



Beans: A Great Meat Alternative!

Beans come from a family called legumes, which also includes lentils, chickpeas, soybeans and peanuts. They are “meat alternatives”, and can be eaten in place of meat. They are low in fat, great sources of fibre and have protein, iron and B vitamins. Legumes are a low cost option to meat and taste great in salads, casseroles, soups, and dips.

Try out different kinds of beans, such as navy, white, kidney or black.

If you have the time, soak and cook dried beans. If not, you can use canned beans for an easy, quick option. Choose “low sodium” or “no salt added” canned beans, or rinse and drain regular canned beans before eating. This will get rid of some of the unwanted salt.

Try adding beans to your family’s favorite dishes or make one meatless meal per week (for example, “Meatless Mondays”).



Try slowly adding beans into your family’s diet reduce some less pleasant feelings like gas and bloating. Make sure that you and your family drink more water or fluid while starting to eat more beans to avoid constipation.

Meat and meat alternatives are an important part of a healthy diet. Other meat alternatives include eggs, nuts, nut butters, and seeds. Use [Canada’s Food Guide](#) to see how much Meat and Alternatives your child needs daily.

Tips for eating more legumes:

- Add cooked and drained lentils or black beans to quesadillas
- Swap ground beef with red kidney beans in chili
- Sprinkle cooked chickpeas onto salad
- Puree cooked black beans or chickpeas and add herbs and spices for an easy dip

For more information on Healthy Eating, visit:
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/2914.asp>