



4 YOUR HEALTH

What will I eat for breakfast? What snack do I choose from the vending machine at work? Should I grab something to eat on my way to work? What snacks will I offer my friends when they come over tonight for a BBQ?

These are some of the more than 200 food-related questions that we ask ourselves everyday, according to a Cornell University survey conducted in 2007.

The key to developing a healthy pattern of eating is to take steps towards making more of those 200-plus daily decisions healthy decisions. This means paying more attention to what, when, and how much we eat. Other food-related decisions we make are where and with whom we eat.

Whether you are at home, at work, on the go, eating out, or somewhere else where food is available, one of the best ways to make sure that you get the right amounts and types of food is to follow Canada's Food Guide (CFG). Originally introduced in 1942 during wartime as a way to ration our food supply, the Food Guide has gone through six revisions. The most recent revision was released in February 2007 by Health Canada. It is based on the latest scientific evidence for the amounts of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients needed for proper growth and development, promoting and maintaining health, and reducing the risk for certain chronic diseases. Following the Food Guide also helps us reach and keep a healthy weight and overall vitality.

In addition to benefiting our physical health, eating is often a social experience that can benefit our mental health. It's about going out for a meal after work with co-workers, celebrating a special occasion with family or friends, or preparing and serving quick and easy meals for the family during the work week. Sitting around a table as a family should be a pleasurable experience. It provides an opportunity to connect with loved ones and to find out about their day.

As you read the rest of this feature, consider how to make more of your food-related decisions a part of a healthy eating pattern, for you and your family.

Benefits to eating well include:

- Achieving better overall health.
- Having lower risk for certain chronic diseases.
- Reaching and keeping a healthy body weight.
- Feeling and looking better.
- Having more energy.
- Strengthening muscles and bones.

Using Canada's Food Guide helps you:

- Eat well by varying food choices throughout the day and week.
- Plan meals and save time by reducing trips to the grocery store.
- Prepare meals faster with less stress for you and your family.

Test Your Knowledge... Then Read On:

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The latest version of Canada's Food Guide (CFG) was released in 2005. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Eating well helps reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The CFG recommends adults eat less than five servings of vegetables and fruit every day. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. At least 125 mL (1/2 cup) of unsaturated fat is recommended every day. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. One Food Guide Serving of grain products looks like a small fist. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. You can tenderize lean cuts of meat by using a marinade or cooking it in a stew. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. The CFG recommends that adults eat at least one light green and one white vegetable every day. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Adults are recommended to get 10-20 minutes of moderate physical activity each day. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

See answers on the back page

WHY?

WHY DO WE NEED TO EAT WELL?

Our health is greatly affected by what we eat. No matter where we are in the lifecycle, our bodies need more than 50 different nutrients every day to function properly. During infancy and childhood, our bodies grow and develop very quickly. In order to do this, nutrients that we get from food are used to develop and maintain our organs, muscles, bones, and the rest of our body and its functions.

As adults, making wise food choices along with having an active lifestyle, helps keep us energized so we can enjoy many years of health and vitality. Getting the nutrients and energy we need on a daily basis helps reduce the risk of developing several chronic diseases. A 2004 world-wide review concluded that eating too much fat, especially saturated and trans fats, can lead to unhealthy weight and obesity, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers. Furthermore, diets high in vegetables and fruit, and dietary fibre can help prevent these diseases and are linked to better overall health.



To help focus on your nutritional health, take the opportunity to get familiar with the recently revised Canada's Food Guide. The Food Guide is an excellent tool to help you adopt a healthy pattern of eating by identifying the amounts and types of food you need from each of the four food groups every day.

HOW?

HOW DO I USE THE FOOD GUIDE TO HELP ME EAT BETTER?

Changing eating habits takes time and effort but each small change is a step in the right direction. Canada's Food Guide can help. The Food Guide describes the amounts and types of food people need to eat for good health.

