

Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Adults



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Why Guidelines are Important.....	2
Healthy Eating for Adults.....	3
Healthy Eating Recommendations.....	4
The Food Rating System.....	12
Category #1 – Choose Most Often	13
Category #2 – Choose Sometimes	21
Category #3 – Choose Least Often	27
Beverages	30
Reading Labels	31
Ingredients Label.....	31
Nutrition Facts Label	32
What are Daily Values?	33
Let’s Look at a Label	34
Choosing Packaged Mixed Dishes	35
Let’s Look at a Label	36
Resources	37

■ Introduction

Albertans deserve a simple, unbiased and easy-to-follow guide on how to make healthier food and beverage choices for us and our families. The Alberta Nutritional Guidelines for Adults make nutritional labels easier to read and provide tips on how to incorporate healthier choices, more often, into our meals and snacks.

Maintaining a healthy weight is a challenge for most Albertans. About 1.5 million adults are overweight or obese, a number which equates to just more than half the Alberta population. What may seem like a matter of personal choice and self-discipline is made more difficult because of the complexity and availability of processed foods. We are faced with mixed messages backed by million dollar advertising campaigns that tell us what's healthy and what's not. To further complicate our choices, we are often surrounded by unhealthy food choices that make self-discipline even more difficult.

We are not alone. An overweight and obesity crisis is developing in many countries.

While these statistics are staggering, so too is the evidence that links disease to individuals who are overweight and obese. This means that one in two Albertans are at risk for developing high cholesterol, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, decreased mental well-being, sleep apnea, joint problems, a lower quality of life, and possibly, reduced life expectancy. These diseases can result in high personal costs as well as significant costs to the health care system.

The Government of Alberta is committed to promoting healthy eating and healthy weights for all Albertans. In June 2008, the Government of Alberta released the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth (ANGCY) – A Childcare, School and Recreation/Community Centre Resource Manual. The ANGCY assists childcare, school and recreation community facilities to create healthy food environments for children and youth. The Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Adults (ANGA) will assist Albertans to create healthier eating environments in their homes, workplaces and in public settings.

The Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Adults will only be available online. The online format of the guidelines will allow for revisions and additions as new information becomes available.

Happy - and healthy - eating!

Lead by example. Our children and youth are watching us!



■ Why Guidelines are Important

Traditionally, we expended a lot of energy gathering and hunting for our food. We ate larger meals in times of plenty and the excess weight was needed for when food was scarce.

As time went on, we learned skills that enabled us to raise animals and grow our food. Now with industrialization, food comes to us with minimal energy expenditure. Now many meals and snacks can be consumed in the home, at work and on the go. Food and beverages are available 24 hours of the day and up to seven days a week. Having food and beverages readily available to us can be a good thing given that many of us no longer live a lifestyle whereby time and affordability are the deciding factors in how we make our food choices. Many of the foods and beverages that are readily available are those that are high in unhealthy fat, sodium (salt) and sugar and low in fibre.

As is evident from the steadily increasing rates of overweight and obesity all of us can use some guidance and encouragement when it comes to the foods and beverages that we are choosing to nourish our bodies with.

When we prepare food and beverages in our home from raw ingredients we can control the amount of fat, sodium (salt) and sugar. Unfortunately, the research is telling us that we are two generations away from having the food skills to prepare foods from raw ingredients.

The reasons for this alarming information are not straight forward. Two known factors are busy lifestyles that do not allow for meal preparation skills to be passed down through generations and the increasing dependence on take away and fast food to facilitate our busy lifestyles.

The Government of Alberta acknowledges that it is not possible for all of us to return to a simpler lifestyle that would afford us the time and energy to prepare our foods and beverages so that we have the healthiest possible choices. Albertans do however deserve to have access to healthier food and beverage choices and the knowledge to make those choices. The Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Adults were developed to assist Albertans to make healthier food and beverage choices.

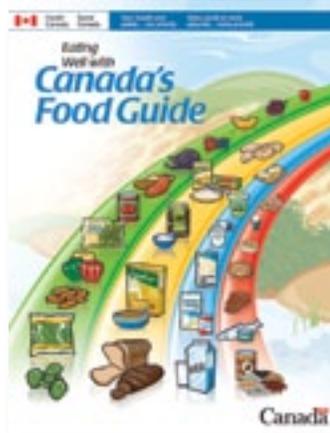
■ Healthy Eating for Adults

The Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Adults (ANGA) take a positive approach to eating. The guidelines support Albertans to take charge of their health and well-being by eating healthy and describe how they can become involved in supporting their families, co-workers and communities to do the same.

In order for Albertans to be able to make improvements to their eating habits they have to be able to feel comfortable knowing how to select and prepare healthy foods in food environments that do not always encourage choosing the healthy choice. Ultimately no one can force anyone to eat healthy. A person needs to want to eat healthy to be healthy. In other words it has to be a personal decision. The guidelines will help Albertans to learn how to select the healthy foods.

Whether you are young or old, short or tall and no matter what your body size, healthy eating is the same for everyone. Dieting for specific health reasons such as the prevention of cardiovascular disease or type 2 diabetes, weight loss or health and longevity, it's all the same thing. One single food will rarely have a large impact on your health. It is your overall eating pattern and the foods and beverages you choose most of the time that are important. Shift your thoughts and fears away from things you shouldn't eat and focus on foods that will contribute to your overall health.

A healthy diet for adults includes choosing to eat foods from all four food groups in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide. To view a copy visit www.hc-sc.gc.ca. The ANGA will help you go one step further and provide you with criteria to select a variety of foods from within the four food groups for your regular meals and snacks.



You can get started eating healthy with just a few simple changes each month, and gradually these new habits will become part of your healthy lifestyle.

Most important, be sure that whatever you eat you enjoy!

Do not focus on the word diet. A diet simply means “the foods and beverages a person usually eats.”

