

Healthy Eating: Variety and Balance

A healthy diet is essential to feeling well and enjoying life to the fullest. Healthy eating starts with following Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide. Enjoying the type and amount of food recommended in the Food Guide can help meet nutrient needs and promote health.

Enjoy a variety of nutritious foods

Try something new each week, whether it is a new fruit, vegetable or grain product. Who knows—you may find a new favourite.

Eat grain products to provide energy, vitamins, minerals and fibre

- Make at least half your grain product choices whole grains each day. Try whole grains such as oatmeal, bulgur, barley, or quinoa.
- Have a bowl of hot cereal, such as oatmeal, or whole grain ready-to-eat cereal for a meal or snack.
- Enjoy a small bran muffin for a snack, or with cheese and fruit as a mini-meal.
- Try brown rice in casseroles and soups.
- Eat whole grain bread, buns, bagels or muffins, whole wheat pastas and brown or wild rice.

Eat more vegetables and fruits for health-promoting nutrients

- Enjoy at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.
- Add fresh or frozen spinach to an omelette, pasta dish or casserole.
- Bake a sweet potato for lunch or dinner. Sprinkle with cinnamon and enjoy.
- Start lunch off with a bowl of low sodium tomato or vegetable soup, a salad or some raw vegetables.
- Make a vegetable stir-fry. Add some black beans and leftover brown rice for a quick supper.
- Craving candy? Try some naturally sweet dried fruit instead.
- Eat more whole vegetables and fruit and drink less juice.
- Enjoy no more than 125 mL (1/2 cup) of 100% fruit juice per day.



Eat dairy products and other calcium rich foods to keep bones healthy

- Have 500ml (2 cups) of skim, 1% or 2% milk every day. Sip a glass of skim or one per cent milk as a bedtime snack.
- Add milk instead of water to canned soup. Add skim milk powder to sauces, soups, casseroles and omelettes.
- Use grated cheese on salads, casseroles or soups.
- Enjoy yogurt topped with fruit for dessert.
- Eat salmon or sardines in a sandwich, or add them to salads or pasta dishes.
- Sprinkle almonds on salads or casseroles or enjoy a handful as an afternoon snack.

Choose leaner meats and more meat alternatives

- Choose lean cuts of meat, such as round, flank and loin.
- Trim all visible fat from meats before cooking. Remove skin from poultry.
- Enjoy a serving of fish (75grams/2.5oz) at least twice a week. Try salmon in a stir-fry.
- Limit deli meats such as sausages, bacon and luncheon meats. Instead, enjoy cooked leftover chicken, turkey, pork or beef in sandwiches.
- Enjoy meatless meals more often. Try eggs, tofu or nuts in a stir fry. Enjoy soups and casseroles made with kidney beans, black beans, or lentils.

Oils and fats

It's healthy to choose lower fat foods more often, but remember that some fat is essential in the diet. Prepare foods with small amounts of unsaturated fat; choose vegetable oil, non-hydrogenated margarine or mayonnaise instead of saturated fats like butter and lard. Avoid trans fats from hydrogenated oil, hard margarine and shortening.



Use salt, caffeine and alcohol in moderation

- Buy lower sodium foods to prepare healthier meals at home.
- Cook without adding salt. Try using lemon juice, pepper or herbs to flavour food rather than salt.
- Drink no more than 3 (250 ml / 8 ounce) cups of brewed coffee or no more than 4 (250 ml / 8ounce) cups of instant coffee per day.
- Alternate cups of coffee with cups of hot water or milk.
- Try decaffeinated teas and coffees.
- Enjoy water to quench your thirst
- If you drink alcohol, limit your intake to no more than:
 - 10 drinks a week for women, with no more than 2 drinks on any day
 - 15 drinks a week for men, with no more than 3 drinks on any day
- a “drink” means
 - a 341 ml (12 oz) bottle of beer,
 - a 142 ml (5 oz) glass of wine or
 - 43 ml (1.5 oz) of distilled alcohol (e.g. rye, gin, rum).
- Be sure to have days where you don’t drink alcohol.

For more nutrition information visit www.dietitians.ca

You can get a copy of the guide by calling 1-800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232) or by visiting www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide.



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