

Section 2

How to Plan a Menu

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Why is menu planning important?

2.1 Overview:

A menu is a plan of all meals and snacks including portion sizes that will be served over a specific period of time.

All supportive living sites must follow the [Continuing Care Accommodation and Health Service Standards](#).¹ as outlined by the Government of Alberta. Standards 13 and 14 from the Accommodation Standards – Supportive Living Accommodation contain the nutrition and menu requirements. More detailed information on these standards can be found in the [Accommodation Standards - Supportive Living Accommodation](#).²

The standards indicate that supportive living sites must:

- Provide a minimum 21-day menu cycle.
- Communicate the complete menu and/or menu substitutions to residents in an appropriate manner.

The Standards require all sites with 11 or more residents to have their menu reviewed and approved by a Registered Dietitian (or by a Food and Nutrition Manager registered with the Canadian Society of Nutrition Management).² This applies to all new menus (including seasonal menus). To find a registered dietitian in your area, visit the Dietitians of Canada [Find a Dietitian](#)³ website.

Having a planned, written menu helps to:

- Meet recommendations from [Canada's food guide](#).⁴
- Increase healthy food choices to help promote a healthy eating environment.
- Offer a variety of foods that look good, taste good, and are safe and appealing to eat.
- Save money and time.
- Reduce food waste.
- Meet the needs of residents with special diets (such as Pureed or High Protein, High Calorie diets).

How do I know that the menu is healthy and meets the Supportive Living Accommodation Standards?¹

2.2 Menu Planning Guidelines

Follow these guidelines to help create a healthy menu that meets the [Continuing Care Accommodation and Health Service Standards](#).¹

1. Make sure the menu provides a variety of foods following the [Canada's food guide](#).⁴ Offer meals, snacks, and drinks to meet the nutrition and fluid needs of all residents.
2. Ensure each snack provides a variety of healthy food choices following the [Canada's food guide](#).⁴
3. Plan at least a 21-day cycle menu that includes three meals and 2–3 snacks per day, listing all food and drinks served. A cycle menu means that all meals and snacks are planned for a certain number of days, and then the menu is repeated.
4. List the standard portion size used for each menu item. This helps with planning, purchasing, preparation, and serving. Refer to the [Standardized Portions Sizes](#) Section 2.7. Residents may ask for smaller or larger portions.
5. Improve meal acceptance and enjoyment by providing foods with a variety of:
 - a. colour (for example, orange, green, yellow)
 - b. texture (for example, soft, crisp)
 - c. flavour (for example, sweet, sour, mild)
 - d. shape (for example, round, sticks, diced)
 - e. temperature (for example, cold salad, hot beef sandwich)
6. Offer foods that complement each other. For example, scalloped potatoes with ham, or whole wheat rolls with beef stew.
7. Provide at least 6 cups (1500 mL) of fluid per day. Offer at least 1 cup (250 mL) of fluid at each meal and snack. Fluids may be hot or cold. Water should be available at all meals and snacks.
8. Modify the regular menu to help residents with special diet needs, such as diets for disease management, food allergies, intolerances, or difficulty chewing, and/or swallowing. Learn more about menu [Substitutions and Special Diets](#) in Section 4.

9. Consider cultural, religious, and personal preferences of residents when planning a menu. See the [Cultural, Religious, and Personal Considerations](#) information in Section 3 to learn more.
10. For special occasions and celebrations, offer foods such as birthday cake that are not part of the regular menu.
11. Consider having “À la Carte” or “Always on the Menu” options for residents who may not eat the first or second choice menu items served. This helps residents to meet their daily nutrition requirements. “Always on the Menu” items are usually simple to prepare, easy to chew, and are widely accepted foods that can easily be adapted to suit the needs of the residents. Examples include a fresh fruit and cottage cheese plate, assorted sandwiches, or a bowl of soup. Other [Sample Always on the Menu](#) items can be found in Appendix 2D.
12. Revise and/or update menus at least twice per year to improve variety. Include seasonal and local foods when possible. A facility may use both a fall/winter and spring/summer menu or provide seasonal menu substitutions.
13. Collect feedback from residents and their families regarding menu changes. Residents may hold resident council meetings where they are able to bring forward concerns/provide feedback about the menu. Use feedback to improve the content and timing of meals and snacks as needed. Refer to the [Resident and Family Councils Act](#)⁵ for more information.
14. Post the menu in a common area, such as the dining room or kitchen for viewing by residents, family members, visitors, and staff.
15. Keep a record of all meals served, any changes to the menu and the reasons for the changes. Records must be kept on file for at least three months. Menu changes can be tracked using the [Menu Substitution Form](#) in Appendix 2E, or by changing and initialing the posted menu.