Many of us choose to eat unhealthy foods for all kinds of reasons. Some of us may find it difficult to control our food cravings. If you struggle with food as an addiction it's important to get help. Ask a physician for a referral to a therapist or call HEALTHLink from anywhere in Alberta at 1-866-408-5465.

■ Healthy Eating Recommendations

Key Steps for Eating to a Healthier You

Step 1 – Set goals and find balance

- Make plans to eat better and move more.
- Take time out of your daily routine to enjoy meals with others.

Step 2 – Prepare and choose healthy food

- Read labels and choose foods high in fibre and low in fat, sodium and sugar.
- Use healthy cooking and baking methods.

Step 3 – Eat more vegetables and fruit

- Choose fresh fruit and vegetables for a quick and healthy snack.
- Have a salad as a meal, it's fresh, delicious and naturally good for you.
- Aim for 7 to 10 servings of fruit and vegetables every day.
- Eating vegetables and fruit is one of the most important thing you can do for your health.

Step 4 – Choose whole grains

- Whole grain products will increase your fibre intake.
- Fibre makes you feel full, helps control blood cholesterol and blood sugar, and lowers the risk of disease.

Step 5 – Watch your portion size

- How much you eat is as important as what you eat.

Step 6 – Choose healthy drinks

- Drink water to quench your thirst throughout the day.
- Limit drinks with added sugar and empty calories.
- Drink milk or fortified soy beverage at meals.

Step 7 – Limit add ons

- Condiments and sauces.
- Unhealthy fats like hard margarines, lard, cream and mayonnaise.
- Salts and sugars.

Make unhealthy foods difficult to choose by leaving them in the store. Then when you have a craving you will have to decide if the effort is really worth it. If it is, walk or ride your bike to get them.

FAT FACTS:

When it comes to fats, it's not only the amount of fat we eat that counts, but also the type. In general, fats that are liquid at room temperature such as liquid vegetable oils and soft margarine are considered "good" fats or fats that are "heart healthy."

Fats that are firm at room temperature such as lard, butter and shortening can increase blood cholesterol levels and, as a result, should be eaten in moderation. Keep in mind that even so-called "good" fats are high in calories. Knowing this, keep portion sizes small.

Healthy Eating Recommendations

The following are recommendations for preparing and providing healthy food choices at home, in the workplace and in public settings.

At Home

When you put healthy foods in your grocery cart you will end up with healthy foods to choose from in your home. Healthy food ingredients make it easy to prepare nutritious meals and snacks. The Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Adults will help you to select the healthy foods by teaching you how to read a Nutrition Facts Table on packaged food and beverage labels and provide you with the nutrition criteria to focus on. Once you have everything you need to prepare healthy meals and snacks you are well on your way to a healthier lifestyle. If you are not that familiar with preparing and cooking food start with simple recipes.

These are some basic foods and ingredients that you can keep in your home to help you eat better:

- Vegetables and fruit, a variety of fresh, canned, frozen or dried.
- Whole grain breads, cereals, pasta and grains such as wraps, oatmeal, bulgar, brown rice, quinoa, millet and a few varieties of whole grain pasta such as spaghetti and macaroni.
- Milk or fortified soy beverages, plain yogurt or soygurt and one or two different types of low-fat cheese or fortified soya loaf/slices.
- Meats and alternatives such as canned fish, eggs, nuts and nut butters, tahini paste (ground sesame seeds), dried legumes, lentils and beans.
- Basic spices such as cinnamon, ginger, chili flakes/whole dried chillies and chili powder, coriander, cumin, turmeric, curry, ground ginger, garlic powder, pepper, oregano, basil and thyme.
- Fats and oils such as canola, sunflower, olive, sesame, coconut and perhaps a nut oil; the choice is yours. Choose a non-hydrogenated margarine. A serving is 5 mL/1 tsp.
- Vinegars such as balsamic, red/white, sherry or cider.
- Broths such as, low sodium beef, chicken or vegetarian.

Snacks should include foods that might be missed at meals such as vegetables and fruit.

Handy Kitchen Equipment

- **Pots; especially a soup pot, a frying pan, baking sheet, pans and muffin tins.**
- **Sharp knives, can opener, vegetable peeler and a cutting board.**
- **Reusable containers, insulated lunch bag, small freezer packs and a permanent marker.**

MEALS as Easy as 1-2-3-4

Plan meals with choices from the four food groups in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide.

1. **Start with a vegetable &/or a fruit.**
2. **Add a whole grain product.**
3. **Select a meat or an alternative.**
4. **Complete the meal with milk, fortified soy beverage, water, tea or coffee.**



Healthy Eating Recommendations

What is a Serving Size?

The Government of Alberta has chosen to use the recommendations in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide to help identify appropriate amounts and portion sizes that need to be eaten daily from specific age categories. A Food Guide Serving Size (FGSS) is simply a reference amount. It helps you understand how much food is recommended every day from each of the four food groups. In some cases, a FGSS may be close to what you eat, such as an apple. In other cases, such as rice or pasta, you may serve yourself more than one Food Guide Serving. For more information check out Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide at www.hc-sc.gc.ca

The amounts of foods from each food group will depend on your body size, activity level and your weight loss or weight gain goals.

Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per Day 19-50 Age in Years

Females		Males	
Vegetables and Fruit	7-8	Vegetables and Fruit	8-10
Grain Products	6-7	Grain Products	8
Milk and Alternatives	2	Milk and Alternatives	2
Meat and Alternatives	2	Meat and Alternatives	3

Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per Day 51+ Age in Years

Females		Males	
Vegetables and Fruit	7	Vegetables and Fruit	7
Grain Products	6	Grain Products	7
Milk and Alternatives	3	Milk and Alternatives	3
Meat and Alternatives	2	Meat and Alternatives	3

Healthy Eating Recommendations

How a Day's Food Choices Add Up

An example for a 19 – 50 year old male according to Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide's recommended number of servings in a day.

