout the week. Start slowly and build up.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF EATING WELL AND BEING ACTIVE?

- Better overall health
- A healthy body weight
- More energy
- Lower risk of disease
- Feeling and looking better
- Stronger muscles and bones

People can use Canada's Food Guide to assess their own eating habits and physical activity patterns and identify changes for better overall health and a healthy body weight. When comparing their intake to Canada's Food Guide, people may find that they need more vegetables, fruit and whole grains, and less high sugar drinks and salty snack foods.

WHEN TEACHING CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE...

- Use terms such as “less healthy choices” to talk about foods high in fat, sugar or salt. Encourage people to track how often they eat these foods. Increasing awareness is a first step in improving food choices. The “less healthy choices” should be limited but can be enjoyed at times. What matters most is how people eat on a regular basis.
- Discuss ideas to help people make healthy choices from the four foods groups at snack time and meals. Placing a bowl of apples, pears or other in-season fruit on the kitchen counter or dining table can make it easier to grab fruit for a quick snack, instead of cookies or doughnuts.
- Help people to become more familiar with the Nutrition Facts table on food labels and to look for packaged foods that contain less fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and sodium.
- Remember that physical activity is an important part of Canada's Food Guide. Seek opportunities to promote physical activity.



TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...

Eat well today and every day.

- ✓ Spend time in the grocery store reading the Nutrition Facts table on food packages. Compare the calorie, fat, sugar and sodium content of different brands or varieties of foods you often buy.
- ✓ Take nutritious snacks from home to eat at school, at work or when on the go. Try packing a snack such as vegetables or fruit with a dip. This will help reduce the temptation to buy less nutritious snacks.
- ✓ Enjoy the natural, wholesome flavour of foods that have not been heavily processed. Savour a juicy apple or ripe banana instead of apple pie or banana chips.
- ✓ At restaurants, order foods that have been grilled, steamed or baked.
- ✓ Avoid eating deep-fried foods such as french fries, onion rings, spring rolls, breaded chicken nuggets, deep-fried battered vegetables and chicken wings.



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Lack of time is one of the most common barriers to healthy eating. Busy Canadians may end up choosing convenience foods, which often contain hidden fat, calories, sugar and salt (sodium). One way to deal with this challenge is to keep a good supply of ready-to-go foods in the kitchen. This way, you will always have something to make a nutritious meal in a hurry. For example, frozen whole wheat pizza crust, a jar of tomato sauce, fresh vegetables and grated low fat cheese can become a nutritious pizza dinner in less than 15 minutes. Try using a slow-cooker, making double batches of recipes and using leftover rice or pasta in a salad. What other creative time saving tips and strategies can you think of to help people eat well?

Be active

Start slowly... and build up.

People do not have to do their activity all at once. They can add up shorter periods through the day. Adults should be active for at least ten minutes at a time.

Adults need to be active for at least 2 ½ hours each week. In addition to this, adults should add muscle and bone strengthening activities at least 2 days each week.

Here's how Jessica makes time for several short periods of physical activity throughout the day:

- 6:30 a.m.** Jessica starts her day with 20 minutes of weight training at home.
- 8:45 a.m.** Jessica gets off the bus a few stops early and walks 10 minutes at a brisk pace to get to work.
- 12:30 p.m.** Before eating lunch, Jessica goes for a 10 minute power walk with her co-workers.
- 7:00 p.m.** After supper, Jessica and her family go biking for 20 minutes.



TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...

Be active today and every day.

- ✓ Start slowly and build up to at least 2 ½ hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week.
- ✓ Take the stairs, up and down, wherever you are. Every step counts.
- ✓ Go for a brisk ten minute walk at lunch, in the mall or after supper.
- ✓ Walk all or part of the way to work or school. If you can, roller-blade or cycle.
- ✓ Invite the neighbours and their kids over to play ball hockey or basketball.
- ✓ Visit with friends during a walk or outdoor hike rather than at the coffee shop.
- ✓ Sign up for a fitness class or a recreation program at the community centre.
- ✓ Take up a new sport.
- ✓ Play tag or soccer with the kids.
- ✓ Organize a walking or cycling club in your community.