How can I plan a healthy menu and create a healthy eating environment for my residents?

2.3 How to Choose and Prepare Healthy Foods

Using the food label

Food labels provide useful information for selecting menu items.

Health Canada's [Nutrition Labelling](#)⁶ regulations specify the information food labels must contain. Food labels are required on almost all pre-packaged foods. The supplier can provide the label information if food is ordered in bulk. Label information can be used to compare products and choose healthy foods.

Nutrition information is found in three places on a food label:

1. [Ingredient List](#)⁷
2. [Nutrition Claims](#)⁸
3. [Nutrition Facts table](#)⁹

See the [Nutrition Education Materials](#) list in Appendix 2C for more information on label reading.

Preparing healthy foods

Food preparation methods can affect the nutrition content of menu items. Use recipes that contain less fat, sugar, and salt. See the [Nutrition Education Materials](#) list in Appendix 2C for more information. Below are some other healthy preparation tips:

1. Use a variety of healthy cooking methods that use little or no added fat. For example, bake, roast, steam, barbeque, broil, boil, microwave, stew, or sauté. Pan-fry or deep-fry least often.
2. Cook with and use healthy fats such as oils and soft margarines (instead of hard margarine, lard, and shortening that contain unhealthy saturated fats).
3. Offer plant-based protein foods and cooked lean meats most often. Processed meat (bacon, ham, and deli meats) are high in salt (sodium) and can be high in fat. These meats should be offered less often than fresh meats.

4. Whenever possible, cook with and offer lower sodium foods. Foods high in sodium include soups, dried soup bases, condiments, sauces, and salad dressings. Use only small portions of high sodium items like soy, hoisin, Worcestershire sauces when offered.
5. Flavour food with garlic, onion, herbs, spices, and lemon juice instead of salt. For more ideas, see Appendix 2F on [Low Sodium Substitutions](#).

For more information about planning a menu, see Appendix 2J ([How to Plan a Menu](#))

2.4 Planning a Menu

Menu substitutions can be made throughout the year to allow for variety and seasonal variation. Keep a record to show that the menu has been altered throughout the different seasons. A new menu for spring/summer could include colder and lighter foods and seasonal items such as fresh fruit. A fall/winter menu could include warmer and comfort foods, such as hearty soups and stews. Develop one new menu. Then use it as a starting point to develop the second menu.

1. Gather menu planning resources:

- [Cycle Menu Template](#) (Appendix 2G).
- [Menu Item Suggestions](#) (Appendix 2H).
- [Food Allergies, Intolerances, and Restrictions Record](#) (Appendix 1A).
- [Standardized Portion Sizes](#) (see Section 2.7).
- [Healthy Standardized Recipes](#) (Section 2.6).

2. Plan the food and drinks to be offered daily.

a) Decide how many choices will be offered for each meal

Residents must be offered an alternate choice from within at least one food group at each meal.² For example, a choice of cereal (hot and cold), an entrée (beef or chicken), or soup (cream or broth). Ensure that the menu template allows space for extra choices as needed.

For those residents with poor intake, offer food choices higher in protein and calories. Refer to the [High Protein High Calorie](#) Section 4.4 or [Malnutrition](#) in Section 8.

Provide water at all meals and snacks. Make water the drink of choice.⁴

- Offer both hot and cold drinks, such as milk, 100% juice, coffee or tea. Provide decaffeinated options, such as decaffeinated coffee, tea, or herbal tea.
- Serve milk or fortified soy beverage at least twice a day.
- Limit 100% juice, such as apple, orange, or cranberry juice blend to 125 mL (1/2 cup) per day. If vegetable juice is offered, a sodium-reduced juice is preferred.

How do I use these guidelines to build a menu each day?