	Vegetables & Fruit	Grain Products	Milk & Alternatives	Meat & Alternatives	Anything extra
Breakfast	1 orange	2 cups/500 mL cereal	1 cup/250 mL milk		Coffee/Tea
Snack	1 apple	30 g granola Bar			Water
Lunch	1 cup/250 mL carrots 1 pear	2 slices Bread		75 g sliced cold roasted chicken	Water, coffee or tea, mayonnaise and mustard
Snack	½ cup/125 mL sugar snap peas				Water
Supper	1 cup/250 mL broccoli	1 cup/250 mL quinoa		75 g salmon	Brewed Ice Tea with Lemon Twist, tartar sauce
Snack	½ cup/125 mL strawberries	20 g crackers	1 cup/250 mL milk		
Totals*	9	8	2	2	
19 – 50 Year Old Male**	8 - 10	8	2	3	Most extras are added calories. Choose wisely

*Total servings from each food group for this example

**Total recommended servings for each food group for a 19-50 year old male

What would your day look like according to your age and gender?

	Vegetables & Fruit	Grain Products	Milk & Alternatives	Meat & Alternatives	Anything extra
Breakfast					
Snack					
Lunch					
Snack					
Supper					
Snack					
Totals					

Examples of serving sizes according to Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide.

Vegetables and fruit: 1 small to medium sized vegetable or fruit or ½ cup/125 mL

Grain Products: 1 cup/250 mL cold cereal; 1 slice of bread; ½ cup/125 mL cooked grains such as quinoa; 20-25g crackers

Milk & Alternatives: 1 cup/250 mL milk or fortified soya beverage

Meat & Alternatives: 75g (2.5 oz.) ½ cup/125 mL cooked lean meat, poultry or fish; 175 mL/¾ cup cooked legumes; 150g/175 mL/¾ cup tofu; 2 eggs; 30 mL/2 Tbsp peanut or nut/seed butters.

Healthy Eating Recommendations

Create an Ideal Meal

The possibilities are endless! You can create breakfast, lunch, and supper ideas by choosing a food from each of the four of the food groups.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

Vegetables & Fruit	Grain Products	Milk & Alternatives	Meat & Alternatives
Fresh fruit such as apple, banana, orange, kiwi, grapefruit, watermelon, cantaloupe, melon	Whole grain bread	Milk	Fresh, frozen, or canned fish
Frozen fruit such as berries	Whole grain buns	Fortified soy beverage	Fresh or frozen lean beef
Canned fruit	Whole wheat pita	Fortified rice beverage	Fresh or frozen skinless chicken
Applesauce	Whole wheat English muffin	Hard cheese	Fresh or frozen skinless turkey
Unsweetened fruit juice	Whole wheat or multigrain bagel	Cheese slice	Fresh or frozen seafood
Vegetable juice	Whole wheat or multigrain wrap	Fortified soya loaf and slices	Fresh or frozen pork
Dried fruit such as raisins, cranberries, figs, dates, apricots, prunes	Whole wheat pasta	Yogurt	Fresh or frozen lamb
Fresh vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, radishes, cucumber	Brown or wild rice	Soygurt	Fresh or frozen game
Dried fruit bar	Oatmeal or oatbran hot cereal		Eggs
Frozen veggies such as corn, peas, carrots, mixed raw veggies such as carrots, snow peas, cherry tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower	High fibre, low sugar breakfast cereal		Tofu
Cooked fresh veggies such as squash, asparagus, peas, green beans	Pancakes		Soy product such as a veggie burger
Salad with lettuce, cabbage or spinach	Waffles		Peanut butter or other nut/seed butter
Vegetable soup	Crepes		Beans/legumes such as kidney beans, chick peas, baked beans, lentils
	Whole grain crackers		Hummus
	Whole wheat or bran muffins		
	Couscous		
	Barley		
	Millet		
	Quinoa		
	Buckwheat		

Great Snack Ideas

- Fresh fruit
- Chewy snack mix: dried apricots/raisins with nuts/seeds
- Yogurt tube or container of yogurt
- Canned fruit cup
- Crunchy snack mix: dried cereal, popcorn, crackers, pretzels
- Whole wheat crackers and cheese
- Raw vegetables and dip/hummus
- Applesauce cup
- Dried fruit bar
- Homemade muffin
- Smoothie with milk, yogurt and frozen berries
- Smoothie with milk, ice and banana
- Celery with peanut butter or almond butter topped with raisins
- Frozen grapes
- Glass of milk and oatmeal cookies
- Strawberries, apple slices, or banana chunks with yogurt as dip
- Yogurt and granola

Healthy Eating Recommendations

Food Journal

Simple goals work best. When you first start out to improve your eating habits it helps to keep a food journal and write down one or two achievable goals that will increase your good habits and decrease your not so good ones. The simpler your healthier lifestyle changes are the easier it will be for you to make permanent changes. Goals with specific actions are measureable and you can track your successes.

- Goals need to be specific if you are going to have a chance at success
- Setting a specific goal builds in the criteria you will use to evaluate your success such as:
 - Increase the number of servings of fruit and vegetables by 2 every month until I am eating at least 7 or 8 servings
- Then use goal setting actions that will help achieve your goals such as:
 - By choosing to eat a vegetable &/or fruit at lunch time
 - By choosing to eat a vegetable or fruit for a snack

Print a copy for yourself.

Breakfast

Time: _____
Location: _____
I'm with: _____
I ate: _____
I drank: _____
I'm feeling: _____
I'm thinking about: _____

Snack # 1

Time: _____
Location: _____
I'm with: _____
I ate: _____
I drank: _____
I'm feeling: _____
I'm thinking about: _____

Lunch

Time: _____
Location: _____
I'm with: _____
I ate: _____
I drank: _____
I'm feeling: _____
I'm thinking about: _____

Snack # 2

Time: _____
Location: _____
I'm with: _____
I ate: _____
I drank: _____
I'm feeling: _____
I'm thinking about: _____

Dinner

Time: _____
Location: _____
I'm with: _____
I ate: _____
I drank: _____
I'm feeling: _____
I'm thinking about: _____

Snack # 3

Time: _____
Location: _____
I'm with: _____
I ate: _____
I drank: _____
I'm feeling: _____
I'm thinking about: _____

Progress Check

This week, I noticed that:	Next week/month, my goals are:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

■ Healthy Eating Recommendations

Moving Healthy Eating into the Workplace

Not only is the workplace viewed as an effective place to promote health but it is increasingly recognized that the environment at work influences health.

