

Canada's  
food guide



# The New Food Guide

Health Canada  
Office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion  
2019

# Overview

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- Evidence and engagement
- What's new with Canada's Food Guide
  - For health professionals and policy makers
  - For Canadians
- Summary and next steps



# Background



# Why the Food Guide Matters to Canadians

Integrated widely by governments and stakeholders into nutrition policies, programs, and resources.

Taught in schools and promoted by health professionals when supporting Canadians to eat well.

Can help influence the foods served and sold in Canada's public institutions from day cares and schools, to long-term care facilities, as well as the foods Canadians choose for themselves and their families.



# Why Healthy Eating Information Matters



## Disease Risk

Unhealthy diet is a primary risk factor for disease burden in Canada



## Complex

Nutrition information can be difficult to use and understand



## Confusing

Conflicting healthy eating messages are everywhere



## Credible

Canadians need credible healthy eating information



# Why Revise?

To **address challenges** for users such as:

- applying recommendations in every day life, including building healthy meals and snacks
- providing the right information to the right audience

To **ensure alignment** with most current evidence on topics such as sodium, saturated fat and sugars.



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# Evidence and Engagement



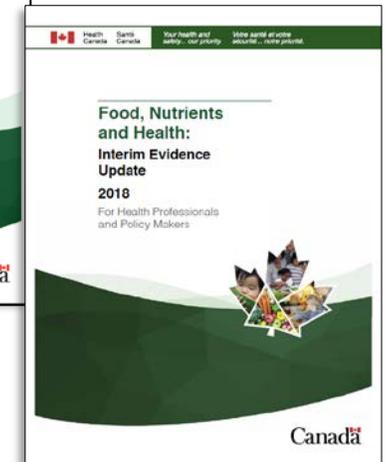
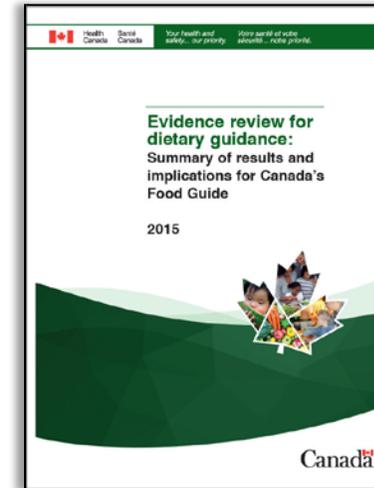
# Solid Evidence

The best available evidence was considered, including:

- only high-quality scientific reports on food and health from respected authorities including systematic reviews on over **100** food-related topics
- over **400** convincing conclusions

The *Evidence Review for Dietary Guidance 2015* and the *Food, Nutrients and Health: Interim Evidence Update 2018*, form the foundation of the new Food Guide.

Industry-commissioned reports were excluded to reduce the potential for, or the perception of, conflict of interest.





# Responsible and Meaningful Engagement

Consulted extensively to ensure resources are evidence based, useful, and relevant to Canadians.

Online public consultations with Canadians and interested stakeholders helped to identify needs and expectations.

To help communicate the guidance accurately, targeted consultations were held with:

- academics
- Indigenous experts
- provincial and territorial governments
- other federal departments
- National Indigenous Organizations
- health professional regulatory bodies/organizations and health charities



# Openness and Transparency

Submissions received during public consultations were summarized in *What We Heard* reports available at [Canada.ca](http://Canada.ca).

When Health Canada senior officials met with organizations to discuss the development of the Food Guide, details including the name of the organization and purpose of meeting, were posted on [Canada.ca](http://Canada.ca).

Health Canada's Office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion officials responsible for drafting the Food Guide did not meet with industry representatives to discuss the Food Guide.



