

# Healthy Eating

Document developed by Mapleton Teaching Kitchen 2011



TIPS & RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY FOOD MENTORS

## **WHAT IS HEALTHY EATING?**

Healthy eating is a key component of health. It includes enjoying nutritious food in the amounts our bodies need to perform their best. There is a lot of information available on nutrition and healthy eating which may leave people unsure of what healthy eating really means. It is not complicated once you know the basics. The rewards of healthy eating will be experienced in the short term as well as the long term. Good nutrition helps to protect against chronic disease such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, stroke and high blood pressure.

### **Healthy eating also . . .**

- provides the necessary nutrients for proper growth and development.
- provides energy for our daily activities.
- promotes a healthy body weight.
- increases our ability to learn.
- strengthens our immune system.
- helps us enjoy life because cooking a healthy meal can be an enjoyable way to spend time, either on our own or with others

To deliver the material regarding Canada's Food Guide, we strongly recommend consulting the following document:

### **Eating well with Canada's Food Guide- A resource for educators and communicators**

To access this guide please visit: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt\\_formats/hpfb-dgpsa/pdf/pubs/res-educat-eng.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt_formats/hpfb-dgpsa/pdf/pubs/res-educat-eng.pdf) or receive a free copy by calling 1.866.225.5366. You can also contact your local public health office.

## **WHAT IS CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE?**

- Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating is designed to help people over the age of 4 make wise food choices
- The guide recommends what AMOUNT of food and what TYPES of foods we need to eat every day to ensure we are getting all the nutrients, vitamins & minerals we need to stay healthy and active.
- Follow the RAINBOW: The food guide is designed like a rainbow, each colour & arc of the rainbow represents a different food group.

- The different size of the arcs of the rainbow represents the importance of eating portions from THAT group each day.

Biggest arc: GREEN: Vegetables & Fruit  
 ↓  
 YELLOW: Grain products  
 BLUE: Milk & Alternatives  
 Smallest arc: RED: Meat & Alternatives

- A “healthy” meal includes foods from 3 to 4 of the food groups.
- A “healthy” snack includes foods from 1 to 2 of the food groups

**Vegetables and fruit** have important nutrients such as vitamins, mineral and fibre. They are also usually low in fat and calories and may help prevent heart disease and some types of cancer.

The green arc of the rainbow:

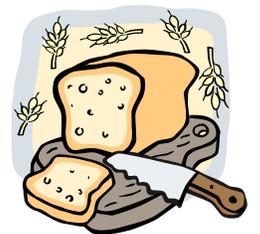
- Biggest arc of the rainbow so largest number of servings per day should come from this group.
  - Vegetables & fruit should be a part of every meal & snack.
  - This group provides us with vitamins A,B,C & fibre.
  - Try and have vegetables & fruit more often than juice.
  - Have at least 1 dark green & one orange vegetable each day.
- 1 serving = ½ cup (125 mL) fresh, frozen or canned fruit or vegetables  
 1 cup (250 mL) raw leafy vegetables  
 1 medium sized fruit or vegetable  
 ½ cup (125 mL) 100% juice



**Grain Products**, especially whole grains are a source of fibre and usually low in fat. Fibre rich foods can help you feel full longer and whole grains may also help to prevent heart disease.

The yellow arc of the rainbow :

- Second biggest arc of the rainbow.
- Make at least ½ of your grain products –WHOLE GRAIN each day for extra fibre & nutrients.
- Fibre is necessary to keep the digestive system healthy and help keep you full longer.
- Provides carbohydrates, the body’s main source of energy
- Every meal should have at least one serving from the grain group.



- 1 serving = 1 slice of bread  
     ½ pita, tortilla or bagel  
     ½ cup (125 mL) cooked rice, pasta, whole grains like quinoa  
     ¾ cup (175 mL) hot or cold cereal

The **Milk & Alternatives** food group provides important vitamins and minerals that are important for developing strong bones and decreasing the risk of osteoporosis.