Promoting health in your workplace doesn't have to be complicated, expensive or time-consuming. Any Albertan can help their organization, large or small, make plans to promote healthy eating in the workplace. Consider being a workplace champion and promote healthy eating by your actions.

You can start by bringing healthy lunches and snacks to work. Doing this gives you greater control over what foods are in your lunch and how big your portion sizes are. And you save money. One person, packing a lunch and snacks, can save as much as \$500.00 a year. Think of what a family of four could save!

If you normally eat out, aim to reduce the number of take away and restaurant meals each month until you are down to no more than once a week. Choose restaurants that offer healthier options. Ask the restaurant if they provide a nutrition breakdown of their menu selections. Many chain restaurants and fast food outlets post this information on their websites. Take the time to compare their nutrition information with the nutrition criteria for Mixed Dishes in the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Adults located on pages 18 to 20.

Meetings, events and conferences are a central part of today's work world and many involve serving food and drinks. When planning food and beverages for meetings make sure that more choices are healthy choices. Lead by example.

Does your office have unhealthy food offered in the staff room or vending machines? Work with the staff and vending supplier to change the food and beverage options to healthier ones. The Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Adults provides you with the nutrition criteria for selecting healthier food and beverage options.



■ Healthy Eating Recommendations

Influencing the Food Environment

Albertans all have a responsibility to role model healthy eating, however this can be difficult if the food environments in public buildings do not support healthy choices.

Public buildings, such as recreation facilities, community centres and hospitals are highly diverse and can attract thousands of visitors annually. They may be operated on a for-profit or not-for profit basis. In many instances the food services within public buildings are subcontracted to for-profit food service operators. Most facilities serve a diverse customer base of both adults and children. Food service operators can ensure that their menu items contain a balance of food and beverage items that include healthier food options at competitive prices.

Healthier food environments in public places should:

- encourage portion sizes of food that are consistent with the recommendations in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide; www.hc-sc.gc.ca;
- promote small serving sizes of energy-dense, nutrient poor foods and beverages;
- Include healthy options from the Choose Most Often category for all vending machines and canteens;
- place healthy food options where they can be seen;
- display healthier food options more prominently than less healthy food choices; and
- do not charge a premium for healthier food options. A lower profit margin on healthier foods and beverages can be compensated for by an increased profit margin on less healthier foods.

Recommendations:

- Vegetables and fruit (raw, or prepared with little to no added fat, sugar or salt) should always be available.*
- Whole grain foods should always be available.
- Water should always be available. Milk (skim, 1%, 2%) and 100% fruit/vegetable juices should also be available.*
- Lean meat and poultry products, beans and lentils, and plain nuts should always be available.*
- Individual portion sizes should be consistent with Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide.
- If providing high fat, sugar and/or sodium (salt) snack items choose serving sizes that provide on average no more than 100 kcal/individual serving:
 - 30 g for chips and crackers (1 cup/250 mL)
 - 30 g for high sugar cereal (1 cup/250 mL)
 - 20 g for beef jerky
 - 30 – 38 g for cookies and cereal bars
 - 20 g for chocolate bars and candy (1 mini)
 - 55 g for bakery items, including, but not limited to, pastries, muffins, and doughnuts
 - 85 g for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, ice cream (frozen on a stick)
 - 237 mL for beverages (8 oz)

*Where appropriate food service equipment is available.

Food availability and accessibility in our environments are important predictors of food intake.

The profits from unhealthy food and beverages is at the expense of an Albertan's health.

The Food Rating System

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide (CFG) recommends appropriate amounts and portion sizes of healthy foods and beverages that need to be eaten daily within specific age and gender categories.

The Government of Alberta uses the recommendations in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide (CFG) to identify foods into the four food groups: Vegetables and Fruit; Grain Products; Milk and Alternatives; and Meat and Alternatives. However the Government of Alberta acknowledges that grouping foods isn't enough information to help Albertans choose a healthy choice from one that is not so healthy. If it were as simple as choosing a red apple versus a green apple we could all make healthy choices. Making healthy choices becomes confusing when we start to process foods. For example, one variety of crackers versus another can vary in the amount of calories, fat, sodium (salt), sugar and fibre it contains. One could be a healthy choice and one may not be so healthy for you. The food rating system will help you separate out the healthy from the not so healthy and the criteria has been displayed inside look-a-like Nutrition Facts Tables just like a Nutrition Facts Table on packaged food and beverages.

The food rating system provides nutrient criteria for a recommended Canada's Food Guide Serving Size. Wherever possible the serving size, as recommended in CFG, has been used as the suggested serving size for the food rating system. For those foods that have no food guide portion size listed, the suggested portion size was taken from the on-line Canadian Nutrient File which is located on the Health Canada website at www.hc-sc.gc.ca

All foods and beverages, within each CFG food group, have been classified into three categories: **Choose Most Often**, **Choose Sometimes** and **Choose Least Often** based on the amount of total fat, saturated fat, sodium (salt), sugar and fibre. When you cook meals at home use ingredients that fit into the Choose Most Often category as much as possible and omit added fat, sodium and sugars. The Government of Alberta also recognizes that we do not always eat foods singly from each food group and has therefore developed a Mixed Dish category which will help you make healthier choices when you are choosing foods that are combined together. A good example is a sandwich or a bowl of soup. Using the Mixed Dish criteria will help you choose healthier packaged foods.

