

The Shopper's Guide

to Making Healthier Food Choices

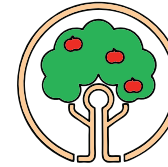


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Food shopping can be an overwhelming experience when faced with thousands of choices. This guide will help you make healthy food choices in the grocery store. Healthy foods are rich in protein, high-fibre carbohydrate, vitamins and minerals. They are lower in saturated fat, sugar and salt, and are trans fat free. To be a smart shopper, you need to look at all the foods you eat. While we all choose less healthy foods sometimes, the goal is healthy eating overall. This booklet provides tips to help you shop for healthy foods.

What You Should Know Before You Go

- Plan what you will have for meals and snacks each week. Use this meal plan to make your shopping list.
- Avoid shopping when hungry to limit less healthy choices. Have a snack before going to the grocery store.
- Shop around the outside of the store to concentrate on fresh, whole food choices.
- Look high and low on the shelves for better prices. Products at eye level are often more expensive.
- Remember that even though larger packages are often cheaper, it is only a deal if you can eat all of the food before it goes bad.
- Be cautious of bulk sale pricing, for example, 6 for \$10. Unless the fine print on the shelf tag specifies that you must buy 6, you can buy any number you want and still get the sale.
- Look for store brand items, which are often just as healthy as more popular brands but cheaper.
- Beware of displays at the end of the aisles, which might not be actual 'sales'. They can tempt you to buy foods you don't need.
- Beware of 'specials' as it may not mean the item is on sale, but just that they have large quantities in the store.
- Use flyers for weekly sales and coupons when available.



Facts on Fibre

Where do we get it?

There are two types of fibre and they have different health benefits:

- Soluble fibre is found in oat bran, oatmeal, dried beans, peas, lentils, psyllium and pectin-rich fruit such as apples, pears, strawberries and citrus fruit. This type of fibre is good for heart health.
- Insoluble fibre ('roughage') is found in wheat bran, wheat bran cereals, whole grain foods such as whole wheat pasta and brown rice, whole grain breads, vegetables and fruit. This type of fibre helps to keep bowels healthy and regular.

How much fibre do we need?

Adult Canadians need between 25 to 38 grams (g) of fibre each day depending on age and sex.

How can we increase our fibre intake?

Eat more:

- Vegetables and fruit
- Whole grain breads, rolls, bagels, tortillas and pitas*
- Whole wheat pasta and brown rice
- Bulgur, quinoa, buckwheat, millet and barley
- Legumes such as dried or canned beans, peas and lentils
- Lower sugar, fibre-rich cereals such as wheat biscuits, oatmeal and bran cereals

Increase your fibre intake slowly and be sure to drink plenty of fluids. Choose water to drink when you are thirsty.

* Whole grains refers to grains that contain all three parts of the kernel (the bran, the endosperm, and the germ). Products made with whole grains have the words "whole grain" followed by the name of the grain as one of the first ingredients. In Canada, 100% whole wheat flour is not considered a whole grain. This is because much of the germ is removed when wheat is milled. Though 100% whole wheat foods may not be considered whole grains, they are nutritious choices that provide dietary fibre. (Health Canada 2019)



Facts on Salt

Sodium is the main ingredient in salt. Humans need sodium in small amounts; however, in some people too much sodium causes blood pressure to rise. High blood pressure can lead to heart disease and stroke.

What foods are high in salt?

Hot dogs	Dips, sauces and gravies	Canned vegetables	Olives and pickles
Ham	Packaged popcorn	Frozen dinners	Salad dressings
Bacon	Many restaurant meals	Canned soups	Cheese
Deli meats	Bakery products	Mustard and ketchup	Fast foods like pizza
French fries	Pretzels and chips	Salted nuts and seeds	

How much salt do we need?

Current evidence shows that healthy adults who are consuming more than 2300 mg/day¹ could lower their risk of cardiovascular disease by reducing their sodium intake. All ages of Canadians eat too much salt².

How can we reduce our intake of salt?

- Cut back on salt gradually.
- Choose fresh foods more often.
- Use flavourings such as flavoured vinegars, fresh and dried herbs and spices. Choose garlic and onion powder instead of garlic and onion salt.
- Choose lower sodium or unsalted foods when possible.
- Compare the Nutrition Facts table on food labels. Products with a sodium content of less than 5% DV (Daily Value) are low in sodium. Those with a sodium content of 15% DV or more are high.

¹National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2019. Dietary Reference Intakes for sodium and potassium. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.17226/25353>

² Health Canada. 2018. Sodium Intake of Canadians in 2017. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/food-nutrition/sodium-intake-canadians-2017.html> accessed 20200122



Facts on Sugar

Sugar is a carbohydrate that provides energy to the body.

