

Wellness Articles

Attached are weekly health and wellness articles provided by Alberta Health Services. As a way to help all Albertans live a healthy life, we welcome and encourage weekly newspapers, community newsletters and other publications to reproduce this information free of charge. Credit to Alberta Health Services or the identified content provider would be appreciated.

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>

Proposed publication date: May 30, 2022
Content provided by: Alberta Health Services

Adding plant-based proteins to your meals

Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba are some of the world's biggest producers of beans, peas, lentils, and chickpeas. These plant-based protein foods contain lots of important nutrients that can support healthy eating.

Beans, peas, lentils, and chickpeas are high sources of fibre. They contain soluble and insoluble fibre. Soluble fibre is part of a heart-healthy diet; it helps lower blood cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Insoluble fibre helps your body absorb important nutrients, keeps your digestive system healthy, and helps keep your bowel movements regular.

High-fibre foods also help to keep you full and satisfied between meals. Most Canadians eat only half the fibre they need. If you want to eat more fibre, add high-fibre foods to your diet slowly, over a period of days or weeks.

It is important to drink enough water when increasing the fibre in your diet. Most adult women need at least 12 cups (2.7 L) of fluid each day; men need at least 16 cups (3.7 L).

Beans, peas, lentils, and chickpeas are plant-based proteins. Canada's Food Guide recommends eating plant-based protein foods often.

Plant-based protein foods are often lower in saturated fat than other protein foods. Foods low in saturated fat are important to help maintain heart health. Choose these foods a couple of times a week instead of animal-based foods as part of a heart-healthy diet.

Buy dried beans, peas, or lentils, and soak them in water at home before cooking. Or buy low-sodium canned beans or chickpeas, and then rinse them with water and drain them before use to reduce the amount of sodium they contain.

- Try adding canned or cooked lentils to replace half of the ground meat in your favourite chili recipe.
- Puree canned chickpeas and use instead of ground meat in a spaghetti sauce recipe.
 - Pan fry canned black beans with your favourite herbs and spices, and put on top of nachos, burrito bowls, or tacos.

For more information, visit ahs.ca/nutritionhandouts and search 'fibre facts'.