2.5 Example of a Completed Regular Menu Plan

Meal	Menu Item	Portion Size
Breakfast	Coffee/tea and water	1 cup/ 250 mL
	100% apple juice	½ cup/ 125 mL
	Banana	1 medium
	Bran cereal with raisins	¾ cup/ 175 mL
	Whole grain toast	2 slices (1 oz/ 35 g each)
	Milk/fortified soy beverage	1 cup/ 250 mL
	Peanut butter	1 tbsp/ 15 mL
Lunch	Water and coffee/tea	1 cup/ 250 mL
	Beef barley soup	1 cup/ 250 mL
	Crackers, saltines	1 package (2 crackers)
	Turkey sandwich wrap on whole grain whole wheat pita bread, with romaine lettuce and tomato slices	1 wrap (2 ½ oz/ 75 g lean turkey breast) 6 inch/15 cm (2 oz/ 70 g) whole grain pita bread 1 piece of romaine and 2 slices of tomato
	Carrot sticks	5–6 pieces (3 inches/ 7 ½ cm long)
	Tossed salad	½ cup/ 125 mL
	Milk/fortified soy beverage	1 cup/ 250 mL
	Grapes	½ cup/ 125 mL
	After-noon Snack	Water and coffee/tea
Orange		1 medium
Oatmeal cookie		2 small cookies (1-1 ½ oz/ 30-38 g total)
Supper	Water and coffee/tea	1 cup/ 250 mL
	Meatloaf	1 slice (2 x 4 x ½ inches/ 5 x 10 x 1.5 cm)
	Baked potato	1 medium
	Green beans	½ cup/ 125 mL
	Whole grain tray bun	1 small bun (1 oz/ 35 g each)
	Milk/fortified soy beverage	1 cup/ 250 mL
	Baked apple with cinnamon	1 medium
	Vanilla pudding	½ cup/ 125 mL
Evening Snack	Water and coffee/tea	1 cup/ 250 mL
	Salmon salad sandwich on whole wheat bread	½ sandwich (1 ½ oz/ 30-45 g salmon)
		1 slice bread (1 oz/ 35 g)

2.6 Healthy Standardized Recipes

Using standardized recipes helps to make sure the quality and quantity of food is consistent each time the recipe is prepared. This can also help to control costs, reduce waste, and make planning and purchasing more efficient.

How to standardize a recipe

1. Choose a recipe. Look for recipes that:
 - Use healthy cooking methods like grilling, baking, broiling, poaching, and steaming.
 - Contain lots of vegetables and fruits.
 - Are made with whole grains such as whole grain flour, brown rice, wild rice, barley, couscous, or whole wheat pasta.
 - Use lower fat cheese (20% Milk Fat (M.F.) or less) and yogurt (2% M.F. or less).
 - Have lean meats or meat alternatives such as lentils, beans, and chickpeas.
 - Include small amounts of healthy fats such as soft margarine or vegetable oil instead of lard, hard margarine, butter, or cream.
 - Are seasoned with herbs and spices instead of salt.
 - Have lower amounts of added sugars.
2. Check the recipe to make sure it is not missing any ingredients or instructions.
3. Convert the recipe to larger servings if necessary. Adjust weight and volume measures if needed. Refer to Conversions and Equivalents in the [Standardized Portion Sizes](#) Section 2.7 for information.
4. Prepare the recipe. Taste test with residents and staff, by selecting a group of people to provide feedback. Evaluate the recipe for quality, yield, portion size, flavour, colour, and texture.
5. Adjust the recipe as needed based on feedback. Prepare the recipe again until there is an acceptable product.
6. Use a standardized recipe template to record details related to the recipe including:
 - Recipe title: Pick a name that describes the recipe.

- Recipe category: Label the recipe as an entrée, grain, salad, dessert, etc.
- Ingredients: List the ingredients used in a recipe in the order used in the directions. Include any preparation techniques (for example: Carrots, peeled and diced).
- Weight and/or volume of each ingredient: List each ingredient in both imperial and metric measurements. For example:

Imperial	Ingredient	Metric
1 cup	Bananas, mashed	250 mL

- Directions: List the steps for preparing the recipe. Use clear, concise language. Include cooking temperature and time and food safety tips as necessary (for example: proper thawing or internal cooking temperature).
- Portion size: List the amount to be served in a single portion. See the [Standardized Portion Sizes](#) in Section 2.7 for more information.
- Recipe yield: List the total amount of product after the recipe is made. This includes the weight or volume of food prepared and/or size and total number of servings.
- List all equipment and utensils to be used during preparation.
- Include the utensils needed for serving. For example, include the scoop number or size needed to serve each portion.