A balanced approach to choosing foods involves eating **Choose Most Often** foods daily, adding in some **Choose Sometimes** foods throughout the week and selecting a **Choose Least Often** perhaps once a week. It is always good to remind yourself that an extra 100 calories a day over and above what your body needs will add up to an extra 10 pound/4.5 kg weight gain in one year!

It should be noted that the following food rating system could contain many more foods that are not listed. Over time, and by the ongoing evaluation of these guidelines, the food rating system will evolve to identify additional foods. Feedback from Albertans that are using the guidelines will assist with this process.

For assistance reading food labels see pages 31 to 37.

The Food Rating System

Category #1 Choose Most Often

Choose Most Often foods and beverages are the healthy choices recommended in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide. Albertans are encouraged to make a variety of food choices from all four food groups: Vegetables & Fruit; Grain Products; Milk & Alternatives; and Meat & Alternatives. Using the nutrition criteria from the Choose Most Often food category for all four food groups will assist Albertans in making food and beverage choices that are lower in fat, sodium and sugar and contain a source of fibre as well. The nutrient criteria are based on a Canada's Food Guide serving size.

Vegetables and Fruit

Choose Most Often Vegetables and Fruit are:

- Prepared with no added fat, sugar or salt.
- Are not deep fried or par-boiled in oil.

Choose to have vegetables and fruit more often than juice.

- Limit juice servings to one Canada Food Guide serving per day; ½ cup/125 mL = 1 CFGS
- Drink water to quench thirst instead.

Dried fruit and fruit/vegetable bars stick to your teeth when eaten.

- Brush your teeth after eating dried fruits and vegetables.

100% Natural Vegetables/Fruit

Nutrition Facts

Per Fresh, frozen or canned fruit = 1 small to medium size or 125 mL / ½ cup
 Dried fruit = 60 mL / 40 g / ¼ cup
 Leafy salad = 250 mL / 1 cup
 100% pure juice = 125 mL / ½ cup
 Fruit sauce
 (i.e. Unsweetened applesauce) = 125 mL / ½ cup

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat naturally occurring only	
Sodium ≤ 100 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Fibre all naturally occurring	
Sugars no added sugar	



100% Dried Vegetables and/or Fruit Bars and Snacks

Nutrition Facts

Per Fruit/vegetable bar (made with 100% fruit/vegetable/puree/juice) = 14 g
 Fruit/vegetable snacks (made with 100% fruit/vegetable/puree/juice) = 20 g

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat naturally occurring only	
Sodium ≤ 100 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Fibre all naturally occurring	
Sugars ≤ 20 g from 100% fruit; no added sugar	



100% Baked Vegetables/Fruit

Nutrition Facts

Per 125 mL / ½ cup/50 g

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 5 g	
Saturated ≤ 2 g	
+Trans 0 g	
Sodium ≤ 100 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Fibre all naturally occurring	
Sugars no added sugar	



Symbols: < less than > greater than
 ≤ less than or equal to ≥ greater than or equal to

CFGs: Canada Food Guide Serving

The Food Rating System

Category #1 Choose Most Often

Milk and Alternatives

Fluid Milk

Nutrition Facts
Per Fluid milk = 250 mL / 1 cup
 Undiluted evaporated milk = 125 mL / ½ cup
 Powdered dry milk = 75 mL / ⅓ cup or 25 g

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 5 g	
Saturated ≤ 3 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.3 g	
Sodium ≤ 120 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Sugars ≤ 12 g	
Protein ≥ 8 g	
Calcium ≥ 30 % DV	
Vitamin D ≥ 44 % DV	



Yogurt/Kefir from Milk

Nutrition Facts
Per 175 mL / ¾ cup

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 3 g	
Saturated ≤ 2 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.3 g	
Sodium ≤ 120 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Sugars ≤ 12 g	
Protein ≥ 6 g	
Calcium ≥ 15 % DV	



Fortified Soy Beverage

Nutrition Facts
Per 250 mL / 1 cup

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 5 g	
Saturated ≤ 1 g	
+Trans ≤ 0 g	
Sodium ≤ 120 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Sugars ≤ 9 g	
Protein ≥ 6 g	
Calcium ≥ 30 % DV	
Vitamin D ≥ 44 % DV	



Examples:

Skim, 1% and 2% fluid milk or evaporated milk.

Soygurt (from Soy)

Nutrition Facts
Per 175 mL / ¾ cup

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 3 g	
Saturated ≤ 1 g	
+Trans ≤ 0 g	
Sodium ≤ 50 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Sugars ≤ 9 g	
Protein ≥ 6 g	
Calcium ≥ 15 % DV	

Symbols: < less than > greater than
 ≤ less than or equal to ≥ greater than or equal to

CFGS: Canada Food Guide Serving

The Food Rating System

Category #1 Choose Most Often

Milk and Alternatives

Cheese, Hard/Soft from Milk

Nutrition Facts	
Per 50 g	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat	≤ 10 g
Saturated	≤ 6 g
+Trans	≤ 0.5 g
Sodium	≤ 350 mg hard; ≤ 200 mg soft
Protein	≥ 8 g



Examples:

Cheddar, Mozzarella, Paneer, Ricotta

Cottage Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
Per 125 mL / ½ cup or 115 g	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat	≤ 5 g
Saturated	≤ 3 g
+Trans	≤ 0.5 g
Sodium	≤ 120 mg
Protein	≥ 8 g



Examples:

Dry curd, no salt added cottage cheese.

Fortified Soya Loaf and Slices (like Cheese)

Nutrition Facts	
Per 50 g	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat	≤ 5 g
Saturated	≤ 1 g
+Trans	≤ 0 g
Sodium	≤ 350 mg
Protein	≥ 6 g

Symbols: < less than > greater than
 ≤ less than or equal to ≥ greater than or equal to

CFGS: Canada Food Guide Serving

The Food Rating System

Category #1 Choose Most Often

Meats and Alternatives

Meat/Fish/Poultry

Nutrition Facts
Per Cooked beef, pork, lamb, wild game, poultry (chicken or turkey) and fish, etc. = 2.5 oz / 75 g cooked weight or 125 mL / ½ cup ground cooked

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 10 g	
Saturated ≤ 3 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.5 g	
Sodium ≤ 200 mg	
Protein ≥ 14 g	



Examples:

All lean meats (beef, venison, bison, pork, lamb, etc.), poultry (chicken, turkey, duck, etc.), and fish — baked, broiled, boiled, poached, roasted, grilled or barbequed.