# Relevant and Useful



## User-Centred

Public opinion research and consultations to understand how healthy eating information is used



## Health Literacy

Lens applied throughout the crafting and testing of messages



## Diversity

Tested with a range of ages, household incomes, locations, education levels, and cultural backgrounds



## Considerations

Determinants of health, the environment, and cultural diversity, including social, cultural and historical context of Indigenous Peoples



# What's New with Canada's Food Guide?



# Canada's Food Guide at a Glance

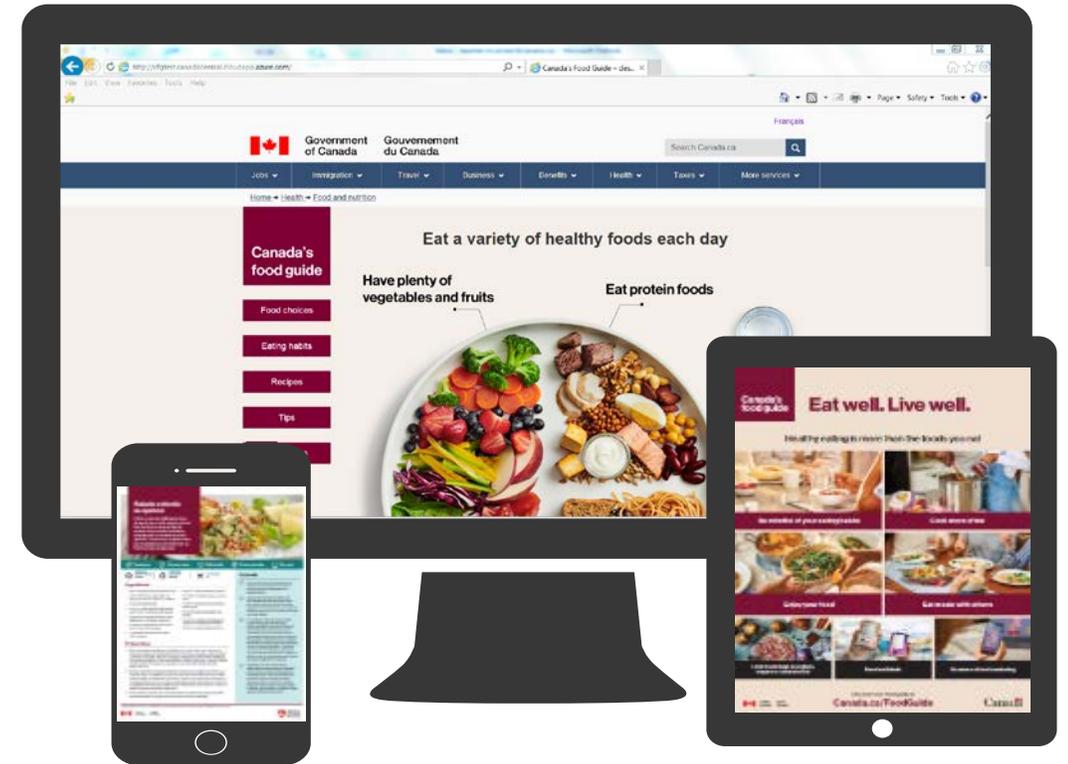
The new Food Guide is an **online suite of resources** that better meets the needs of different users including the general public, policy makers, and health professionals. Highlights include:

- Actionable advice for Canadians on healthy food choices and healthy eating habits including cooking more often and being mindful of eating habits
- Updated recommendations on saturated fat, sodium, and sugars including guidance on confectioneries and sugary drinks such as soft drinks, sweetened milk and juice
- Mobile-responsive web content to support Canadians to eat healthy whenever, and wherever they go



# Online Resources Available in English and French

- Canada's Dietary Guidelines for Health Professionals and Policy Makers
- Food Guide snapshot
- Videos, recipes and actionable advice
- Evidence including the *Evidence Review for Dietary Guidance 2015* and the *Food, Nutrients and Health: Interim Evidence Update 2018*



[Canada.ca/FoodGuide](https://Canada.ca/FoodGuide)

# Considerations for Indigenous Peoples

As part of reconciliation, the Government of Canada acknowledges that program and policy making must support self-determination, as well as recognize the distinct nature and lived experience of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

The integration of Indigenous considerations has been informed through engagement with Indigenous academics, health professionals and National Indigenous Organizations.

