

Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating

Healthy eating is as easy as following these five points.

1 Enjoy a **VARIETY** of foods.

This is the best way to ensure you are eating well. Your body needs over 50 nutrients a day. No one food will provide all of them. The sure way to get all the nutrients you need is to mix and match different foods daily. Vitamin and mineral supplements cannot make up for poor eating habits. Besides, eating is much more enjoyable than taking a pill.

- Remember, it is the total diet, not individual foods that influences health.

2 Emphasize cereals, breads, other grain products, vegetables and fruits.

Eating well means planning your meals around foods from the earth - grains, vegetables, and fruit - the backbone of a healthy diet. Meals built around these foods are a feast of textures, colours, flavours, and aromas. These foods provide complex carbohydrates and are naturally low in fat.

Diets high in complex carbohydrates have been associated with a lower risk of heart disease and some cancers. Also, whole grain products, vegetables, and fruit add dietary fibre, which may help you manage your weight because they fill you up before you eat too many calories.

- Go beyond bread, rice, and pasta - try couscous, quinoa, bulgur, barley, kasha, and wild rice for variety. Once available only in health food stores, most of these grains have become supermarket regulars.

Broccoli is very nutritious, but you don't have to eat it every day. Don't forget carrots, cauliflower, dark leafy greens, winter and summer squashes, green and red peppers, snow peas, red cabbage, sweet potatoes ... you get the picture! The list of vegetables available for your enjoyment is endless. Frozen mixed vegetables make it easy to get an assortment at a single meal. And, frozen vegetables are just as nutritious as fresh!

- Reach for three or more servings of vegetables per day. A serving is probably smaller than you think; a half-cup of cooked or fresh vegetables equals one serving!

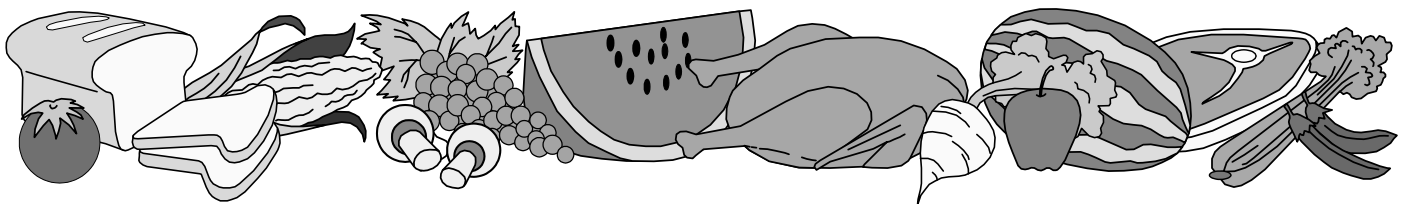
While a glass of fruit juice at breakfast is a great start, how about some bananas, peaches, or dried fruit on top of your cereal or waffles? A crisp apple or juicy orange makes a great midday snack. A bowl of ripe, red strawberries topped with low fat vanilla yogurt for dessert is a tasty way to end a meal.

- Reach for two or more servings of fruit per day. A half-cup of juice or fruit equals one serving – easy!

3 Choose lower-fat dairy products, leaner meats and foods prepared with little or no fat.

Eating less fat provides short and long term health benefits. By cutting back on fat, you may reduce the amount of saturated fat and cholesterol in your diet.

- Choose milk, yogurt, and other dairy products that are 1% milk fat (M.F.) or less. Look for cheese that is skimmed, part-skimmed, or less than 20% M.F.



- ❑ Think of the size and thickness of a deck of cards as a healthy portion size of meat, fish, or poultry.
- ❑ Low fat cooking methods include broiling, steaming, roasting, baking, microwaving, grilling, braising, boiling, poaching, and stir frying (if a small amount of oil is used).
- ❑ Marinades without oil tenderize lean meats as well as those with oil. Acidic ingredients, like citrus juice, vinegar, or wine, do the tenderizing. Try a fat free salad dressing for a quick, twenty minute marinade.
- ❑ Lower fat foods may have fewer calories than higher fat ones, but check the labels to compare. Some low fat foods, like cookies or muffins, have just as many calories as the original version because of the increased sugar added to the product.

4 Achieve and maintain a healthy weight by enjoying regular physical activity and healthy eating.

People who have lost weight and kept it off have done it through regular physical activity and sensible eating. Forget about trying drastic, low calorie or fad diets and ignoring physical activity. An active lifestyle can greatly improve how you look and feel. Remember that healthy bodies come in many shapes and sizes, so keep your healthy weight goal realistic.

Healthy eating means eating a variety of foods to meet your nutrient and caloric needs. If you restrict your food intake too much, chances are you will not meet your nutritional needs, and you will probably feel like you're denying yourself.

- ❑ Strike a balance between eating well and moving your body daily!

5 Limit salt, alcohol and caffeine.

Most of the salt in our diet comes from processed foods. Choose lower salt versions of these foods more often. Try to include more meals and snacks that you make from scratch so you can control the amount of salt used.

- ❑ Use less salt when cooking. Add herbs and spices to enhance the natural flavours of foods.
- ❑ Remove the salt shaker from the table.
- ❑ Limit highly salted chips, pretzels, nuts, and crackers.

Although there is a lot of news in the media about alcohol possibly reducing the risk of heart disease, the other side of the story is rarely told. Alcohol can also increase the risk of liver disease, suicide, injuries, and several cancers, including breast cancer. To improve your health, eat better, exercise more, and don't smoke rather than drinking more or starting to drink! If you choose to drink alcohol, follow this advice:

- ❑ Have no more than one or two drinks on any day.
- ❑ To help have the healthiest baby possible don't drink if you might become pregnant, are pregnant or are breastfeeding. No safe level of alcohol consumption during these times has been identified.

Enjoying that morning cup of coffee is a common practice, and that's OK. Just keep in mind how much and how often you reach for coffee and other caffeine-containing beverages throughout the day.

If you have more than 400 - 450 mg of caffeine per day (about four 6-ounce cups of coffee), you may want try some other beverages. Enjoy decaffeinated coffee or tea, herbal teas, coffee substitutes, fruit juice, or low fat milk for a change. Don't forget that cola drinks and chocolate also contain caffeine.