The blue arc of the rainbow:

- This group provides calcium for strong bones & teeth, vitamins A, B and protein.
- Milk is the major food source of vitamin D.
- Without vitamin D, calcium from your food cannot be absorbed.
- Therefore have at least 2 cups (500mL) of milk every day.
- Choose lower fat yogurts & cheese too.
- 1 serving = ¾ cup (175 mL) yogurt  
     1 ½ ounces (50 grams) of cheese  
     1 cup (250 mL) milk or soy beverage that has been fortified with calcium and vitamin D.

Foods from the **Meat and Alternatives** food group provide important nutrients like iron, magnesium, B vitamins and protein.



The red arc of the rainbow:

- This group includes legumes (beans, peas & lentils), eggs, fish, seafood, nuts, seeds, poultry and meats.
- Foods in the red group make up the smallest arc of the rainbow, the least number of servings per day should come from this group.
- Meat & alternatives provide us with protein, iron, zinc & other minerals
- Eat at least two servings of fish per week.
- Choose lean meat and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or sodium
- 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.
- 1 serving = 2 ½ oz or ½ cup (125 mL) cooked fish, shellfish, poultry or lean meat  
     ¾ cup (175 mL) cooked legumes (beans, chick peas, lentils, etc.)  
     2 eggs or 2 Tbsp (30 mL) peanut butter  
     ¼ cup (60 mL) shelled nuts or ¾ cup (175 mL) tofu

## Fat:

Fat provides essential nutrients and allows for absorption of fat soluble vitamins (A,D,E and K) 2 to 3 Tbsp (30 to 45 mL) is recommended each day.



- However these amounts should come from sources of “unsaturated” fats. These fats are liquid at room temperature and include vegetable oils like olive, canola, sunflower & soybean.
- 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.
- “Saturated” fats are solid at room temperature and include shortening, lard & butter. These fats need to be limited because diets high in these fats are linked to health risks like high cholesterol and heart disease.
- Choose tub margarine that is labelled “non hydrogenated” and has 5% or less Daily Value (DV) from saturated & trans fats.

## SATISFY YOUR THIRST WITH WATER



- A calorie-free way to quench your thirst
- Drink more water in hot weather or when you are very active.

## EAT WELL

- Limit foods & beverages high in calories, fat, sugar or salt.

cakes	pastries
Chocolate	candies
Doughnuts	muffins
Ice cream	French fries
Potato chips	other salty snacks
Alcohol	fruit flavoured drinks
Sports & energy drinks	
Sweetened hot or cold drinks	

## Food Guide Serving Size Comparisons

2 ½ ounce (75 grams) cooked fish, shellfish, poultry or lean meats  
= 1 deck of cards



