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## A GUIDE TO HEALTHY EATING

### WHAT WE EAT INFLUENCES OUR HEALTH

Chronic diseases impacted by diet—namely ischemic heart disease, stroke, colorectal cancer, diabetes and breast cancer—are among the leading causes of premature death in Canada.

### EAT A VARIETY OF NUTRITIOUS FOODS

Healthy eating is a habit. Eat vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein foods often to develop a healthy eating pattern and maintain your health. The term eating pattern refers to what you eat and drink on a regular basis. In a healthy eating pattern, all the foods and drinks work together to:

- help you feel good
- maintain your health
- meet your nutritional needs

### FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Try making half of your plate vegetables and fruits.

Choose different textures, colours and shapes to fit your taste.

Try a variety of vegetables and fruits such as: zucchini, tomatoes, cucumbers, pears, apples, berries, broccoli, peaches, cabbage and leafy greens.

Frozen or canned vegetables and fruits can be healthy options.

- Choose frozen vegetables and fruits without: added sugars, added seasonings, breading or rich sauces.
- Choose canned vegetables with little to no added sodium. Drain and rinse canned vegetables to lower the sodium content.
- Choose canned fruit with little to no added sugars.

### PROTEIN

Protein foods are an important part of healthy eating. Choose protein foods that come from plants more often. You don't need to eat large amounts of protein foods to meet your nutritional needs.

Protein foods include legumes, nuts, seeds, tofu, fortified soy beverage, fish, shellfish, eggs, poultry, lean red meat including wild game, lower fat milk, lower fat yogurts, lower fat kefir, and cheeses lower in fat and sodium.

### WHOLE GRAINS

Whole grain foods are a healthier choice than refined grains because they include all parts of the grain.

- Enjoy a variety of whole grain foods such as: quinoa, whole grain pasta, whole grain bread, whole oats or oatmeal, whole grain brown or wild rice.
- Some grain foods can have a lot of added sodium, sugars or saturated fat. These include foods like: breads, muffins, crackers and pasta dishes.
- Read the ingredient list and choose foods that have the word “whole grain” followed by the name of the grain as one of the first ingredients like: whole grain oats or whole grain wheat.

### MAKE WATER YOUR DRINK OF CHOICE

Replace sugary drinks with water. Water should be the beverage of choice to support health and promote hydration without adding calories to the diet.



- Water is vital for life—in fact it is the largest single component of the human body.
- Water is essential for metabolic and digestive processes.

### LIMIT PROCESSED FOODS

Highly processed foods are processed or prepared foods and drinks that add excess sodium, sugars or saturated fat to your diet. Limit highly processed foods as they are not a part of a healthy eating pattern. If you choose these foods, eat them less often and in small amounts.

Highly processed foods can include:

- sugary drinks, chocolate and candies
- ice cream and frozen desserts
- fast foods like French fries and burgers
- frozen entrées like pasta dishes and pizzas
- bakery products like muffins, buns and cakes
- processed meats like sausages and deli meats

### THINGS TO REMEMBER

Your eating pattern can lead to better or worse health outcomes.

Cooking and preparing food at home supports healthy eating habits.

Eating with others brings enjoyment to healthy eating and fosters connections between generations and cultures.

### MOVE YOUR BODY

For optimal health, children and youth should perform at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day and have low levels of sedentary behaviour, as well as get sufficient sleep.

For adults and older adults, performing at least 150 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week is recommended to achieve health benefits.

### RESOURCES

Read Canada's Food Guide at <https://food-guide.canada.ca>

### DID YOU KNOW?

The way food is prepared matters for your health. Baking, grilling, poaching, steaming, roasting, pressure & slow cooking, and sautéing are some of the healthiest cooking methods.