Resources:

Recipes: [AHS Inspiring Recipes](#)

2.7 Standardized Portion Sizes

Using standardized portion sizes helps with planning, purchasing, and preparation of foods, as well as providing a healthy diet for residents.

Operators are responsible for ensuring that the residents' nutrition and hydration needs are met. Use the information which follows in menu planning to ensure these requirements are met.

For more information on healthy food choices, see [Planning a Menu](#) in Section 2.4.

Food portions and serving sizes

A portion is the amount of food a person plans to eat at one time. There are many factors that can affect food portion sizes. These factors can include the person's age, gender, activity level, appetite, and where the food was obtained and eaten. To meet the needs of residents, serve portions that do not overwhelm the smaller eater, or leave the larger eater feeling that they need more. Assessing individual resident needs will help ensure that the right amounts and types of foods are made and served. This also helps to meet the residents' nutrition needs, prevents food wastage, and helps control food cost.

Standardized portions for food items

Listed below are suggested portion sizes. To provide more choice for residents, it is helpful to have the option of regular, small, or large portions.

Food Item	Standard Food Portion Sizes
Vegetables	
Mashed potato (regular or sweet potato)	½ cup/ 125 mL #8 scoop
Baked potato (regular or sweet potato)	1 medium or ½ large
Scalloped potatoes	½ cup/ 125 mL #8 scoop
Potato wedges	3 oz/ 90 g 3–4 each
Cooked vegetable	½ cup/ 125 mL 4 oz portion server
Leafy salads: tossed, romaine, spinach, Caesar	1 cup/ 250 mL
Raw vegetable salads (carrot raisin salad; broccoli salad; corn salad)	½ cup/ 125 mL 4 oz portion server
Tomato slices	2
Vegetable sticks	5–6 pieces (3 inches/ 7 ½ cm long)
Juice, 100%; no salt added or reduced in sodium	½ cup/ 125 mL

Fruits	
Prunes, cooked	¼ cup/ 60 mL 2 oz portion server
Fresh fruit	1 whole, medium
Fruit cocktail, strawberries, pears, peaches, mandarin oranges, pineapple, melon (diced), apricots, stewed fruit	½ cup/ 125 mL 4 oz portion server
Fruit sauce	½ cup/ 125 mL 4 oz portion server
Juice, 100% / from concentrate	½ cup/ 125 mL
Grain Foods	
Stuffing, bread	¼ cup/ 60 mL #16 scoop
Rice (steamed, pilaf)	½ cup/ 125 mL #8 scoop
Pasta / Noodles	½ cup/ 125 mL 4 oz portion server
Bread, slice	2 slices (1 oz/ 35 g each) (breakfast or lunch) 1 slice (1 oz/ 35 g) (supper)
Bun / Roll	1 bun (1 oz/ 35 g)
Pita bread	½ pita (1 oz/ 35 g)
Soda crackers	1 package (2 crackers)
French toast, waffles, pancakes	2 (4 inches/ 10 cm)
English muffin	½ muffin (1 oz/ 35 g)

Grain Foods (continued)	
Hot cereal	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup/ 175 mL 6 oz portion server
Cold cereal	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup/ 175 mL 6 oz portion server
Potatoes	See above under “Vegetables” section

Protein Foods: Milk and Alternatives	
Milk whole, 2%, 1%, or skim, chocolate, lactose free	1 cup/ 250 mL
Fortified soy beverage	1 cup/ 250 mL
Evaporated milk, canned (undiluted)	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup/ 125 mL
Powdered milk	1 oz/ 25 g $\frac{1}{3}$ cup/ 75 mL (to make 1 cup/ 250 mL)
Buttermilk	1 cup/ 250 mL
Goat milk, fortified	1 cup/ 250 mL
Block cheese (cheddar, Mozzarella, Swiss)	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/ 50 g
Cheese slice	1-2 slices 1 oz/ 30 g
Cottage cheese or quark cheese	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup/ 125 mL #8 scoop
Yogurt (plain and flavoured)	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup/ 125 mL #8 scoop
Yogurt drink	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup/ 175 mL