Where do we get it?

Sugar can occur naturally in foods such as unsweetened white milk, fruit, vegetables, and other plant-based foods such as legumes. These foods are full of nutrients such as protein, vitamins or fibre, and they help us feel full and satisfied.

Free sugars are those added to foods and drinks during processing and preparation. Free sugars also include those naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juice and fruit juice concentrates. These sugars provide no nutritional benefits.

What foods are high in free sugar?

100% fruit juice	Flavoured yogurt	Sweetened milks
Soft drinks and fruit drinks	Candy	Biscuits, buns, cakes and cookies
Sports drinks and energy drinks	Alcoholic drinks	Ketchup and sauces
Jams and jellies	Ice cream	Sugary cereals
Granola bars and energy bars		

How much sugar do we need?

Canadians consume too much sugar, especially in foods that have little or no nutritional value like sweetened drinks. Health Canada reminds us that beverages that contain free sugars (including 100% fruit juice) have been associated with a higher risk of dental decay in children.

In 2015 the World Health Organization recommended that not more than 10% of total daily calories should come from free sugars. That means for an average 2000 calorie diet, there should be no more than 48 g or 12 teaspoons (tsp) of free sugar a day. One can of pop contains about 40 g or 10 tsps of free sugar!

Tip: One tsp or 5 millilitres (mL) of sugar is equal to 4 g. Follow these steps to decide how much sugar is in a packaged food or drink:

1. Look at the number of g of 'sugars' in the product on the Nutrition Facts table (this number includes both naturally occurring and free sugars).
2. Divide the number of 'sugars' by four (4) to find out the tsps of sugar in the serving size used for the Nutrition Facts table.



How can we reduce our intake of free or added sugar?

- Drink water to quench thirst.
- Limit specialty coffees or teas with sugar flavourings or whipped topping.
- Limit 100% fruit juice, juice drinks, energy drinks and sports drinks.
- Cut sugar amounts in recipes by one quarter to one half.
- Choose fresh foods more often.
- Choose foods that are unsweetened.
- Read the ingredient list to find sources of free sugar to compare products. Choose those with lower amounts of sugar.



Facts on Fat

Fats, in small amounts, are needed for our bodies to work properly. Just like salt and sugar a small amount of fat can add a lot of flavour. Oils and fats supply calories and essential fats and help your body absorb the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K.

But, just like too much salt and too much free sugar, eating too much fat and the wrong kinds of fat can harm our health. Pay attention to the type of fat as well as the amount you eat. Too much saturated fat and too much fat overall can increase unhealthy LDL cholesterol and lower healthy HDL cholesterol, which can increase your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Choose Unsaturated Fats Most Often.

Foods that contain mostly unsaturated fat should replace foods that contain mostly saturated fat.

- Omega-3 fat is a polyunsaturated fat found in fatty fish such as salmon, trout, herring, sardines and mackerel as well as flaxseed, canola and soybean oils, walnuts, pine nuts and pecans. This fat can help reduce the risk of stroke and heart disease.
- Omega 6 fat is a polyunsaturated fat found in safflower, sunflower and corn oils, non-hydrogenated margarine, almonds, pecans, brazil nuts and sunflower seeds. It is also found in packaged and prepared foods. Eat in moderation.
- Monounsaturated fat is found in olive, canola and peanut oils, avocados, non-hydrogenated margarine, almonds, pistachios, pecans, hazelnuts and cashews.

Choose Saturated Fats Less Often.

Saturated fats come from animal sources such as red meat, poultry, full-fat dairy products, and tropical oils such as palm, palm kernel and coconut oil. Saturated fat should make up less than 10% of total energy intake.

Avoid Trans Fats.

Trans fats occur naturally in some foods in small amounts but most trans fats are formed when a liquid oil is made into a solid fat through a food processing method called hydrogenation. Trans fat is an artificial fat that offers no nutritional benefit. Eat as little trans fat as possible. On September 17, 2018, Health Canada banned the use of partially hydrogenated oils in foods, the main source of industrially produced trans fat.¹

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2018/09/canadian-ban-on-trans-fats-comes-into-force-today.html> accessed 20200121

What foods may contain trans fats?

- Deep fried foods
- Hard (stick) margarine
- Shortening
- Microwave popcorn
- Liquid coffee whiteners
- Granola bars
- Crackers
- Cookies
- Commercially baked goods
 - » Donuts
 - » Muffins
 - » Cakes
- Ready-to-eat, frozen food
 - » Pizza
 - » Egg rolls
 - » French fries

How can we reduce our intake of saturated fat?