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Many adults say that the high cost of going to the gym or playing a sport keeps them from being more active. You can help people overcome this barrier by talking about lower cost opportunities such as joining a walking club. Another common barrier is lack of time. It is important to make physical activity a priority. Choosing activities that are enjoyable can help people continue to make time for them in their busy schedule. In addition to the tips, what other ideas can you share to encourage people to make physical activity part of their daily routine?

Children need to be active for 60 minutes every day.

Here's how nine-year-old Ben has fun and keeps active on a school day:

- 10:00 a.m.** At recess, Ben has outdoor free time and climbs on the play structure with his schoolmates for 10 minutes.
- 12:30 p.m.** After he eats his lunch, Ben plays a 15 minute game of basketball.
- 4:30 p.m.** After school, Ben takes a five minute walk to his friend's house. They play a 20 minute game of ball hockey on the driveway and then Ben walks home for five minutes.
- 7:00 p.m.** After supper, Ben and his Dad play one-on-one soccer in the backyard for 15 minutes.





MORE TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...

Take a step today to eat well and be active.

- ✓ **Enjoy breakfast every day.** It may help control your hunger later in the day. Children who eat breakfast are more alert. Be a role model. If the adults eat breakfast, it is likely the children will too.
- ✓ **Walk wherever you can – get off the bus early, use the stairs.** Walking is one of Canadians' favourite activities and you don't need any special equipment. Taking the stairs at work or in the mall is just as good as using a stair climber machine at the gym.
- ✓ **Benefit from eating vegetables and fruit at all meals and snacks.** Vegetables and fruit are packed with nutrition and great taste. Every time you eat a vegetable and fruit, you are closer to meeting your daily recommended number of Food Guide Servings.

- ✓ **Spend less time being inactive like watching TV or playing computer games.** Watching TV or playing computer games takes away from time that could be spent being physically active. If you are inactive, you are more likely to gain weight. You may also be more likely to snack on higher fat, sweet and salty foods while watching TV.
- ✓ **Compare the Nutrition Facts table on food labels to choose products that contain less fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugars and sodium.** You eat what you buy. The Nutrition Facts table can help you pick the healthier choices. Keep in mind that the calories and nutrients listed are for the amount of food found at the top of the Nutrition Facts table. Read the ingredient lists on packaged and frozen foods. Limit foods that contain hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils, palm oil, palm kernel oil, coconut oil, shortening, butter or lard. Breaded fish sticks and fillets, chicken balls and nuggets, meat pies, snack foods and baked goods commonly contain these ingredients.



✓ **Request nutrition information about menu items when eating out to help you make healthier choices.** Nutrition information for food purchased in coffee shops or restaurants is often available in pamphlets on display or by request. You can also visit the vendor's website for this information. Another tip is to order smaller portions or share with a friend. Portion sizes have increased over the years, so be aware of the amount you eat. Often the smaller and healthier choices on the menu are the best value. If food is served with gravy or rich sauces, ask for them on the side. Or ask for au jus instead of gravy.

✓ **Enjoy eating with family and friends.** Having meals together as a family helps to reinforce positive eating habits. Use family meal times as an opportunity to talk about the day's events.

✓ **Take time to eat and savour every bite.** Slow down. Allow time to enjoy the meal and to notice when you feel full.



5

ADVICE FOR DIFFERENT AGES AND STAGES

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide is designed to help make sure most people get enough vitamins, minerals and other nutrients from the healthy eating pattern. Some groups of people, however, need more of certain nutrients or require specific guidance on selecting foods within or in addition to the eating pattern.