Amount of Food: The Food Guide recommends how many Food Guide Servings people should eat from each of the four food groups, based on age and sex.

Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings Per Day for Adults

If you are at a healthy weight and are active, you can choose extra servings from the four food groups.

	19 - 50 Yrs. old		51 + Yrs. old	
	F	M	F	M
Vegetables and Fruit	7-8	8-10	7	7
Grain Products	6-7	8	6	7
Milk and Alternatives	2	2	3	3
Meat and Alternatives	2	3	2	3

Types of Food: The type of food you eat is just as important as the amount. The Food Guide recommends a focus on specific foods within each food group to get the most nutritional value from the choices you make:

- 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.

Putting It Together

Now that you have an idea of the type and amount of food to focus on, the next step is to get a better idea of how to count food guide servings in a meal. Start by measuring some of the foods you eat for a day or two. Use the table (*What Is One Food Guide Serving?*) to help visualize quantities. Then, compare the amounts you eat to the recommended daily Food Guide Servings for your age and sex. In doing this, you may notice that it is easier to achieve the recommended servings for some food groups than others. This comparison will help you set small goals to improve your eating habits.

Wherever you are - at home, at work, or eating out - make each food decision or food choice count!

- Drink skim, 1%, or 2% milk (or fortified soy beverage) each day.
- Have meat alternatives more often, such as beans, lentils, and tofu.
- Eat at least two Food Guide Servings 75 g (2.5 oz) of fish each week.
- Include a small amount of unsaturated fat (e.g., canola, olive, and soybean oil) each day, 30-45 mL (2-3 Tbsp). This includes the oil used in cooking, salad dressings, mayonnaise, and margarine.
- Choose foods lower in fat, sugar, and salt.
- Satisfy your thirst with water.

WHAT?

WHAT IS ONE FOOD GUIDE SERVING?

In order to get the most out of using the Food Guide as a tool for healthy eating, you should become familiar with the size of Food Guide Servings. This table will help you estimate how much food you eat and help you visualize how much food is recommended for many foods from each food group.



One serving of...	Equals...	This looks like ...
Vegetables and Fruit	125 mL (½ c) fresh, frozen, or canned vegetable or fruit, or 100% juice	A small fist or regular light bulb.
	250 mL (1 c) leafy raw greens or salad	
Grain Products	125 mL (½ c) cooked rice, pasta, or couscous	A small fist or regular light bulb.
	30 grams cereal, cold or hot	It depends on the cereal. Check the Nutrition Facts table on the package.
Milk and Alternatives	250 mL (1 c) milk or fortified soy beverage	A small mug or small measuring cup.
	50 g (1 ½ oz) cheese	the size of two thumbs.
Meat and Alternatives	75 g (2 ½ oz) or about 125 mL (½ c) cooked fish, poultry, or lean meat	A deck of cards.
	175 mL (¾ c) cooked beans	A small fist or regular light bulb.
	30 mL (2 Tbsp) peanut butter	A golf ball.

Here is a List of suggestions to help you get started on following the Food Guide when choosing or preparing meals and snacks:



Vegetables and Fruit

- Toss chopped vegetables with a small amount of olive oil and bake in the oven.
- Keep a variety of frozen vegetables in the freezer for easy and fast preparation.
- At the cafeteria, choose a piece of fresh fruit or fruit salad rather than a piece of pie for dessert.



Grain Products

- Start your day with a bowl of whole grain cereal, such as oatmeal, or whole wheat toast.
- Choose whole wheat pasta and brown rice instead of regular pasta or white rice.
- Keep cookies, cakes, and rich desserts as treats or for special occasions.



Milk and Alternatives

- Drink 500 mL (2 c) of lower fat or skim milk, or fortified soy beverage every day.
- Use lower fat vanilla or fruit-flavoured yogurt as a dip for fruit.
- Try *small* amounts of Parmesan or old cheddar for maximum flavour.