- Choose lower fat dairy products – look for the %MF (milk fat) on the front of the label.
- Eat more meatless meals each week.
- Choose fish more often.
- Choose lower sodium broth-based soups over cream-based soups.
- Choose fresh, whole foods rather than pre-packaged foods.
- Line a baking pan with parchment paper rather than greasing it with butter.
- Grill, bake, poach or steam instead of frying.
- Replace butter or lard with mashed fruit or unsweetened applesauce in recipes.
- Use small amounts of low-fat mayonnaise or salad dressing instead of full fat versions for egg, salmon or tuna salad.

Eat well and ensure you are getting all of the nutrients you need for good health by balancing your plate at mealtimes and snacks. Aim to have half of your plate filled with vegetables and fruit. Split the other half of your plate into whole grains (quinoa, barley, rice, pasta, bread) and protein (legumes, tofu & beans, seeds & nuts, fish, eggs, poultry, dairy and lean meat). Canada's new food guide uses a plate to show a healthy eating pattern. In addition, the food guide suggests you:

- Be mindful of your eating habits.
- Cook more often.
- Enjoy your food.
- Eat meals with others.
- Be aware that food marketing can influence your choices.
- Make water your drink of choice.
- Choose protein foods that come from plants more often.
- Limit highly processed foods. If you choose these foods, eat them less often and in small amounts.
- Replace saturated fat with unsaturated fat.



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Nutrition Labelling

Health Canada has introduced changes to food labelling based on consumer feedback. The food industry has been given until 2021 to make these changes. The Nutrition Facts table and the ingredient list are two sources of valuable information on food packaging.

Learning from Food Labels

A food label has three types of nutrition information to help you make healthier choices:

1. Ingredient list
2. Nutrition Facts table
3. Nutrition claims



Compare the current and the new ingredient lists below to see some of the changes which include:

- grouping together sugars-based ingredients in brackets after the name 'sugars' to help identify all of the sources of sugars added to a food, and
- listing food colours by their individual common names.

CURRENT

INGREDIENTS: FLOUR, FANCY MOLASSES, VEGETABLE OIL, SHORTENING, BROWN SUGAR, LIQUID WHOLE EGG, SUGAR, CONTAINS: WHEAT, EGG

NEW

Ingredients: Sugars (fancy molasses, brown sugar, sugar) • Flour • Vegetable oil shortening • Liquid whole egg • Salt • Sodium bicarbonate • Spices • Allura red
Contains: Wheat • Egg

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Source: © All Rights Reserved. *Food Labelling Changes.* Health Canada, 2017. Adapted and reproduced with permission from the Minister of Health, 2019.



Compare the current and the upcoming Nutrition Facts tables below to see some of the changes.

CURRENT	
Nutrition Facts	
Valeur nutritive	
Per 250 mL / par 250 mL	
Amount	% Daily Value
Teneur	% valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories 110	
Fat / Lipides 0 g	0%
Saturated / saturés 0 g	
+ Trans / trans 0 g	0%
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium / Sodium 0 mg	0%
Carbohydrate / Glucides 26 g	9%
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	
Sugars / Sucres 22 g	
Protein / Protéines 2 g	
Vitmain A / vitamine A	0%
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	120%
Calcium / Calcium	2%
Iron /Fer	0%

UPCOMING	
Nutrition Facts	
Valeur nutritive	
Per 1 cup (250 mL) pour 1 tasse (250 mL)	
Calories 110	% Daily Value*
	% valeur quotidienne*
Fat / Lipides 0 g	0%
Saturated / saturés 0 g	
+ Trans / trans 0 g	0%
Carbohydrate / Glucides 26 g	
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	0%
Sugars / Sucres 22 g	22%
Protein / Protéines 2 g	
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium / Sodium 0 mg	0%
Potassium 450 mg	10%
Calcium 30 mg	2%
Iron /Fer 0 mg	0%
*5% or less is a little , 15% or more is a lot	
*5% ou moins c'est peu , 15% ou plus c'est beaucoup	

Calories is larger and stands out more with bold line below →

Serving size stands out more and is more similar on similar foods

Daily Values updated

New % Daily Values for total sugars

Updated list of minerals of public health concern

mg amounts are shown

New % Daily Value footnote →

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Use the steps on the next page to help you use the Nutrition Facts table to compare products.
Together with Canada's new food guide, food label information can support healthier food choices.

Step 1

Start by comparing the serving size when comparing two products. Use the serving size described in milliliters (mL) or in grams (g).

As the food industry begins to catch up with the changes you will see the Nutrition Facts tables using similar serving sizes for similar products.

Step 2

Use the % Daily Value (% DV) to see if a serving size has a little or a lot of a nutrient. Keep in mind that 5% DV or less is a little and 15% DV or more means a lot.

Step 3

Think of Canada's new food guide when using the Nutrition Facts table to make your choices.

