

# Canada's Food Guide

Reviewed by SickKids Staff | Last updated: May 13th 2021

Discover the foundation for healthy eating with Canada's Food Guide. Learn about Canada's Food Guide recommendations and how to apply them to your family's diet.

## Key points

- Canada's Food Guide offers guidelines on nutrition for people aged two and older.
- Recommendations and guidelines for healthy eating include eating a variety of vegetables and fruits, protein foods and whole grains.
- Canada's Food Guide promotes healthy eating habits for all Canadians of all cultures.
- It is important to eat a variety of healthy foods each day and adapt the guidelines to individual nutritional needs.

[Canada's Food Guide](#) promotes healthy eating habits for all Canadians of all cultures and is a general guide to nutrition for people aged two and older.

## Healthy eating recommendations

- Have plenty of [vegetables and fruits](#).
  - Fresh, frozen, or canned can all be healthy choices.
- Choose [whole grain foods](#).
  - Whole wheat foods are not whole grain, but they can still be a healthy choice because they contain fibre.
- Eat [protein foods](#).
  - Protein foods include animal-based protein, such as dairy products, meats, fish, eggs; as well as plant-based protein, such as beans, lentils and nuts.
  - Have plant-based protein more often.
- Make water your drink of choice.

- Limit foods high in sodium (salt), sugars or saturated fat.

To help you and your family meet all your nutritional needs, choose a variety of healthy foods every day. Eating different vegetables and fruits, protein foods and whole grains throughout the week will help you and your family have a balanced nutritious diet.

## Healthy eating is more than the foods you eat

Healthy eating is also about where, when, why and how you eat. Try practicing healthy eating habits, as well as eating nutritious foods:

- Be mindful of your eating habits. Pay attention to how long it takes you to eat a meal and how hungry you are.
- Cook at home more often. To help make this easier, plan what you will eat ahead of time; and involve your children in meal planning and preparation.
- Enjoy foods from your culture(s) and include traditional foods often.
- Eat meals with family and friends.
- Use food labels to make healthier choices.
- Be aware of [food marketing](#).

## The plate method



Canada's Food Guide recommends adults and children eat vegetables and fruits, protein foods and whole grains every day. Instead of specific serving sizes and amounts from each food group, the new food guide has adopted a “plate method”, recommending:

- half the plate be made up of vegetables and fruits
- one quarter of the plate be made up of whole grains
- one quarter of the plate be made up of protein foods

### **What is a proper meal portion and what should my child be eating?**

For more videos from SickKids experts in collaboration with Youngster, visit [Youngster on YouTube](#).

Remember that this is only a guide. A person's activity level and nutritional needs will affect how much food they should eat and in which proportions. Activity levels and nutritional needs can vary from person to person and from day to day and will also vary across a person's life cycle. For example, your child will need more nutrition when they are going through a growth spurt. Furthermore, the amount of nutrients children need will be different from adults and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

## **Using Canada's Food Guide**

Although the principles in Canada's Food Guide are backed by scientific evidence, it is not an individual meal plan for you or your family. Use the guide to inspire you. Be adventurous. Try new healthy foods, and adapt the guide to fit with your family's eating style.

Please visit [AboutKidsHealth.ca](#) for more child health information.

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