Deli/Luncheon Meats

Nutrition Facts
Per Cooked beef, pork, lamb, wild meat, and poultry (chicken or turkey) or fish, etc = 75 g cooked weight or 125 mL

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 5 g	
Saturated ≤ 3 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.5 g	
Sodium ≤ 350 mg	
Protein ≥ 10 g	



Examples:

Sliced sandwich meat, sausage.

Alternatives

Nutrition Facts
Per Eggs = 2
 Nuts and seeds, plain and unsalted = 60 mL or 20 almonds (36 g), 10 walnuts (25 g), or 10 pecans (25 g)
 Peanuts = 60 mL or 46 peanuts (37 g)
 Nut butters (peanut, cashew, almond, etc.) = 2 Tbsp / 30 mL
 Legumes — beans (kidney, black, navy, soy, etc.) and lentils (chick peas, split peas, etc.) = 175 mL / ¾ cup cooked
 Tofu = 175 mL / ¾ cup or 150 g

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 10 g (All naturally occurring fat in nuts, seeds, nut and seed butters is acceptable.)	
Saturated ≤ 3 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.5 g	
Sodium ≤ 200 mg (No added salt on nuts and seeds, in nut and seed butters and eggs.)	
Carbohydrate	
Sugar naturally occurring	
Protein ≥ 6 g	
Calcium ≥ 25 % DV (tofu)	
Iron ≥ 4 % DV (tofu) ≥ 2% DV (nuts, nut butters and legumes)	



Examples:

All legumes (beans, lentils and peanuts) All nuts and seeds (walnuts, almonds, pecans, cashews, sesame seeds, flax seeds, etc.). Nut butters (peanut, etc.) with no hydrogenated oil.

Note: Wild meat must be prepared at a federally inspected plant.

Symbols: < less than > greater than
 ≤ less than or equal to ≥ greater than or equal to

CFGS: Canada Food Guide Serving

The Food Rating System

Category #1 Choose Most Often

Mixed Dishes

Soup – Broth Based	
Nutrition Facts	
Per See examples on this page	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories ≤ 200	
Fat ≤ 2 g	
Saturated ≤ 1 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.1 g	
Sodium ≤ 250 mg	

Soup – Broth Based	
Nutrition Facts	
Per See examples on this page	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 201 – 300	
Fat ≤ 4 g	
Saturated ≤ 2 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.2 g	
Sodium ≤ 400 mg	

Examples:

Chicken rice, beef noodle, vegetable gumbo and tomato or vegetable soups that are not made with cream or milk.

Soup – Meal Style	
Nutrition Facts	
Per See examples on this page	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories ≤ 200	
Fat ≤ 4 g	
Saturated ≤ 1 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.2 g	
Sodium ≤ 250 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Fibre ≥ 2 g	
Sugar	
Protein ≥ 7 g	

Soup – Meal Style	
Nutrition Facts	
Per See examples on this page	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 201 – 300	
Fat ≤ 7 g	
Saturated ≤ 2 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.3 g	
Sodium ≤ 400 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Fibre ≥ 2 g	
Sugar	
Protein ≥ 10 g	

Examples:

Chowders, chunky soup, stews and cream based soups.

Note: In order to be considered in the Choose Most Often category, a mixed dish containing grain products, must be made with whole grains.

Symbols: < less than > greater than
 ≤ less than or equal to ≥ greater than or equal to

CFGs: Canada Food Guide Serving



The Food Rating System

Category #2 Choose Sometimes

Foods and beverages in the Choose Sometimes category may provide beneficial nutrients however they tend to be higher in added sodium, sugar and unhealthy fat. Foods and beverages in this category can be a part of your diet but you need to choose them only sometimes, for example 3 or 4 selections combined from all four food groups, not 3 or 4 selections from each of the four food groups, each week.

Vegetables and Fruit

Grain Products

Processed Vegetables/ Fruit

Nutrition Facts

Per 125 mL / ½ cup
 Juice = 125 mL / ½ cup
 Fruit sauce (ie. apple sauce) = 125 mL / ½ cup
 Dried fruit with added sugar = 60 mL / ¼ cup or 40 g*
 Fruit/vegetable bar = 14 g*
 Fruit snacks = 20 g*
 Vegetable/fruit product = 125 mL / ½ cup / 50 g

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 10 g	
Saturated ≤ 4 g	
+Trans 0 g	
Sodium ≤ 300 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Sugars ≤ 16 g; * ≤ 30 g; fruit/vegetable bar, fruit/ vegetable snack and dried fruit	



Cereals and Grain Products/Baked Goods

Nutrition Facts

Per Bread or bun = 1 slice or 35 g /slice
 Naan, roti, pita or wrap = ½ of a 17 cm diameter piece or 35 g
 Crackers = 20 g to 25 g
 Granola bar and cookie(s) = 30 g to 38 g
 Rice, grains and pasta = 125 mL cooked or 43 g
 Hot cereal = 175 mL / ¾ cup or 175-190 g
 Cold cereal = 250 mL or 30 g / 1 cup
 Muffin (½) or quick breads = 35 g
 Pancake or waffle = 35 g
 Pizza crust = 35 g
 Popcorn = 500 mL / 2 cups
 Bagel = ½ or 45 g
 Granola type cereal = 80 mL / 1/3 cup or 30 to 35 g
 Rice cake = 2 medium
 Congee = 125 mL / ½ cup
 Polenta = 125 mL / ½ cup