- 58% of all Canadians consume more sodium (salt) than what is needed. This is concerning as diets high in sodium are associated with higher blood pressure, which is a risk factor for heart disease. Processed foods can be very high in sodium.
- We should all be trying to increase the amount of fibre each day. The best choices are vegetables and fruit, dried peas and beans, nuts and seeds, and whole grains.
- Iron is an important nutrient. It carries oxygen to all parts of the body, it helps your cells work properly and helps babies' brains and nerves to develop. Go to the Healthy Eating section at www.healthunit.org for more information on iron.
- Try to limit fried foods and baked goods.

Nutrition Claims

Nutrition claims are usually the first piece of nutrition information you see on packaged food. Claims must follow Health Canada rules to be sure they are not misleading.

Nutrient content claims: Highlight the amount of a nutrient in a food such as 'reduced in fat' or 'very high source of fibre'.

Diet-related health claims: Highlight helpful effects of a certain food on a person's health such as 'a diet low in saturated and trans fat reduces risk of heart disease'. Use the health claim to choose foods that you may want to include as part of a healthy diet to reduce your risk of chronic diseases.

Note: Nutrition claims are optional and only highlight a few key nutrients or foods. Just because a product does not have a claim that doesn't mean it's not a good choice. Use the Nutrition Facts table and the ingredient list to make food choices that are better for you.

Sample Claim	Meaning
Source of fibre	at least 2 g of dietary fibre per serving
High source of fibre	at least 4 g of dietary fibre per serving
Very high source of fibre	at least 6 g of dietary fibre per serving
Low fat	no more than 3 g of fat per serving
Fat free	less than 0.5 g of fat per serving
Low in sodium / salt	no more than 140 mg of sodium per serving

Caution

- The words 'lite' or 'light' can refer to the taste, texture or look of a food, not just calories.
- 'Lower' or 'reduced' calorie, fat and sodium products are not always low in calories, fat or sodium. They are just lower than the original.
- 'No sugar added' does not mean sugar-free. Natural sugar may be present, although no sugar has been added to the product.

Grocery Sections

Vegetables and Fruit

Vegetables and fruit are rich in vitamins, minerals and fibre, yet low in fat, calories and sodium. Fill half your plate with colourful vegetables and fruit at each meal and snack to keep your body in good health and reduce your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and some cancers. Enjoy vegetables and fruit with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.

Fruit

CHOOSE:

- Fresh fruit in season
- Frozen fruit packed without sugar
- Fruit canned in water
- Whole fruit instead of juice. Quench your thirst with water.



SHOP SMART:

- Try locally grown fruit, when available.
- Avoid fruit drinks, beverages, punches, -ades and cocktails that are mainly water, sugar, flavouring and sometimes with added vitamin C. They are like pop without the fizz! Quench your thirst with water instead of these high sugar choices.
- Buy whole fruit more often than juice for fibre and more nutrition.
- Avoid fruit canned in heavy syrup.
- Remember, dried fruit for example, raisins, apricots, mangoes, apples have fibre and iron, but are high in natural sugar. Eat dried fruit with meals. Try to brush your teeth soon after you eat dried fruit.

Vegetables

CHOOSE:

- Fresh vegetables in season
- Vegetables that have edible skins for extra fibre, such as cucumbers, eggplant, carrots, sugar snap peas
- Frozen vegetables without sauces or breading

SHOP SMART:

- Try locally grown vegetables when available.
- Look for canned vegetables with 'no salt added' or 'low sodium' on the label. To further reduce the sodium content you can drain and rinse with water.
- Include dark green and orange vegetables more often for a rich source of folate and vitamin A.
- Did you know that fruit candies, vegetable chips, fruit jams or spreads, ketchup, and vegetable or fruit juices and beverages do not count as vegetables and fruit?

BUDGET TIPS:

- Enjoy fresh vegetables and fruit in season – buy in small amounts to avoid waste if they ripen quickly.
- Use cheaper root vegetables like potatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips, sweet potatoes and onions.
- Add leftover cooked vegetables to soups, stews or stir-fries.
- Check out the 'reduced' section for better value – but beware as this produce needs to be used up quickly.
- Wash and cut your own produce – ready-to-eat, cut and washed versions cost more.
- Use lower cost frozen vegetables for casseroles, soups, chili or main dishes.
- Try fresh or canned fruit as a tasty alternative to a costly dessert.

TIPS FOR KIDS:

- Don't be fooled by the colourful pictures when buying snacks for kids. Dried fruit leathers/roll-ups are basically sugar with little nutrition.
- Remember, children don't need juice to be healthy. Whole vegetables and fruit have much more nutrition. Quench their thirst with water.