Protein Foods: Milk and Alternatives (continued)	
Kefir	6 oz/ 175 g ¾ cup/ 175 mL
Paneer	1 ½oz/ 50 g
Pudding/custard (made with milk)	½ cup/ 125 mL #8 scoop
Frozen yogurt, low fat	½ cup/ 125 mL #8 scoop
Protein Foods: Meat and Alternatives	
Bacon	3 Slices
Breakfast ham	1 oz/ 30 g
Breakfast sausage	2 links (½ oz/ 15 g each)
Egg (boiled or poached)	1 large
Egg (scrambled)	¼ cup/ 60 mL #16 scoop
Omelet, made with 2 eggs	1
Peanut butter	1 package/ 1 Tbsp/ 15 mL
Legumes (beans, lentils, dried peas)	½ cup/ 125 mL 4 oz portion server
Hummus	¼ cup/ 60 mL (as snack) 2 oz portion server
Tofu	½ cup/ 125 mL 4 oz portion server
Roast meats (beef, pork, turkey)	2–3 oz/ 60–90 g

Protein Foods: Meat and Alternatives (continued)	
Salisbury steak	1 patty 2–3 oz/ 60–90 g
Meatloaf	1 slice (about 2 x 4 x ½ inch/ 5 x 10 x 1 ½ cm slice)
Meat sauce	¼ cup/ 60 mL 2 oz portion server
Meatballs	5 meatballs (½ oz/ 15 g each)
Baked ham	2–3 oz / 60–90 g
Sausage	1 sausage (2–3 oz/ 60–90 g)
Pork chop	1 chop 2–3 oz/ 60–90 g
Chicken breast	1 breast 2–3 oz/ 60–90 g
Chicken drumstick	2 drumsticks 2–3 oz/ 60–90 g
Chicken leg and thigh	1 leg and thigh 2–3 oz/ 60–90 g
Chicken strips	2 strips 2–3 oz/ 60–90 g
Fish (salmon, cod, tilapia, etc.)	1 piece 2–3 oz/ 60–90 g

Mixed Dishes	
Fruit and yogurt smoothie	1 cup/ 250 mL
Soup (cream or broth)	1 cup/ 250 mL 8 oz portion server
Stew / Chili	1 cup/ 250 mL 8 oz portion server
Casserole	1 cup/ 250 mL 8 oz portion server
Chicken cacciatore	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup/ 175 mL 6 oz portion server
Lasagna (meat or vegetarian)	1 cup/ 250 mL 8 oz portion server
Sandwich	1 whole $\frac{1}{2}$ whole (as snack)
Hamburger	1 whole bun (1 oz/ 35 g) + 1 patty (2–3 oz/ 60–90 g)
Pizza	1 piece (4 inch/ 10 cm slice)
Shepherd's pie	1 cup/ 250 mL 8 oz portion server
Quiche	1 piece (4 inch/ 10 cm slice) 3 oz/ 90 g
Perogies	3 (3 oz/ 90 g)

Desserts	
Muffin	1 small (2 ½ oz/ 70 g)
Loaf (e.g., banana loaf)	½ slice (1 inch/ 2 ½ cm thick)
Frozen yogurt	½ cup/ 125 mL #8 scoop
Milk pudding	½ cup/ 125 mL #8 scoop
Custard (made with milk)	½ cup/ 125 mL #8 scoop
Mousse	½ cup/ 125 mL #8 scoop
Fruit crumble/crisp/cobbler	½ cup/ 125 mL 4 oz portion server
Cereal bar	1 bar (1–1 ½ oz/ 30–38 g)
Square	1 square 2 x 2 x 1 inch/ 5 x 5 x 2 ½ cm
Cookie	2 small cookies (2 ½ inches/ 6 cm diameter each) 1-1 ½ oz/ 30–38 g