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 10 g	
Saturated ≤ 4 g	
+Trans 0 g	
Sodium ≤ 300 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Sugars ≤ 16 g	



Symbols: < less than > greater than
 ≤ less than or equal to ≥ greater than or equal to

CFGS: Canada Food Guide Serving

The Food Rating System

Category #2 Choose Sometimes

Milk and Alternatives

Fluid Milk	
Nutrition Facts	
Per 250 mL / 1 cup	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 6 g	
Saturated ≤ 4 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.3 g	
Sodium ≤ 200 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Sugars ≤ 21 g	
Protein ≥ 5 g	
Calcium ≥ 30 % DV	
Vitamin D ≥ 44 % DV	

Fortified Soy Beverage	
Nutrition Facts	
Per 250 mL / 1 cup	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 6 g	
Saturated ≤ 1 g	
+Trans ≤ 0 g	
Sodium ≤ 150 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Sugars ≤ 20 g	
Protein ≥ 5 g	
Calcium ≥ 30 % DV	
Vitamin D ≥ 44 % DV	

Milk Alternatives	
Nutrition Facts	
Per Yogurt = 175 mL / ¾ cup	
Yogurt drink = 200 mL / 0.8 cup	
Cottage cheese = 125 mL / ½ cup	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 5 g	
Saturated ≤ 3 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.3 g; cottage cheese ≤ 0.5 g	
Sodium ≤ 120 mg; cottage cheese ≤ 350 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Sugars ≤ 20 g	
Protein ≥ 5 g	
Calcium ≥ 15 % DV	

Examples:

Flavoured skim, 1% and 2% milk.

Examples:

Flavoured fortified soy beverage.

Cheese, Hard/Soft Type from Milk	
Nutrition Facts	
Per 50 g	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 20 g	
Saturated ≤ 10 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.5 g	
Sodium ≤ 450 mg hard; ≤ 350 mg soft	
Protein ≥ 6 g	

pudding from Milk	
Nutrition Facts	
Per 125 mL / ½ cup	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 3 g	
Saturated ≤ 2 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.3 g	
Sodium ≤ 200 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Sugars ≤ 20 g	
Protein ≥ 4 g	
Calcium ≥ 10 % DV	

Soygurt (from Soy)	
Nutrition Facts	
Per 175 mL / ¾ cup	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 5 g	
Saturated ≤ 1 g	
+Trans ≤ 0 g	
Sodium ≤ 120 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Sugars ≤ 20 g	
Protein ≥ 5 g	
Calcium ≥ 15 % DV	

Fortified Soya Loaf and Slices (from Soy)	
Nutrition Facts	
Per 50 g	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Fat ≤ 8 g	
Saturated ≤ 2 g	
+Trans ≤ 0 g	
Sodium ≤ 400 mg	
Protein ≥ 6 g	

Symbols: < less than > greater than
 ≤ less than or equal to ≥ greater than or equal to

CFGs: Canada Food Guide Serving

The Food Rating System

Category #2 Choose Sometimes

Mixed Dishes

Using the criteria on pages 35 - 37 will help you choose healthier packaged foods.

Meat/Fish/Poultry Based	
Nutrition Facts	
Per See examples on this page	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 100 – 199	
Fat ≤ 6 g	
Saturated ≤ 3 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.3 g	
Sodium ≤ 500 mg	
Protein ≥ 5 g	

Meat/Fish/Poultry Based	
Nutrition Facts	
Per See examples on this page	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 200 – 299	
Fat ≤ 10 g	
Saturated ≤ 4 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.5 g	
Sodium ≤ 750 mg	
Protein ≥ 8 g	

Meat/Fish/Poultry Based	
Nutrition Facts	
Per See examples on this page	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 300 – 399	
Fat ≤ 15 g	
Saturated ≤ 6 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.7 g	
Sodium ≤ 900 mg	
Protein ≥ 10 g	

Meat/Fish/Poultry Based	
Nutrition Facts	
Per See examples on this page	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 400 – 499	
Fat ≤ 19 g	
Saturated ≤ 8 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.9 g	
Sodium ≤ 900 mg	
Protein ≥ 13 g	

Meat/Fish/Poultry Based	
Nutrition Facts	
Per See examples on this page	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 500 – 599	
Fat ≤ 23 g	
Saturated ≤ 10 g	
+Trans ≤ 1 g	
Sodium ≤ 900 mg	
Protein ≥ 15 g	

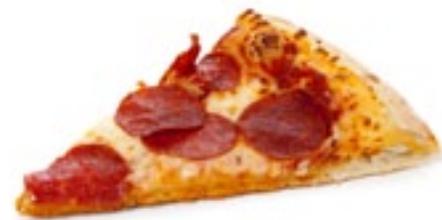
Examples:

Sandwiches including burgers, donairs, tacos, wraps, sushi, spring rolls, salad rolls, pizza, samosas and egg rolls.

Casseroles including macaroni and cheese, pasta and sauce, shepherd's pie, Pad Thai, meal salads, chili con carne, pasta salads and any meat/fish/poultry based dishes.

Symbols: < less than > greater than
 ≤ less than or equal to ≥ greater than or equal to

CFGS: Canada Food Guide Serving



The Food Rating System

Category #2 Choose Sometimes

Mixed Dishes

Soup – Broth Based	
Nutrition Facts	
Per See examples on this page	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories ≤ 200	
Fat ≤ 4 g	
Saturated ≤ 2 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.2 g	
Sodium ≤ 300 mg	

Soup – Broth Based	
Nutrition Facts	
Per See examples on this page	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 201 – 300	
Fat ≤ 7 g	
Saturated ≤ 3 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.3 g	
Sodium ≤ 450 mg	

Examples:

Chicken rice, beef noodle, vegetable gumbo and tomato or vegetable soups that are not made with cream or milk.

