

Canada's Food Guide - FAQ

Canada has a new food guide!

Canada's Food Guide is now an **online suite of resources** that support Canadians in making healthy food choices available at Canada.ca/FoodGuide.

The messages in the new Canada's Food Guide align in general with existing Alberta Health Services healthy eating information. Later in 2019, Health Canada will be releasing Phase II: *Canada's Healthy Eating Pattern for Health Professionals and Policy Makers*, which will provide more guidance on amounts and types of foods, as well as life stage guidance.

The Healthy eating recommendations of the new food guide are available at <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-recommendations>.



Q. What has changed with the new food guide?

- A. Overall healthy eating messages haven't changed; however the way messages are presented has changed. The new Canada's Food Guide:
- no longer has food groups
 - presents healthy food choices: vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein foods
 - focuses on proportions of nutritious foods using the [Eat Well Plate](#) rather than number of servings
 - combines the former Milk and Alternatives and Meat and Alternatives as Protein foods
 - encourages choosing plant-based proteins more often
 - encourages replacing saturated fat with foods that contain mostly unsaturated fat, rather than placing a limit on total fats
 - places more emphasis on how you eat, not just what you eat

Q. With no food groups or serving sizes, how do I know which foods to eat and how much to eat in a day?

- A. The new food guide promotes proportions of healthy foods instead of specific amounts, with vegetables and fruits making up the largest proportion of the foods you eat.

Use the [Eat Well Plate](#) as a guide to help you plan healthy meals: half your plate as vegetables or fruit, a quarter with whole grains and another quarter with protein foods. The proportions of foods for your snacks throughout the day should generally follow the proportions of the Eat Well Plate as well.

[Canada's Food Guide](#) can help you choose which foods to include at meals and snacks. Use your hunger and fullness cues to help you decide how much of these foods to eat.

Q. Why include plant-based proteins more often?

A. Plant-based protein foods like beans, lentils, chickpeas, nuts, nut butter, seeds, and tofu can provide more fibre and less saturated fat than animal-based protein foods. Eating more fibre and less saturated fat can have a positive effect on health, including a lowered risk of cancer, heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Here are some easy ways to include more plant-based protein foods:

- trail mix made with nuts and seeds
- hummus with fresh vegetables
- beans in a burrito
- tofu in a vegetable stir-fry
- lentils in soup, stew or casserole

Q. Should I stop eating animal-based proteins?

A. You can eat a variety of protein foods as part of a healthy eating pattern. Animal-based protein foods such as eggs, lean meats and poultry, fish, shellfish, lower fat milk and lower fat dairy products are healthy choices and provide many essential nutrients. Patterns of eating that include animal-based foods should also include plenty of plant-based foods (vegetables and fruits, whole grains and plant-based proteins). Limit highly processed meats like sausages, hot dogs, and deli meats which have been linked to increased risk of colorectal cancer.

Q. What about milk? I don't see it on the new food guide?

A. Milk has not been removed from the new food guide. It is included as a protein food and drinking milk continues to be a practical way to help meet protein, calcium and vitamin D needs.

The new food guide does not include specific advice to drink 2 cups (500 mL) of milk or fortified soy beverage each day. However, we are still awaiting *Canada's Healthy Eating Pattern* which may provide more specific guidance. In the meantime, lower fat milk and fortified soy beverages continue to be healthy drinks that contain protein, calcium and vitamin D.

If you are not drinking milk, it is important to ensure you are meeting your needs for nutrients like [calcium](#) and [vitamin D](#) with other foods and drinks. If you have questions or concerns, call [Health Link](#).

Q. I'm confused about fat. Should I be reducing the amount of fat I eat?

A. Recent evidence has indicated that the type of fat you eat over time is more important for health than the total amount of fat you eat. Instead of reducing overall fat content in the diet, the new food guide recommends choosing foods that contain mostly *healthy fat* instead of foods that contain mostly *saturated fat*. This can help lower your risk of heart disease.

- Foods that contain *healthy fats* include nuts, seeds, avocado, fatty fish, vegetable oils and soft margarine
- Foods that contain *saturated fat* include fatty meats, high fat dairy products and some highly processed foods

Q. What about juice?

A. On the new food guide, 100% juice is not included with vegetables and fruits. Sweetened and unsweetened juice are identified as a sugary drinks, not to be consumed regularly. Instead of drinking juice, eat whole [vegetables and fruits](#).

Q. The new food guide emphasizes that healthy eating is more than the foods you eat. What does this mean?

- A. The new food guide emphasizes that healthy eating is also about *where*, *when*, *why* and *how* you eat. It encourages us to:
- *Be mindful of your eating habits*: take time to eat and notice when you are hungry or full
 - *Cook more often*: plan and prepare meals at home more often
 - *Enjoy your food*: culture and food traditions can be a part of part healthy eating
 - *Eat meals with others*: connect and enjoy quality time around food

Resources

The [food guide website](#) has many pages including Food choices, Eating habits, Recipes, Tips, and Resources. Browse the sections for their short videos.

Some resources that can be printed include:

- [Food Guide Snapshot](#)
- [Healthy Eating Recommendations](#)
- [Educational Poster](#)

Any more questions?

We are here to help. Contact your local dietitian or email PublicHealth.Nutrition@albertahealthservices.ca