- Input to *Canada's Dietary Guidelines* addressed the social, cultural and historical factors that are determinants of healthy eating and that may influence the application of dietary guidance in Indigenous populations.
- Indigenous health professionals and health professionals with experience and expertise working with Indigenous populations provided input to inform the *Food Guide snapshot*.



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# Canada's Dietary Guidelines

## For Health Professionals and Policy Makers

For use when developing policies, programs, and educational resources.

Forms the foundation for the Food Guide resources.

Provides guidance on:

- Nutritious foods and beverages that are the foundation for healthy eating
- Foods and beverages that can have a negative impact on health when consumed on a regular basis
- Food skills as a practical way to support healthy eating
- Supportive environments for healthy eating



Canada's  
Dietary  
Guidelines

for Health Professionals  
and Policy Makers

[Canada.ca/FoodGuide](https://Canada.ca/FoodGuide)

# Guideline 1: Foundation for healthy eating

**Vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and protein foods should be consumed regularly. Among protein foods, consume plant-based more often.**

**Why? Patterns of eating that emphasize plant-based foods typically result in higher intakes of vegetables and fruit, nuts, soy protein, and fibre; and lower intake of processed meats and foods that contain mostly saturated fat.**

- ✓ Eating more vegetables and fruit is linked to a lower risk of cardiovascular disease.
- ✓ Eating more nuts or soy protein is linked to improved blood lipid levels.
- ✓ Higher fibre intake is linked to improved blood lipid levels and a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, colon cancer, and type 2 diabetes.
- ✓ Processed meat has been linked to colorectal cancer and foods that contain mostly saturated fat are linked to unfavourable blood lipid levels and a higher risk of type 2 diabetes.

**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.**

# Guideline 1: Foundation for healthy eating

**Foods that contain mostly unsaturated fat should replace foods that contain mostly saturated fat.**

**Why? Cardiovascular disease is one of the leading causes of death in Canada.**

- ✓ Lowering the intake of saturated fat by replacing it with unsaturated fat decreases total and LDL-cholesterol.
- ✓ Elevated LDL-cholesterol is a well-established risk factor for cardiovascular disease.



**The intention is not to reduce total fat in the diet. Rather, it is to help reduce intakes of saturated fat, while encouraging foods that contain mostly unsaturated fat.**

# Guideline 1: Foundation for healthy eating

## Water should be the beverage of choice.

**Why? Water supports health and promotes hydration without adding calories to the diet.**

- ✓ Water is essential for metabolic and digestive processes.
- ✓ Adequate intake is based on the total water required to prevent the effects of dehydration.



## Guideline 2: Foods and beverages that undermine healthy eating

**Processed or prepared foods and beverages that contribute to excess sodium, free sugars, or saturated fat undermine healthy eating and should not be consumed regularly.**

**Why? Canadians are purchasing more highly processed foods.**

- ✓ When consumed on a regular basis, they can contribute to excess sodium, sugars, or saturated fat. These nutrients are linked to chronic disease risk when consumed in excess.



## Guideline 2: Foods and beverages that undermine healthy eating

### *Considerations*

#### **There are health risks associated with alcohol consumption.**

**Why? Alcoholic beverages can contribute a lot of calories to the diet with little to no nutritive value. They also increase the risk of developing chronic disease.**

- ✓ Alcohol can be a significant source of sodium, free sugars, or saturated fat when mixed with syrups, sugary drinks, or cream-based liquors.
- ✓ Well-established health risks are associated with long-term alcohol consumption, including increased risk of many types of cancer and other serious health conditions, such as hypertension and liver disease.

#### **Foods and beverages offered in publically funded institutions should align with Canada's Dietary Guidelines.**

**Why? Offering healthier options and limiting the availability of highly processed foods and beverages, such as sugary drinks and confectioneries, creates supportive environments for healthy eating.**

## Guideline 3: Importance of food skills

**Cooking and food preparation using nutritious foods should be promoted as a practical way to support healthy eating.**

**Why? There has been a shift from cooking meals with basic ingredients towards use of highly processed products, which requires fewer or different skills.**

- ✓ The increased use of these products has decreased the transfer of food skills to children and adolescents.
- ✓ Improving food skills by cooking and preparing food at home can contribute to improved food choices and eating behaviours among Canadians of all ages. It may also make it easier for Canadians to reduce household food waste.