Whole Grain Products

Whole grain products provide us with carbohydrates, B vitamins, minerals and can be a good source of fibre. Make at least half your daily grain choices whole grains.

What are whole grains?

Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel: the outer bran layer where most of the fibre comes from; the germ layer that is rich in vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals; and, the endosperm that contains the starch. Processing a grain, for example, wheat to make white flour, removes the nutrient-rich germ and the fibre-rich bran.

On the Ingredient list:

'Whole Wheat' means the product contains at least 95% of the original kernel.

'Whole Grain Whole Wheat' means the product contains 100% of the original kernel.

Words such as whole grain whole wheat, whole rye, whole spelt, whole grain oats and flaxseed indicate whole grains. Look for 'whole grain' as the first ingredient in the list, indicating that the product contains more whole grain than any other ingredient.

Enriched wheat flour, enriched flour, wheat flour, unbleached wheat flour and untreated wheat flour are refined grains, without the bran and germ layers.

What about Multigrain?

Don't assume 'multigrain' breads are whole grain. Multigrain means that more than one type of grain has been used, but often they are refined grains. Bread labeled 'multigrain' might actually be made from white flour.



Breads, Tortillas, Pitas

CHOOSE:

- Whole grain breads, tortillas and pitas:
 - whole grain, whole wheat
 - whole wheat
 - whole rye
 - whole grain oats
- Breads, tortillas and pitas with at least 2 g of fibre per serving



SHOP SMART:

- Try a variety of whole grain flours instead of white flour when cooking.
- Be cautious about low calorie breads. They are usually sliced thinner, but aren't always made from whole grains.
- Beware of refined grain products with added processed fibres like inulin and polydextrose as they do not provide the same benefits as intact fibre found in whole grains, fruits and vegetables.
- Check the ingredient list to be sure bakery items are made from whole grains since they may not have a Nutrition Facts table.
- Check out wheat germ. While not the whole grain, add it to yogurt, cereals and baked goods for extra nutrition.
- Don't go by colour. Just because bread is brown doesn't mean it is whole grain. Pumpernickel bread can have molasses added for colour but is made with refined flour.
- Don't count baked goods such as cookies, croissants, cakes, pies, pastries, donuts, danish, biscuits and sweet rolls as part of your daily grain products. They are too high in fat and sugar, and offer little nutrition. Keep them for treats or sometimes foods.

Rice, Pasta and Other Grains:

CHOOSE:

- Brown rice
- 'Converted' or 'parboiled' white rice
- Whole grain pastas
- Barley, quinoa, buckwheat, millet and bulgur
- Whole grain couscous

SHOP SMART:

- Buy pot barley instead of pearl barley for more fibre.
- Did you know that when rice is parboiled or converted, some of the vitamins and minerals in the bran are absorbed into the kernel, so not all the nutrition of the whole grain is lost?
- Avoid high salt, low fibre rice and pasta mixes or use only half the seasoning package.
- Beware of the higher fats, cream sauces, cheese, and meat fillings found in prepared pasta dishes.
- Don't look for extra vegetables in 'tomato' or 'spinach' pastas – vegetable powders add colour, not nutrition.

Cereals and grain based snacks:

CHOOSE:

- Plain hot cereals made with 100% whole grains
- Ready-to-eat cereals made with whole grains, at least 4 g of fibre, and less than 7 g of sugar
- Grain-based bars made with whole grains, at least 2 g of fibre, and less than 7 g of sugar
- Hot and cold cereal and grain-based bars where sugar is not listed as either first or second in the ingredient list
- Baked crackers made with whole grains and more than 2 g of fibre, less than 3 g of fat and less than 240 mg sodium per serving
- Plain popcorn

SHOP SMART:

- Be sure to check the serving size of ready-to-eat cereals when you are comparing them to each other because the serving sizes can vary. Be aware that many granolas or muesli can be high in fat and sugar due to the dried fruit, nuts and coconut. Mix granola with other lower-fat, lower-sugar, higher fibre cereals or make your own.
- Check the ingredient list for trans fats found in hydrogenated oils, partially hydrogenated oils and shortening.
- Enjoy popcorn – it's a great whole grain, high-fibre snack when eaten without butter and salty seasonings.

BUDGET TIPS:

- Buy plain brown rice, whole grain pasta and other whole grains then add your own vegetables and seasonings for flavour.
- Buy plain, whole grain cereals such as wheat biscuits or rolled oats and add your own nuts or fruit. Pre-sweetened varieties and those with added fruit and nuts are more expensive.
- Buy discounted bakery bread that has tomorrow's 'best by' date. Freeze it right away. It can last up to 6 months.