1 tsp (5 mL) margarine = 1 dice



2 Tbsp (30 mL) peanut butter = 1 golf ball



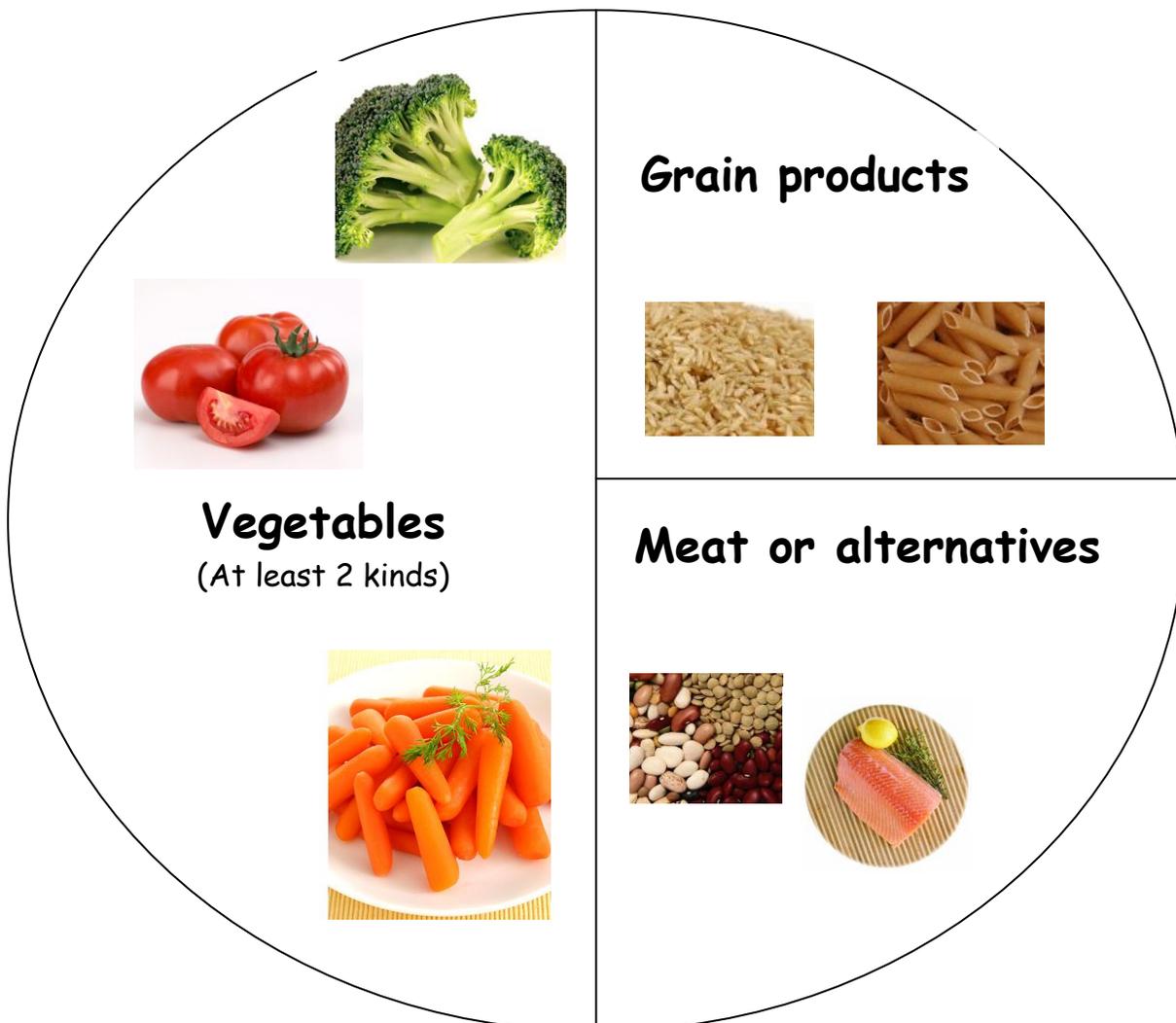
½ cup (125 mL) of rice, pasta, couscous = tennis ball or ½ woman's fist.



1 ½ ounces (50 grams) of cheese = 1 domino



### Balancing meals:



## Remember

A meal includes 3-4 of the Food Groups from Canada's Food Guide

A snack includes 2 Food Groups from Canada's Food Guide

### Did you know?

- Youth obesity rates have tripled over the past 25 years
- Obesity is the second leading preventable cause of death after cigarette smoking.
- Canadian data show low intakes for most of the food groups in Canada's Food Guide for both girls and boys in most grade levels.
- Atlantic Canadians eat less vegetables and fruit than other Canadians. Only a third of Atlantic Canadians eat enough vegetables and fruit for good health.
- Consumption of vegetables and fruit helps prevent many diseases and promotes good health.
- Eating dinners as a family is associated with healthy food intake patterns, including more vegetables and fruit, less fried food and soft drinks, as well as higher fiber and nutrient intakes from food.
- The increase in portion sizes has contributed to childhood obesity.