## Guideline 3: Importance of food skills

**Food labels should be promoted as a tool to help Canadians make informed food choices.**

**Why? Food labels can help Canadians make informed food choices in various settings, such as grocery stores.**

- ✓ Encouraging the use of food labels can be an effective strategy to promote the selection of nutritious foods and support the preparation of healthy meals and snacks.



# Implementation of Dietary Guidelines

Programs and policies that align with these Guidelines provide an opportunity to create supportive environments for healthy eating.

Creating supportive environments across settings, such as schools, workplaces, recreation centres, and health care facilities, can help increase the influence of the Guidelines.

Understanding and acting on the barriers that make it challenging for Canadians to make healthy food choices are essential for the successful implementation of the Guidelines.

# Food Guide Snapshot

## For Canadians

At-a-glance presentation of food choices and eating habits.

An interactive, mobile-responsive online resource that is also printer-friendly.

Online entry point to Canada's healthy eating recommendations (*slides 26-28*).



# Eat a Variety of Healthy Foods Each Day

**Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein foods. Choose protein foods that come from plants more often.**

- Choose foods with healthy fats instead of saturated fat.

Examples:

- Vegetables and fruit including fresh, frozen or canned options
- Whole grain foods such as whole grain pasta, brown rice and quinoa
- Protein foods such as lentils, lean meats, fish, unsweetened milk and fortified soy beverages

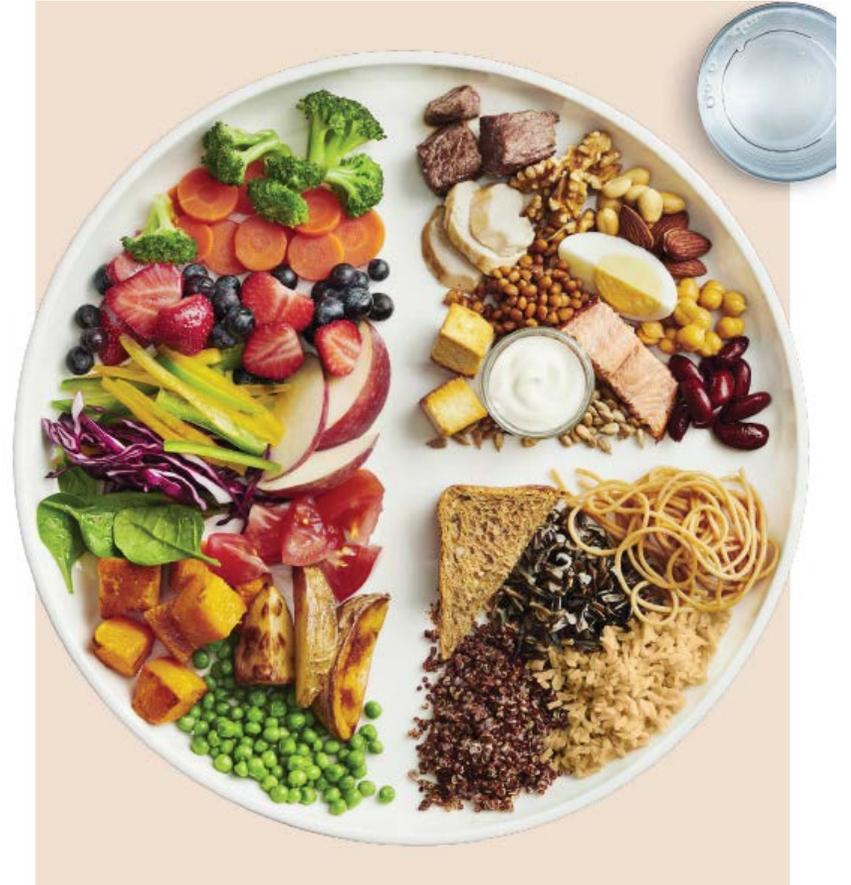


# Eat a Variety of Healthy Foods Each Day

## Make water your drink of choice.

- Replace sugary drinks with water.