Advice for different ages and stages includes:

- Young children need small nutritious meals and snacks each day.
- For young children, nutritious foods that contain fat should not be restricted.
- Women who could become pregnant, as well as those who are pregnant or breastfeeding, need a daily multivitamin containing folic acid.
- Pregnant women need a multivitamin that contains iron.
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women need more calories.
- Men and women over the age of 50 need a daily vitamin D supplement.



CHILDREN

- *Following Canada's Food Guide helps children grow and thrive.*



Children aged two years and older can get the nutrients and calories they need for healthy growth and development by following the healthy eating pattern in Canada's Food Guide.

During early childhood, two to five years, children need enough calories for growth. Nutritious foods that contain fat, such as milk or peanut butter, can provide a concentrated source of calories for young children.

Serve nutritious small meals and snacks to young children to meet their daily recommended Food Guide Servings. Because they have small stomachs that tend to fill up quickly, children need to eat small amounts of food throughout the day. Most prefer meals and snacks on a regular schedule and in familiar surroundings. The amount of food eaten at each meal and snack will vary day-to-day depending on the child's appetite, activity level and whether they are experiencing a growth spurt. Their appetite may also fluctuate when they are excited or overly tired. Also, it is quite normal to see children lose interest in any activity in a short time, including at mealtimes. When hungry, young children will focus on eating. When satisfied, their attention turns elsewhere.

Over time, the variations in the amount a child eats tend to average out to provide the calories and nutrients needed. This is especially true if the child is encouraged to eat healthy foods when hungry and to stop when full. Eating foods from each of the four food groups and including a small amount of unsaturated fats is the best way to make sure that children get the nutrients they need. A multivitamin is rarely needed for healthy children who are growing well and following Canada's Food Guide. For an example of how a three-year-old child can meet his/her daily Food Guide Servings, see Appendix A.



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Families and caregivers play a big role in creating a positive eating environment. The early childhood years are a time to discover new foods and to develop a love and appreciation for healthy eating. Build on the fact that young children are eager to learn. Even simple activities such as helping to cut open a pumpkin or making muffins are ways children learn about food. Preparing food gives children a feeling of accomplishment and encourages them to try these foods. For example, potatoes that a preschooler has helped mash or radishes they picked from the garden are more appealing than those that just appear on the table. When you teach Canada's Food Guide to parents and other educators, discuss these ideas and others you have tried for creating a positive eating environment for children at home, in daycare or at school.





TIPS FOR CONSUMERS...

Help young children to follow Canada's Food Guide.

- ✓ Prepare meals that include foods from each of the four groups. For children, one Food Guide Serving from a food group such as Meat and Alternatives can be divided up into smaller amounts of food served throughout the day.
- ✓ Make sure to offer children a total of two cups of milk or fortified soy beverage every day. This will help meet their requirement for vitamin D.
- ✓ Offer a variety of nutritious foods, including some choices that contain fat such as milk and peanut butter.
- ✓ Make time for healthy eating so that children don't feel rushed. Set regular times for meals and snacks. This helps to establish a healthy routine.
- ✓ Sit down and eat with children. Provide a pleasant setting. Leave the television off during meal times.
- ✓ Let children help with simple food-related tasks. Ask them to set the table or help to wash the vegetables.
- ✓ Keep in mind that while parents and caregivers are responsible for **what** children eat, children are responsible for **how much** they eat. Offer suitable portions with options for seconds.
- ✓ Be patient. If an unfamiliar food is rejected the first time, it can be offered again later. The more often children are exposed to new foods, the more likely they are to accept them.
- ✓ Be a positive role model for children. They will be more likely to enjoy a variety of foods and to try new foods if you do.
- ✓ Organize fun and easy physical activities such as bicycling, walking, dancing, games of ball or tag in the summer and sledding or building a snowman in the winter. Young children rely on parents and caregivers to provide opportunities for physical activity.