2.8 Conversions and Equivalents

Volume Equivalents for Liquids	60 drops	= 1 tsp	
	1 Tbsp (15 mL)	= 3 tsp	= 0.5 fl oz
	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup (30 mL)	= 2 Tbsp	= 1 fl oz
	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 mL)	= 4 Tbsp	= 2 fl oz
	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup (80 mL)	= 5 Tbsp + 1 tsp	= 2.65 fl oz
	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup (90 mL)	= 6 Tbsp	= 3 fl oz
	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 mL)	= 8 Tbsp	= 4 fl oz
	$\frac{5}{8}$ cup (150 mL)	= 10 Tbsp	= 5 fl oz
	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup (160 mL)	= 10 Tbsp + 2 tsp	= 5.3 fl oz
	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL)	= 12 Tbsp	= 6 fl oz
	$\frac{7}{8}$ cup (210 mL)	= 14 Tbsp	= 7 fl oz
	1 cup (250 mL)	= 16 Tbsp	= 8 fl oz
	$\frac{1}{2}$ pint (250 mL)	= 1 cup	= 8 fl oz
	1 pint (480 mL)	= 2 cups	= 16 fl oz
	1 quart (960 mL)	= 2 pt	= 32 fl oz
1 gallon (1920 mL)	= 4 qt	= 128 fl oz	

Equivalent Weights	32 oz	= 2 lb	= 907 g
	16 oz	= 1 lb	= 454 g
	12 oz	= $\frac{3}{4}$ lb / 0.75 lb	= 340 g
	8 oz	= $\frac{1}{2}$ lb / 0.50 lb	= 227 g
	4 oz	= $\frac{1}{4}$ lb / 0.25 lb	= 113 g
	1 oz	= $\frac{1}{16}$ lb / 0.063 lb	= 28 g
	2.2 lb	= 1000 g	= 1.0 kg

Conversions and Equivalents (continued)

Scoop Sizes / Volume Measure	No. 6	= 6 oz	= $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (160 mL)
	No. 8	= 4–5 oz	= $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 mL)
	No. 10	= 3–4 oz	= $\frac{3}{8}$ cup (90 mL)
	No. 12	= 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ –3 oz	= $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (80 mL)
	No. 16	= 2–2 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz	= $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 mL)
	No. 20	= 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz	= 3 $\frac{1}{3}$ Tbsp (50 mL)
	No. 24	= 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ oz	= 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ Tbsp (40 mL)
	No. 30	= 1–1 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz	= 2 Tbsp (30 mL)
	No. 40	= $\frac{3}{4}$ oz	= 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ Tbsp (25 mL)
	No. 60	= $\frac{9}{16}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ oz	= 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp (16 mL)

Ladles / Portion Servers	1 oz	= $\frac{1}{8}$ cup	= 30 mL
	2 oz	= $\frac{1}{4}$ cup	= 60 mL
	3 oz	= $\frac{3}{8}$ cup	= 90 mL
	4 oz	= $\frac{1}{2}$ cup	= 125 mL
	6 oz	= $\frac{3}{4}$ cup	= 175 mL
	8 oz	= 1 cup	= 250 mL

*Use ladles for serving soups, stews, creamed dishes, sauces, gravies, and other liquid products.

Use portion servers (solid or perforated) for portioning solids and semi-solids such as fruits and vegetables and condiments.

Conversions and Equivalents (continued)

Steam Table Pan Capacity	Pan Size	Portion Size	Number of Portions
	12 x 20 x 2 ½ inches/ 30 x 50 x 6 cm (capacity = 2 gal/ 7 ½ L)	½ cup/ 125 mL (4 oz ladle or No. 8 scoop)	64
		¾ cup/ 90 mL (3 oz ladle or No. 10 scoop)	80
		⅓ cup/ 80 mL (No. 12 scoop)	96
		¼ cup/ 60 mL (2 oz ladle or No. 16 scoop)	128
	12 x 20 x 4 inches/ 30 x 50 x 10 cm (capacity = 3 ½ gal/ 13 L)	½ cup/ 125 mL (4 oz ladle or No. 8 scoop)	112
		¾ cup/ 90 mL (3 oz ladle or No. 10 scoop)	135
		⅓ cup/ 80 mL (No. 12 scoop)	168
		¼ cup/ 60 mL (2 oz ladle or No. 16 scoop)	224
	12 x 20 x 6 inches/ 30 x 20 x 15 cm (capacity = 5 gal/ 19 L)	½ cup/ 125 mL (4 oz ladle or No. 8 scoop)	160
		¾ cup/ 90 mL (3 oz ladle or No. 10 scoop)	200
		⅓ cup/ 80 mL (No. 12 scoop)	250
		¼ cup/ 60 mL (2 oz ladle or No. 16 scoop)	320

2.9 Cutting Diagrams for Portioning

See below for examples of cutting diagrams for portioning. For packaged items, follow manufacturer's instructions for cutting to achieve an appropriate portion size for serving.