TIPS FOR KIDS:

- Breads baked with added carrots or pumpkin offer no more nutrition than regular bread. Choose whole grain bread and visit the produce section to get your vegetables and fruit.
- Avoid cereals, oatmeal and grain based bars that are marketed to children with cartoon characters or bright pictures. They are almost always high in added sugars, especially if they contain marshmallows, chocolate and fake fruit pieces.
- Skip the crackers marketed to children – they are usually low in fibre, even if they state 'made with whole wheat' or 'contain whole grains'.
- Beware of fake fruit found in many kids' cereals. It is mostly sugar with added flavours, colors and other additives.
- Don't waste money on grain based snacks and finger foods like puffs, crisps or bars found in the baby and toddler aisle. These snack foods are often very low in fibre, vitamins and minerals.

Protein Foods

In addition to protein this food category provides B vitamins, iron, and sometimes fibre. Among protein foods, consume plant-based more often.

Protein foods include legumes, nuts, seeds, tofu, fortified soy beverage, fish, shellfish, eggs, poultry, lean red meat including wild game, lower fat milk, lower fat yogurts, lower fat kefir, and cheeses lower in fat and sodium.

To help you reduce your risk of cancer, eat little, if any, processed meat such as deli meats, bacon or hot dogs.

Legumes

CHOOSE:

- Split peas, kidney beans, navy beans, lentils, lima beans, soybeans, pinto beans, and chick peas
- Tofu (soybean curd) set with calcium
- Baked beans in tomato sauce
- Texturized Vegetable Protein (TVP)
- Fortified soy beverage with at least 8 g of protein per 1 cup serving.
Don't rely on fortified rice, almond or other plant-based beverages as a source of protein.
- Plant-based beverages that are fortified with added calcium, vitamin D and other nutrients.



SHOP SMART:

- Enjoy beans as they are very versatile and most are low in fat.
- Drain and rinse the salt from canned beans, chick peas or lentils before using.
- Try using Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP) instead of meat in recipes. It offers complete protein, fiber, iron, vitamins and minerals.
- Look for tofu in the produce or health food sections.
- Avoid baked beans with added lard or pork and more than 15% DV of sodium.

Nuts, Seeds and Nut Butters

CHOOSE:

- Plain peanut or other nut butters without added fats, sugar or salt
- Walnuts, pecans, almonds, chestnuts, plain dry roasted peanuts, or pumpkin, sunflower, and sesame seeds
- Unsalted nuts and seeds

SHOP SMART:

- Pay attention to your portion size for nuts and seeds. It is true they are a good source of protein, fibre and iron but they are also high in fat.

Fish

Try to eat fish at least 2 times per week. Fish contains protein, B vitamins and iron and is low in saturated fat. Some fish are very high in omega-3 fat, which is an unsaturated fat and great for a healthy heart.

CHOOSE:

Fish high in omega-3 fats – salmon, herring, mackerel, sardines, rainbow trout, char, white fish, and smelt

SHOP SMART:

- Buy plain fish that is not battered or deep fried.
- Bake, broil or grill as less fat is needed for these cooking methods. Use herbs and low-salt spices for extra flavour.
- Limit high mercury fish including fresh or frozen tuna, canned albacore tuna, shark, orange roughy, marlin, swordfish, and escolar.
- Look for canned fish that is packed in water rather than oil as it is lower in fat.
- Pre-seasoned, single serving canned fish can be much higher in salt.

Eggs

CHOOSE:

- Fresh, clean, uncracked eggs

SHOP SMART:

- Concerned about cholesterol? The egg yolk contains the fat, cholesterol, some protein and vitamins, while the egg white contains mostly protein.
- Did you know? Brown and white eggs have the same nutrients.
- Don't rely on omega-3 eggs as your only source of omega-3 fats. Check the price first as they may cost more.

Poultry and Meat

CHOOSE:

- Well-trimmed cuts of meat (i.e., majority of thick, white solid fat has been removed) with little marbling
- Pork: tenderloin, lean leg, sirloin, centre cut, lean ham, grilled back bacon
- Beef/Veal: lean round, flank, rump, sirloin, tenderloin, strip loin, lean leg or shoulder, roasted veal, lean or extra lean ground beef
- Poultry: chicken or turkey breast with no skin, or remove the skin after cooking, fresh or frozen turkeys that have not been pre-basted
- Lamb: lean leg or loin, roasted
- Canadian or back bacon, which is lower in fat than regular, turkey and chicken bacon
- Canned meat packed in water

SHOP SMART:

- Cook your own fresh meat at home and slice for sandwiches, salads and other meals.