WOMEN OF CHILDBEARING AGE

- *During different stages of their childbearing years, women need additional nutrients or calories.*



Folic acid

Folic acid or folate is a B vitamin that supports the growth of maternal and fetal tissue. Supplemental folic acid decreases the risk of the fetus developing neural tube defects (NTDs). All women who could become pregnant should take one tablet daily of a multivitamin containing 400 micrograms (0.4 mg) of folic acid. They should start taking the supplement at least three months before becoming pregnant. This amount of supplemental folic acid, together with the amount of folate found in the healthy eating pattern, should reduce the risk of NTDs in women who have no history of the condition.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women also need more folate. The recommended intake of folate is 600 micrograms for women who are pregnant and 500 micrograms for breastfeeding women. It is difficult to meet these levels with food alone. To get enough folate and other needed nutrients, women should continue taking a daily multivitamin containing folic acid throughout their pregnancy and while breastfeeding.

Iron

Women need extra iron during pregnancy to increase the maternal red blood cell count and nourish the growing fetus and placenta. For this reason, pregnant women should make sure they are taking a daily multivitamin that also contains an adequate amount of iron. Each woman should ask her health care provider about the supplement that is right for her.

Additional calories

Women need extra calories during pregnancy to sustain an adequate weight gain to support the baby's growth and development. Additional calorie intake is only recommended during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy because women typically do not gain much weight in the first trimester. Women need about 350 extra calories per day in the second trimester and 450 extra calories per day in the third trimester.

The amount of additional calories women need when breastfeeding depends on the rate of milk production and how much weight the woman loses. Generally, though, women need about 350 to 400 extra calories per day for the first year of breastfeeding.

To meet their need for extra calories, pregnant and breastfeeding women should eat a little more food every day from the food groups of their choice. The amount of extra food they eat should be a total of about two to three Food Guide Servings. For instance, one woman may choose to have an extra morning snack of two additional servings of Vegetables and Fruit and one additional serving of Grain Products. Another woman might choose to add one additional serving of Milk and Alternatives at lunch and one additional Vegetables and Fruit serving at supper.

MEN AND WOMEN OVER THE AGE OF 50

- *Men and women over the age of 50 need a daily vitamin D supplement.*



Vitamin D

Vitamin D is obtained from the diet. The major dietary sources of vitamin D are foods such as milk and margarine to which vitamin D is added.

Vitamin D can also be produced when the skin is exposed to UVB radiation. Unfortunately, for a large part of the year in Canada (October to March and longer in far northern latitudes), the sun is so low in the sky that its rays are not strong enough for the human body to produce the vitamin naturally. Other factors such as sunscreen use and skin pigmentation can also affect the production of vitamin D through skin exposure.

Vitamin D needs increase after the age of 50 in part because with age, the skin has a reduced capacity to produce vitamin D. Vitamin D and calcium are important for bone strength and to reduce the risk of osteoporosis and fractures in older adults. After the age of 50, people's vitamin D needs are higher than can be obtained from food even when following Canada's Food Guide.

Consuming 500 mL (2 cups) of milk each day will provide approximately 5 micrograms (200 IU) of vitamin D. Adding a supplement containing 10 micrograms (400 IU) of vitamin D will ensure that individuals over 50 meet their recommended intakes. Therefore, all adults over the age of 50 should take a daily vitamin D supplement of 10 micrograms (400 IU) in addition to following Canada's Food Guide.

A

APPENDIX A: Sample One-Day Menus

SAMPLE ONE-DAY MENU FOR OLIVIA, A THREE-YEAR-OLD GIRL

	Recommended Daily Food Guide Servings			
	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives
Girl 2 - 3 years	4	3	2	1