For 25 servings make 4 cuts across and 4 cuts down.

For 50 servings make 4 cuts across and 9 cuts down (make the longest cuts first).

This toolkit provides general guidelines and suggestions for planning a healthy and enjoyable menu. It is not in the scope of the toolkit to provide specific detailed menus. It is important for each individual site to consider the cultural, religious, and personal preferences of its residents when creating a menu.

2.10 Planning Healthy Meals for Smaller Sites

This section is for smaller sites (with fewer than 11 residents), that provide meals on a smaller scale than larger sites. The information will help you plan and prepare healthy meals for residents in a smaller, home-like environment.

It is important to ensure the correct portion sizes are available at each meal and snack. How much a resident eats is as important as what they eat. Below are some tips on ideal portion sizes for meals and snacks.

Meals

If possible, food should be measured to provide standardized portion sizes. Below is a list of suggested equipment to manage standardized portion sizes.

- Dry measuring cups or numbered scoops (#6, #8, #16 etc.)
- Liquid measuring cup
- Measuring spoons
- Food scale



Common household objects can also be used as visual guides to portion sizes.

If standardized portion equipment is unavailable, here are some tips to help manage portion sizes:

- Use medium sized 23 cm/ 9 in plates (about the size of a Frisbee®) to help provide a healthy serving. If a large plate must be used, fill only the middle of the plate. Do not fill a larger plate right to the edge with food.

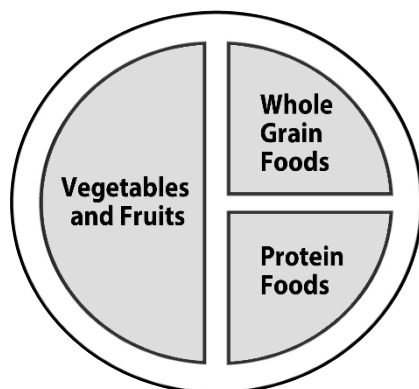
All sites must ensure all meals, snacks, and fluids provided meet the current nutrition recommendations set forth by [Canada's food guide](#).⁴

Canada's food guide defines and promotes healthy eating for Canadians of all ages. It recommends eating a variety of healthy foods each day:

- [Vegetables and fruits](#)
- [Grain foods](#)
- [Protein foods](#)
- [Making water your drink of choice](#)

Eating according to Canada's food guide helps Canadians meet their individual nutrient needs, which contributes to overall health and vitality. This can help to reduce the risk of obesity and other chronic diseases.⁴

[Canada's food guide](#)⁴ is available in languages other than English from the Health Canada website.



- Vegetables and fruits should always make up the largest proportion of the foods you eat.
- Choose whole grain foods.
- Include protein foods. Choose protein foods that come from plants more often.
- Make water your drink of choice.

Snacks

Snacks are a part of a healthy eating pattern. Snacks can be used to provide a variety of foods from the Canada's food guide each day. Refer to [Canada's food guide: Healthy Snacks](#).¹⁰

For more information on [Snack Ideas](#), see Section 4.5.

Bagged Meals

Residents may be away from home during mealtimes for many reasons, such as day programs or medical appointments. To help residents' meet nutrition needs on days away from home, a well-balanced bagged meal should be available to take along.

The bagged meal should include a sandwich (or wrap, pita, etc.), fruit, beverage, and a dessert (if appropriate). Try to include the following:

Sandwich/Wrap/Pita:

- **Protein Foods:**

- Choose lean and low sodium protein sources, such as peanut butter, canned fish, chicken, turkey, or egg fillings.
- If using canned meat/chicken or fish, choose no salt added brands or rinse salted products under water to decrease sodium content.

- **Whole Grain Products:**

- Choose whole grain breads, buns, small bagels, pitas, tortillas, or crackers.

- **Spreads or condiments:**

- Choose from cranberry sauce, mustard, horseradish, jam, jelly, reduced fat mayonnaise, salad dressing (low sodium), or low-fat sour cream.