BUDGET TIPS:

- Buy more meat alternatives:
 - » Enjoy soups, stews, casseroles and salads with legumes.
 - » Puree beans or chick peas to use in dips and spreads.
 - » Use tofu in place of half the ground beef in meatloaf, chili or tacos.
 - » Add steamed edamame (green soybeans) to salads or soups.
 - » Snack on a handful of unsalted soy nuts instead of chips or crackers.
- Look for 'light' canned tuna rather than Albacore canned tuna.
- Check the price on liquid eggs. They can cost more and can spoil more quickly.
- Use a slow cooker to cook less expensive cuts of meat.

TIPS FOR KIDS:

- Offer a variety of meat and alternatives at a young age.
- Try snacks like non-flavoured light tuna or salmon with crackers or hummus with veggies.
- Try boiled eggs for a great grab and go snack.
- Avoid cocoa hazelnut spreads and flavoured peanut butters with added sugars, honey or jams.
- Limit prepared 'lunch kits' high in salt, sugar and fat. Instead, make your own using lean meats and alternatives, fruit, vegetables, lower fat milk and alternative products and whole grains.
- Check out homemade baked goods that use beans like black bean mini muffins.

Dairy Products

Dairy products provide protein, fat, calcium and Vitamin D for strong bones, healthy teeth, and preventing osteoporosis. Select lower fat choices every day.

CHOOSE:

- Skim, 1% or 2% MF (milk fat) white milk
- Skim milk powder
- Buttermilk 1% MF
- Yogurt 2% MF or less
- Partially-skimmed block cheese 20% MF or less
- Cottage cheese 2% MF or less

SHOP SMART:

- Drinking 2 cups of milk or fortified soy beverage everyday can be an easy way to meet vitamin D recommendations.
- Read labels and compare the added sugar:
 - » Flavoured milks (e.g., chocolate) are a sugary drink that can have 3 - 4 tsp of added sugar in 250 mL (1 cup). Buy plain milk most often.
 - » Avoid 'fruit on the bottom' yogurt. Buy plain yogurt; add your own fruit.
- Be aware that butter, coffee cream, whipped cream, sour cream, cream 'cheese', ice cream, and ice milk are poor choices for calcium and vitamin D, and are higher in saturated fat. Keep them for treats or sometimes foods.
- Did you know that processed cheeses (e.g., slices) are lower in calcium and protein, and higher in sodium than regular block cheese?
- Choose a fortified soy beverage with at least 8 g of protein per 1 cup serving. Don't rely on fortified rice, almond or other plant-based beverages as a source of protein.
- Buy plant-based beverages that are fortified with added calcium, vitamin D and other nutrients.

- **Keep it safe:** Steer clear of raw milk, which has not been pasteurized and can carry dangerous bacteria like E. coli, Listeria and Salmonella.

BUDGET TIPS:

- Buy milk in bags rather than cartons.
- Buy larger bricks of cheese, and slice or grate it yourself.
- Buy large tubs of yogurt instead of multi-packs or smaller containers.
- Buy plain yogurt and add your own fruit.
- Use skim milk powder to make recipes that call for milk.

TIPS FOR KIDS:

- Children nine months to two years need 3.25% MF (homogenized) milk.
- School-age children can choose lower-fat options (2% MF or less).
- For children aged two and younger, soy, rice, almond, coconut and other plant-based beverages – fortified or not – are not suitable alternatives to breast milk or whole cow's milk as they are generally lower in protein, fat and calories.
- Flavoured milks can be an occasional treat.

Fats, Oils and Dressings

Foods that contain mostly unsaturated fat should replace foods that contain mostly saturated fat.

Fats (margarine and butter)

CHOOSE:

- Non-hydrogenated soft tub margarine

SHOP SMART:

- Did you know regular margarine and butter have the same total fat and calorie content but differ in the type of fat?
- Pay attention to portion size, whether you choose margarine or butter.
- Limit the butter, shortening and lard you buy as they are high in saturated fat.
- Avoid hard stick margarine which contains trans fat.
- Avoid using diet, light, and calorie or fat reduced margarines for cooking. They may spatter and are not good for baking due to their high water content.

Vegetable Oils

CHOOSE:

- Polyunsaturated oils such as corn, safflower, sunflower, and soybean
- Monounsaturated oils such as olive, peanut, and canola
- Non-stick cooking sprays

Note: Some specialty oils such as flax, walnut or sesame, need to be refrigerated after opening.

SHOP SMART:

- Use oils in moderation as they are 100% fat.
- Be alert to the term 'light' on oils. It refers to colour or flavour not the fat content.
- Watch your intake of coconut and palm oils. These are in highly processed foods and contain saturated fat. There is no evidence to show that coconut oil benefits our health more than other oils.
- Did you know that all plant oils are cholesterol free?