Foods	Number of Food Guide Servings				
	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives	Added Oils and Fats
Breakfast • ½ bowl of whole grain cereal (15 g) • 125 mL (½ cup) of 2 % milk		1/2	1/2		
Snack • 60 mL (¼ cup) carrots sticks and broccoli florets with salad dressing • water	1/2				✓
Lunch • ½ salmon sandwich on whole wheat bread (made with 30 g or 1 oz of canned salmon and mayonnaise) • 60 mL (¼ cup) red pepper strips and cucumber slices • 125 mL (½ cup) milk • 1 peach	1/2 1	1	1/2	1/2	✓
Snack • oat rings cereal (15 g) • 125 mL (½ cup) milk		1/2	1/2		
Dinner • 125 mL (½ cup) spaghetti with tomato and meat sauce (about 40 g or 1 ½ oz of meat) • 125 mL (½ cup) milk • 125 mL (½ cup) applesauce	1/2 1	1	1/2	1/2	✓
Snack • ½ banana	1/2				
Total Food Guide Servings for the day	4	3	2	1	

SAMPLE ONE-DAY MENU FOR MALCOLM, A 12-YEAR-OLD BOY

	Recommended Daily Food Guide Servings			
	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives
Boys 9 - 13 years	6	6	3-4	1-2

Foods	Number of Food Guide Servings				
	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives	Added Oils and Fats
Breakfast • 1 small slice of leftover cheese pizza on whole wheat crust • 250 mL (1 cup) milk • 125 mL (½ cup) orange juice	1	1 - 1/2	1/2 1		
Snack • 1 whole grain granola bar • water		1			
Lunch • roast beef sandwich with 75g (2 ½ oz) beef and mayonnaise on 2 slices of whole grain bread • 250 mL (1 cup) milk • 1 nectarine	1	2	1	1	✓
Snack • 125 mL (½ cup) cantaloupe cubes with low fat fruit yogurt dip • water	1		1/2		
Dinner • chicken stir-fry with 75g (2 ½ oz) chicken and 250 mL (1 cup) broccoli and red peppers cooked in canola oil • 175 mL (¾ cup) whole wheat noodles • 250 mL (1 cup) milk	2	1 - 1/2	1	1	✓
Snack • 125 mL (½ cup) blueberries	1				
Total Food Guide Servings for the day	6	6	4	2	

SAMPLE ONE-DAY MENU FOR EMILY, A 16-YEAR-OLD FEMALE

	Recommended Daily Food Guide Servings			
	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives
Female 14 - 18 years	7	6	3-4	2

Foods	Number of Food Guide Servings				
	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives	Added Oils and Fats
Breakfast • 1 whole wheat tortilla with 15 mL (1 Tbsp) peanut butter • 1 banana • 250 mL (1 cup) skim milk	1	2	1	1/2	
Snack • 1 apple • water	1				
Lunch • tuna salad sandwich (30 g or 1 oz of tuna and mayonnaise) on 2 slices of rye bread • 125 mL (½ cup) orange juice • 125 mL (½ cup) baby carrots with dip	1 1	2		1/2	✓ ✓
Dinner • 500 mL (2 cups) spinach salad with 125 mL (½ cup) strawberries and kiwi and 60 mL (¼ cup) almonds • salad dressing • 1 whole wheat bagel • 50 g (1 ½ oz) cheese • 250 mL (1 cup) skim milk	2 1	2	1 1	1	✓
Total Food Guide Servings for the day	7	6	3	2	

SAMPLE ONE-DAY MENU FOR JAMES, A 45-YEAR-OLD MALE

	Recommended Daily Food Guide Servings			
	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives
Male 19 – 50 years	8-10	8	2	3

Foods	Number of Food Guide Servings				
	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives	Added Oils and Fats
Breakfast • 1 large bowl of whole grain cereal (60 g) with 125 mL (½ cup) peaches and 30 mL (2 Tbsp) walnuts • 250 mL (1 cup) 2% milk • 1 coffee	1	2	1	1/2	
Snack • 250 mL (1 cup) orange juice	2				
Lunch • Leftovers: marinated chicken breast (75 g or 2½ oz) with 250 mL (1 cup) whole wheat couscous and 125 mL (½ cup) cooked green beans with margarine • 1 apple • water	1 1	2		1	✓
Dinner • 110 g (3 ½ oz) roast pork • 250 mL (1 cup) rice pilaf • 125 mL (½ cup) steamed asparagus • 250 mL (1 cup) romaine lettuce with 125 mL (½ cup) cut-up tomato, cucumber, celery and vinaigrette • water	1 1 1	2		1 - 1/2	✓
Snack • 2 whole grain toast with margarine • 1 banana • 250 mL (1 cup) 2% milk	1	2	1		✓
Total Food Guide Servings for the day	9	8	2	3	