- **Toppings:**
 - Choose from bell peppers, cucumber, dark green lettuce (such as romaine or spinach), onions, roasted red peppers, or tomato slices.
- **Add flavour:**
 - Choose from black pepper, curry powder, no salt added herb seasonings, red pepper flakes, sweet pickle relish, lemon juice, or vinegar.
- **Vegetable or Fruit side:**
 - Choose carrot or celery sticks, cucumber slices, snap peas, cauliflower, or broccoli. Fresh, frozen, or canned fruit (packed in water or fruit juice), or dried fruit without added sugar are also great additions.

Build Your Own Bagged Meal

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Protein Foods	Turkey	Chicken	Egg Salad	Tuna Salad	Roast Beef
Whole Grain Foods	Small whole wheat bagel	Whole grain flour tortillas	Whole grain rye bread	Pita	Hamburger roll
Vegetables and Fruits	Banana	Carrot sticks with hummus	Canned fruit	Celery sticks with hummus	Cucumber slices
Beverage	Water or low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage or 100% fruit juice	Water or low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage or 100% fruit juice	Water or low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage or 100% fruit juice	Water or low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage or 100% fruit juice	Water or low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage or 100% fruit juice
Desserts	Milk based pudding	Canned fruit	Granola bar	Milk based pudding	Applesauce
Spread or Condiment	Cranberry sauce	Reduced fat mayonnaise and mustard	Reduced fat mayonnaise included in egg salad	Reduced fat mayonnaise included in tuna salad	Horseradish

Bagged meals provided to residents should be refrigerated after preparation and until served to ensure food safety. If refrigeration is not available, an ice pack can be included in the bagged meal. Refer to the [Food Safety](#)¹¹ in Section 1.4.



Note: If the resident is on a special diet, refer to the [Substitutions and Special Diets](#) in Section 4.

2.11 Budgeting

Planning ahead helps you make the most out of your food budget. The following suggestions may not be applicable to all sites.

Plan Ahead

Food can be purchased from retail grocery stores, wholesale stores, or from a supplier. An up-to-date grocery list or order sheet can help with planning. Using a list can prevent extra grocery shopping later for forgotten items. A list can also be used to check deliveries if food is received from a supplier. A [Sample Grocery List](#) has been included in Appendix 2B.



- If you operate more than 1 site, purchase all food in the same trip, instead of making a separate trip for each site.
- If you have many stores that sell food in your area, compare prices. Some stores have an average lower cost than others. Review flyers for the products you often buy. Some stores will price match, selling you the same product for the lower price if you bring in the other store's flyer.
- Some grocery stores and retailers offer a discount off your total bill if food is purchased on certain days of the week or month. Check with local retailers and grocery stores to find out about special shopping days.

Shop for Healthy Foods

Choose healthy food to get the most nutrition for your money. Below are some tips to choose healthier foods. For more information, go to Health Canada's: [Tips for Healthy Eating](#).¹²

In the Store

- Whenever possible, purchase food at a wholesale store. Buying basic food and supplies such as pasta, potatoes, rice, flour, oatmeal, dried fruit, nuts, seeds, and beans in bulk can save money.
- Check the “best before” or “expiry” date on perishable foods. Only purchase items which can be used before the best before or expiry date.
- Purchase food on sale when possible. If the sale item is not available, ask for a “rain check”. A “rain check” can be used to purchase the food at a later date for the sale price.
- Compare prices between name brands and store brands. Store brands are often available for a lower price.
- It may be helpful to bring a calculator with you to the store or use a Unit Price App on a smart phone to compare items and find lowest price.
- To ensure the same amount of food is compared, consider the package size and the unit price of similar products. Unit price is the best way to compare the cost of similar food items and is usually listed on the shelf price tag. The unit price tells you the cost per 100 g, kilogram, pound, liter or other unit of weight or volume. When you compare the cost of 1 product to another, make sure you are comparing the same amount of food.
- The unit price is the price per unit of volume or weight, for example, \$1.45 per 100 g.



Storing Food

Proper food storage can help food to last longer. Use the following tips:

- Put groceries that need to be stored in the fridge and freezer right after shopping or receiving them from your supplier.
- Follow the “First In, First Out (FIFO)” rule. This means using foods with the shortest expiry dates first and storing newer stock at the back to be used later. This can help reduce food waste, which saves money and time.
- Refer to Health Canada’s [General Food Safety Tips on Safe Food Storage](#) for detailed information for proper food storage.

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