Dressings

CHOOSE:

- Lower-fat mayonnaise-type products
- Oil based dressings

SHOP SMART:

- Limit creamy dressings – even the lower-fat versions can still be high in fat.
- Be cautious about fat free salad dressings as they usually have more sugar and salt added to replace the flavour lost when the fat was removed.
- Use flavoured vinegars or 100% fruit juices as the base for a vinaigrette dressing and add less oil for great flavour. Some examples of flavoured vinegars include: balsamic, apple, cider, and red wine.
- In recipes that call for mayonnaise try using plain, lower-fat greek yogurt instead.

BUDGET TIPS:

- Make your own simple salad dressing with oil, vinegar and herbs.

TIPS FOR KIDS:

- Get them involved! Ask them to help you make salad dressings and chop veggies for salad.
- Use plain simple dressings at an early age so kids don't get used to very sugary, salty or creamy flavours.

Frozen and Canned Foods and Meals

Frozen and canned meals are often expensive, high in sodium and less nutritious than meals made at home.

Frozen Foods

CHOOSE:

- Frozen meals that contain less than 10 g of fat, less than 720 mg of sodium, more than 2 g of fibre, less than 10 g of sugar and more than 10 g of protein per serving
- Entrees that are broiled, barbecued or baked, not breaded
- Frozen pasta entrees with a tomato sauce instead of a cream or cheese sauce

SHOP SMART:

- Limit the amount of frozen, pre-made meals you eat as they are often high in sodium, fat, and sugar and low in fibre and protein. They have limited vegetables or fruit.
- Look for frozen meals that include vegetables and use vegetable based sauces like tomato sauce.

Canned Foods

CHOOSE:

- Low salt or no salt added canned sauces, soups and entrees

SHOP SMART:

- Beware of the usually high salt content in canned foods.
- Add extra fresh, canned or frozen vegetables when using canned sauces and soups.
- Choose vegetable or lower sodium broth-based soups instead of rich cream soups.

BUDGET TIPS:

- Reduce the amount of frozen/pre-made meals you purchase from the grocery store. Instead, cook in larger batches so that you can freeze your own homemade meals.
- Try making your favourite soups at home. Homemade soups are a good way to use up your leftovers, reduce waste and save money.

TIPS FOR KIDS:

- Try making your own versions of kid favourite meals like spaghetti using fresh, whole ingredients instead of buying the high sodium canned meals marketed to children.
- Avoid making separate meals for children who refuse foods enjoyed by the rest of the family. Instead, make sure there is at least one healthy item at mealtime that children enjoy.
- Trust their appetites. Allow them to decide which and how much food to eat from what you have provided.



Sugary Drinks

Quench your thirst with water. Make water your beverage of choice!

Sugary drinks are mostly sugar and water. They provide little, if any, nutritional value and often take the place of healthier drinks such as water and plain milk. Regular intake of sugary drinks is linked to chronic diseases and tooth decay.

Sugary drinks include:

- 100% fruit juice
- Soda pop or soft drinks
- Fruit drinks (e.g., punches, cocktails or -ades)
- Energy drinks
- Sports drinks
- Flavoured or vitamin-enhanced waters
- Flavoured milk drinks and milkshakes
- Sweetened plant-based beverages (e.g., soy, almond, rice beverages)
- Specialty tea and coffee beverages (e.g., iced cappuccino or iced tea)
- Hot chocolate
- Sweetened smoothies made with added honey or fruit juice
- Slush type drinks



TIPS FOR KIDS:

- Do not give children energy drinks. They are unsafe and the caffeine in energy drinks can cause harmful side effects.
- Offer plain water, flavoured with sliced fruit or veggies when they are thirsty.
- Did you know that sports drinks are not the same as energy drinks? Sports drinks are not necessary for most young children.
- Consider offering a sports drink only if children are doing continuous vigorous activity for more than 60 minutes in hot and humid weather or are wearing heavy protective gear.
- Offer water or low-fat milk at meals or snacks. Sports drinks, fruit juice or fruit punches should not replace these healthier choices.

Healthy Snacks

Nutritious snacks fill the gaps between meals to keep our hunger at bay and our energy levels up. Treats are foods we eat sometimes. Most food found in the snack food aisle is high in fat, sugar and/or salt such as potato chips, chocolate bars, chocolate, and candies. These foods should not be 'everyday' foods. Focus on providing yourself and your family with nutritious food to snack on, while offering treats every now and then.

Here are some ideas for healthy and tasty snacks:

- Fresh vegetables and hummus
- Fresh fruit or unsweetened fruit cups, applesauce blends
- Whole grain crackers and low fat cheese
- Greek yogurt
- Unsalted nuts and seeds
- Pita with hummus
- Homemade smoothie
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Cottage cheese
- Whole grain toast and nut butter