Unsweetened drink options other than water can include lower fat white milk, plant-based beverages, coffee and tea



# Eat a Variety of Healthy Foods Each Day

**Limit highly processed foods. If you choose these foods, eat them less often and in small amounts.**

- Prepare meals and snacks using ingredients that have little to no added sodium, sugars or saturated fat.

**Use food labels.**

**Be aware that food marketing can influence your choices.**



# Healthy Eating is More Than the Foods You Eat

<p><b>Be Mindful of Your Eating Habits.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take time to eat. Notice when you are hungry and when you are full.</li></ul>	<p><b>Cook More Often.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Involve others in planning and preparing meals.</li></ul>
<p><b>Enjoy Your Food.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Culture and food traditions can be part of healthy eating.</li></ul>	<p><b>Eat Meals with Others.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share food traditions, across generations and cultures.</li></ul>



# Summary and Next Steps



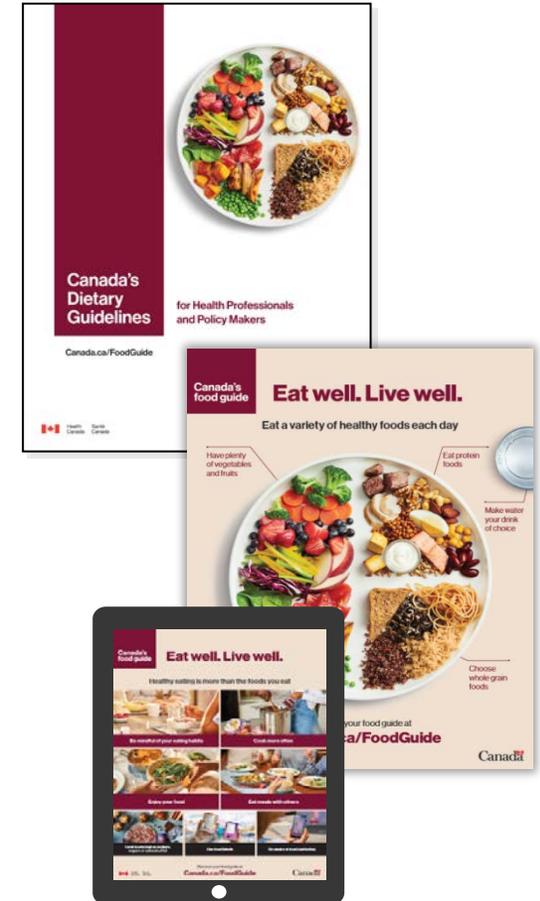
# Summary

## Canada's Food Guide is....

...an online **suite of resources** that better meets the needs of the general public, policy makers, and health professionals.

...based on a solid foundation of **evidence** and recommendations are aligned with many jurisdictions and trusted health authorities.

...shifting to provide more **actionable advice** for Canadians on healthy food choices and healthy eating habits.





# What's Still to Come

## Canada's Healthy Eating Pattern for Health Professionals and Policy Makers

- Will be released later in 2019
- For use by health professionals and policy makers
- Will build on *Canada's Dietary Guidelines* and will include a healthy eating pattern that will provide more specific guidance on amounts and types of food

### Online resources

- Will be enhanced on an ongoing basis



# What's Still to Come

## Considerations for Indigenous Peoples

Health Canada and Indigenous Services Canada are working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to support the development of distinction-based healthy eating tools as part of the revision process.



# Share the New Food Guide

If you wish to share messages about the Food Guide, you can access:

- Web banners and buttons
- Promotional poster
- Printer-friendly version of the Food Guide snapshot

Content can be found at [Canada.ca/FoodGuide](https://Canada.ca/FoodGuide) or on social media

**#CanadasFoodGuide**

