

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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What's new about the Food Guide?

Canada's Food Guide, a document that promotes and provides dietary guidance to support healthy eating in the Canadian context, was updated in January 2019; 12 years since the last version. Many things are similar to the previous version, such as encouraging us to eat a variety of foods and choosing plenty of vegetables and fruit at each meal, however some things have changed. Here is an overview:

The Look

The Food Guide is presented as a plate instead of a rainbow. It focuses on the proportions of food on the plate for a meal rather than recommending a number of servings to have each day. The updated food guide encourages $\frac{1}{2}$ of a plate to be vegetables and fruit, $\frac{1}{4}$ of it to be protein foods and $\frac{1}{4}$ of it to be whole grain foods. It also encourages water as the drink of choice for hydration.

Protein Foods

This category of foods includes foods previously found in the Milk and Alternatives and Meat and Alternatives groups. The new food guide emphasizes choosing foods from plant sources (beans, peas, lentils, nuts and seeds) and limiting intake of red meat (and where meat is chosen, emphasis is on lean options). Examples of foods in the protein foods group include

- Eggs
- Fish and shellfish.
- Beans, peas, lentils, nuts and seeds
- Lower fat dairy like milk, yogurt and lower sodium cheeses
- Lean meats and poultry

Even more emphasis on Whole Grains

While the previous food guide encouraged ½ the grains chosen to be whole grains, the updated Food guide directs Canadians to “Choose whole grain foods”. Examples include:

- Whole grain brown or wild rice
- Whole grain pasta, bread
- Whole oats or oatmeal

Messages about how to eat

There is a lot of information for consumers on ‘how’ to eat. The new food guide provides encouragement to take time to eat, cook more often, involve others in planning and preparing and to enjoy food which includes considering the importance of tradition and culture in foods.

Messages about healthy habits

While the Canada’s Food Guide snapshot provides a visual representation of foods to eat regularly there are also messages in the food guide to encourage healthy habits which influence food choices. There are specific messages to reduce highly processed foods, using food labels to inform food decisions and being aware of how food marketing can affect food choices.

Check out Canada.ca/foodguide for tips, resources and recipes to help make healthy food choices.