Meat and Alternatives

- Each week, plan a couple of meals using beans or lentils. Add them to salads, soups, and casseroles.
- Wrap a fish fillet, along with vegetables, a little canola or olive oil, and herbs in aluminum foil and bake in the oven.
- Tenderize lean cuts of meat, such as round or loin cuts, by using a marinade or cook in a stew.

Eating well and leading an active lifestyle go hand in hand to maintain a healthy body weight and achieve overall health and vitality. The Food Guide recommends that adults get 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity every day.

For more information on eating well, along with recommendations for children and older adults, check out your copy of the new Canada's Food Guide included with your Spring 2007 mailing from the Working Toward Wellness at DCCI program. For additional Canada's Food Guide resources on planning meals, quick and easy meal ideas, reading food labels, eating out, and counting Food Guide Servings in a meal visit:

www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

Meal Suggestions that Follow Canada's Food Guide

Breakfast Ideas

Make a shake

Mix in a blender:

- 125 mL (1/2 cup) of 100% fruit juice
- 125 mL fresh or frozen fruit such as berries or sliced banana
- 175 grams (3/4 cup) plain or low-fat fruit-flavoured yogurt
- 15 mL (1 Tbsp) of skim milk powder

Wrap it up

Scramble two eggs with chopped green peppers in the microwave and roll them up in a whole wheat tortilla, topped with shredded cheese and salsa.

Lunch Ideas

Soup it Up

Heat up some lentil soup and have baby carrots, a whole grain bagel, and a slice of cheese.

Stuff It

Spread hummus (chick pea dip) on the inside of a whole wheat pita, and fill with vegetables such as spinach and shredded carrots.

Supper Ideas

Hot and Spicy

Cook boneless chicken strips in a skillet until meat is browned and juices run clear. Add chopped red pepper and sliced zucchini, and cook until soft. Stir in raisins and curry paste to taste and a small amount of water and heat through. Serve with brown rice.

Presto Pasta

Brown some onions and garlic in a large skillet. Add canned or bottled tomato-based pasta sauce and canned drained lentils or clams. Serve over whole wheat pasta or couscous. A tossed green salad and a glass of milk or fortified soy beverage completes the meal.

WORKING TOWARD
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MAKE IT HAPPEN ...AT YOUR WORKPLACE!

Here are some suggestions to encourage and support healthy eating.



- Make a conscious effort to include at least one dark green or orange vegetable for your at-work meal. For example, add some mixed leafy greens to your sandwich or pack some carrots and low-fat dip to have as a snack.
- Include snack options in the vending machine that are lower in fat and calories and higher in fibre. Healthier selections include higher fibre cereal bars, pretzels, popcorn, baked crunchy snacks (e.g., baked potato chips, or lower fat snack crackers), and nuts and seeds.
- Ensure that nightshift employees have access to a supply of healthier food options in the vending machines, especially if there is no cafeteria or it is closed during the night.
- Highlight some healthier vending machine selections by placing stickers directly on the display window in front of the food or beverage item. Or, designate a row of choices that are healthier options in the vending machine.
- Highlight nutritious food and beverage choices in the cafeteria by posting Canada's Food Guide information nearby.
- When offering meal promotions or healthy 'combos' in the cafeteria, pair healthier options to make a balanced meal that includes at least 3 of the 4 food groups of Canada's Food Guide. For example, serve a sandwich made with lean deli meat, romaine lettuce, and light mayonnaise on a pumpkin bun, paired with a 250 mL (1 c) serving of 1% chocolate milk.
- Try to reduce your intake of coffee and soft drinks at work. Instead, satisfy your thirst by drinking water more often.

**“Those who think they have no time for healthy eating
will sooner or later have to find time for illness”**

-modified from Edward Stanley

Answers (from page 8): 1 - F • 2 - T • 3 - F • 4 - F • 5 - T • 6 - T • 7 - F • 8 - F

Key References:

- Health Canada. (2007). *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide, A resource for educators and communicators*. Ottawa, ON: Author.
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