### General Tips

- Remember to eat a VARIETY of foods because no single food is perfect. To get all the nutrients you need, enjoy as many different foods as possible from each of the 4 food groups in Canada's Food Guide. Refer to [foodguide](#) for more info & tools.
- Eating breakfast every day can help improve concentration, reduce hunger and maintain a healthy weight.
- Go for the whole grains; choose whole-wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, bran cereals, oatmeal and brown or wild rice more often. Whole grains are a great source of energy and fiber. Check the Nutrition Facts table on foods to find out if that food is a good source of fiber. Look for at least 4 grams of fiber per serving. Refer to [www.healthyeatingisinstore.com](http://www.healthyeatingisinstore.com) for more information on reading labels.
- When reading labels, check the nutrition facts panel and look for products with less than 3 grams of total fat when looking for a low fat choice.

- A serving is ½ a cup or what would fit in the palm of your hand. Refer to [www.dietitians.ca/eatwell](http://www.dietitians.ca/eatwell) for a fact sheet called “Colour your world with Vegetables and Fruit”.
- Dark green and orange vegetables are loaded with vitamins, fiber and antioxidants which help to fight disease and allow your body to perform at its best. Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day. Try vegetables such as carrots, spinach, broccoli, tomatoes, sweet potatoes and squash at least twice a day.
- Consider the portion size that is right for you and your activity level. Eat only until you are comfortably full. If you are still hungry after a meal choose another serving of whole grain, vegetable or fruit. Try to avoid seconds of higher fat or sugary foods.
- Purchase the leaner cuts of meat more often, trim off visible fat, and bake, barbecue, broil or microwave. Meat alternatives such as eggs and dried beans, peas and lentils are less expensive sources of protein.
- Milk and milk products are a key source of calcium and other bone building nutrients. A healthy eating plan, including milk products, along with daily activity will help prevent osteoporosis. Refer to [www.dairygoodness.ca](http://www.dairygoodness.ca) for more information on milk products.

### **Family Tips**

- Home and family have a huge impact on a child’s nutrition and health. Parents and care givers have the opportunity to help children develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime.
- Make family meals a priority. Try not to schedule activities during usual meal times.
- Make sure family meals are pleasant and relaxed. Spend time at the family meal talking about each others day.
- Remember it is the parent’s responsibility to provide a variety of healthy foods, at regular times, in an appropriate setting. It is the child’s responsibility to decide if and how much they will eat. Never force a child to eat. Children have a natural ability to regulate their food intake.
- Never use food as a punishment or reward.
- Involve the whole family with meal planning, purchasing and preparation.
- Be a positive role model for your children.
- Be adventurous; try one new fruit or vegetable each week.

### **On a budget**

Everyone is trying to get the most out of their food dollar. Here are some tips to help ensure you get the nutrients you need while sticking to a budget.

- Plan your shopping list based on the grocery store flyer.
- If you are feeling hungry, have a healthy snack before heading to the grocery store.

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- Shop around the outside of the grocery store first. You will find foods from the 4 food groups in Canada's Food Guide. You may need to pick up a few necessary items from the aisles, but many of the "extra" items that are often low in nutrients, high in calories and expensive, are found in the aisles.
- If possible, buy larger portions, then separate and freeze in smaller portions.
- Choose fresh vegetables and fruit when they are in season. When not in season, frozen or canned are good options.
- Look for choice grade canned vegetables and fruit. The nutritional value is still as good as grade A.
- Fill your cupboard or freezer with staples such as whole wheat bread, pasta, rice, oatmeal, frozen vegetables,

### **Not Enough Time?**

- Today's busy lifestyles can make it challenging to provide healthy meals for the family. Here are some tips to help:
- Plan ahead. Give some thought at the beginning of the week to what you would like to eat throughout the week. Check out [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca).
- Keep prepared items such as prepackaged salads, frozen vegetables and mini carrots on hand. These can easily be added to a meal to boost nutrients and fiber.
- Have a plan for leftovers. Make enough to last a few days then freeze unused portions. They can be easily pulled out of the freezer for a quick meal when you are in a hurry.
- When you have a few minutes, wash and cut vegetables and fruit so they will be ready to eat when a quick snack is needed.
- Most people have a small number of recipes that they use on a regular basis. Take some time to review some healthy recipes and add them to your inventory.
- Set the table for breakfast the night before.