SAMPLE ONE-DAY MENU FOR ISABELLE, A 60-YEAR-OLD FEMALE

	Recommended Daily Food Guide Servings			
	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives
Female 51+ years	7	6	3	2

Foods	Number of Food Guide Servings				
	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives	Added Oils and Fats
Breakfast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 175 mL (¾ cup) oatmeal • 125 mL (½ cup) 1% milk • 1 pear 	1	1	1/2		
Snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 mL (2 Tbsp) almonds • 3 graham crackers • Tea with lemon 		1		1/2	
Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pasta salad: 250 mL (1 cup) whole wheat pasta; 125 mL (½ cup) roasted red peppers and corn; 125 mL (½ cup) broccoli florets and parsley; 1 hard boiled egg; vinaigrette • 125 mL (½ cup) blueberries • 125 mL (½ cup) 1% milk 	1 1 1	2	1/2	1/2	✓
Snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 175 mL (¾ cup) low fat yogurt • 125 mL (½ cup) fruit salad 	1		1		
Dinner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moroccan stew: 175 mL (¾ cup) chick peas; 125 mL (½ cup) green peas and sweet potato; cooked with olive oil • 125 mL (½ cup) basmati rice • 125 mL (½ cup) 1% milk 	1	1	1/2	1	✓
Snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bowl of whole grain cereal (30 g) • 125 mL (½ cup) milk • 1 small banana sliced 	1	1	1/2		
Total Food Guide Servings for the day	7	6	3	2	

SAMPLE ONE-DAY MENU FOR RAJ, A 20-YEAR-OLD MALE VEGETARIAN

	Recommended Daily Food Guide Servings			
	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives
Male 19 – 50 years	8-10	8	2	3

Foods	Number of Food Guide Servings				
	Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives	Added Oils and Fats
Breakfast • smoothie: 250 mL (1 cup) fortified soy beverage; 125 mL (½ cup) frozen berries; 1 banana • 2 scrambled eggs • 2 whole wheat toast with margarine	2	2	1	1	✓
Snack • 1 homemade muffin • water		2			
Lunch • stir-fry: 175 mL (¾ cup) tofu; 125 mL (½ cup) orange pepper; 125 mL (½ cup) zucchini cooked with black bean sauce and canola oil • 250 mL (1 cup) quinoa • 1 apple	1 1	2		1	✓
Dinner • 175 mL (¾ cup) cooked red lentils (dahl) • ½ naan • 125 mL (½ cup) cooked spinach with margarine • 250 mL (1 cup) orange juice	1 2	2		1	✓
Snack • 250 mL (1 cup) cantaloupe • 250 mL (1 cup) fortified soy beverage	2		1		
Total Food Guide Servings for the day	10	8	2	3	



CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE SUGGESTS...

- ☑ Eat the recommended **amount** and **type** of food each day.
- ☑ Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.
- ☑ Choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.
- ☑ Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice.
- ☑ Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.
- ☑ Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar or salt.
- ☑ Drink skim, 1% or 2% milk each day.
- ☑ Select lower fat milk alternatives.
- ☑ Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often.
- ☑ Eat at least two Food Guide Servings of fish each week.
- ☑ Select lean meat and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or salt.
- ☑ Include a small amount of unsaturated fat each day.
- ☑ Satisfy your thirst with water.
- ☑ Limit foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar or salt.
- ☑ Be active every day.



VISIT CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE ONLINE

www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

- *Practical tips to help follow Canada's Food Guide*
- *Interactive tools and resources*
- *Scientific background*