Soup – Meal Style	
Nutrition Facts	
Per See examples on this page	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories ≤ 200	
Fat ≤ 6 g	
Saturated ≤ 3 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.3 g	
Sodium ≤ 300 mg	
Protein ≥ 5 g	

Soup – Meal Style	
Nutrition Facts	
Per See examples on this page	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 201 – 300	
Fat ≤ 10 g	
Saturated ≤ 4 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.5 g	
Sodium ≤ 450 mg	
Protein ≥ 8 g	

Examples:

Chowders, chunky soup, stews and cream based soups.



Symbols: < less than > greater than
 ≤ less than or equal to ≥ greater than or equal to

CFGS: Canada Food Guide Serving

The Food Rating System



Category #3 Choose Least Often

Only small portions of nutrient poor food and beverages should be consumed.

Avoid large portion sizes of nutrient poor foods.

When choosing to eat foods and beverages high in calories from sugar and unhealthy fat, and high in sodium, select a small portion size as calories from these foods and beverages can be as much as 1/3 of your daily caloric needs and/or the sodium may exceed your total daily requirement.

Serving Size

Nutrition Facts

Serving sizes for foods that are high in unhealthy fat, sugar and salt are based on approximately 100 kcal per serving.

Example	Serving Size
French fries	≤ 50 grams (g), or 10 strips
Chips and crackers	≤ 30 grams (g), 250 mL / 1 cup
Sugary cereal, ≥ 16 grams (g)	≤ 30 grams (g), 250 mL / 1 cup
Cookies and granola bars ≥ 16 grams (g) sugar, ≥ 10 grams (g) fat	30 grams (g) or greater Cookies (2), Granola bar (1)
Chocolate bars and candy	20 grams (g) (1 mini)
Bakery items including, but not limited to pastries, muffins and doughnuts	≤ 55+ grams (g) total weight ≤ 10 grams (g) fat
Frozen desserts, including, but not limited to ice cream, in a dish or frozen on a stick	85 grams (g) or 1/2 cup serving
Fruit flavoured drinks	237 mL/8 oz

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide recommends limiting foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar or sodium (salt) such as:

- cakes and pastries, chocolate and candies, cookies and granola bars, doughnuts and muffins, ice cream and frozen desserts, deep fried french fries, potato chips, nachos and other salty snacks, fruit-flavoured drinks, soft drinks, sports and energy drinks, and sweetened hot or cold drinks.

Just because a food item has been fortified with vitamins or minerals or antioxidants or fibre, it is still considered an unhealthy food if it is high in calories from sugar and unhealthy fat, and high in sodium.

Symbols: < less than > greater than
 ≤ less than or equal to ≥ greater than or equal to

CFGS: Canada Food Guide Serving

The Food Rating System

Category #3 Choose Least Often

The following Nutrition Fact tables for nutrient poor foods do not indicate that these are healthier choices. Rather the criteria listed are examples of just how much fat, sugar and sodium you may be consuming if you choose these foods.

Cakes

Nutrition Facts	
Per $\frac{1}{12}$ of 23 cm diameter cake	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 400 - 500	
Fat ≥ 25 g	
Saturated ≥ 10 g	
Sodium ≥ 600 mg	
Sugars ≥ 60 g	



Pies

Nutrition Facts	
Per $\frac{1}{8}$ of 23 cm pie	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 200 - 500	
Fat ≥ 30 g	
Saturated ≥ 15 g	
Sodium ≥ 500 mg	
Sugars ≥ 50 g	



Donut

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 200 - 300	
Fat ≥ 20 g	
Saturated ≥ 5 g	
Sodium ≥ 250 mg	
Sugars ≥ 20 g	



Cookie

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 large	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 450 - 500	
Fat ≥ 22 g	
Saturated ≥ 11 g	
Sodium ≥ 300 mg	
Sugars ≥ 40 g	



Blended Ice Cream Treat

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 large	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories ≥ 600	
Fat ≥ 20 g	
Saturated ≥ 10 g	
Sodium ≥ 350 mg	
Sugars 60 - 70* g	



Muffin

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 large	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 300 - 400	
Fat ≥ 15 g	
Saturated ≥ 2 g	
Sodium ≥ 400 mg	
Sugars ≥ 20 g	



The Food Rating System

Category #3 Choose Least Often

French Fries, Large

Nutrition Facts
Per 150 g

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories ≥ 540	
Fat ≥ 26 g	
Saturated ≥ 5 g	
Sodium ≥ 350 mg	



Potato Chips

Nutrition Facts
Per 43 g

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories ≥ 200	
Fat ≥ 8 g	
Saturated ≥ 1 g	
Sodium ≥ 350 mg	



Specialty Coffee with syrup shots & creams

Nutrition Facts
Per 250 mL

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 300 - 400+	
Fat ≥ 10 g	
Saturated ≥ 5 g	
Sodium ≥ 50 mg	
Sugars ≥ 30 g	



Pop

Nutrition Facts
Per 250 mL

Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories ≥ 100	
Fat 0 g	
Saturated 0 g	
Sodium ≥ 10 mg	
Sugars ≥ 25 g	



Symbols: < less than > greater than
 ≤ less than or equal to ≥ greater than or equal to

CFGS: Canada Food Guide Serving

■ Reading Labels

In order to help you make a healthier food choice you will first need to know how to read a Nutrition Facts Table and the ingredient list on packaged food and beverages. Health Canada has made it mandatory that all packaged foods and beverages have a Nutrition Facts Table and ingredient lists.

Reading the Ingredients Label and Nutrition Facts Label

Reading labels is a great way to make the healthiest food choices for your family. Read the ingredients label and the Nutrition Facts Table before you purchase food. You will learn different things from each label.

Ingredients Label

Food packages list all the ingredients that are used to make the food. This list is always written in order of amounts: the package will contain the most of the first ingredient and the least of the last ingredient listed.

For example, this label was found on a box of wheat crackers:

- These crackers have more wheat flour than any other ingredient.
- These crackers have less flax meal than any other ingredient.

Ingredients lists are useful for people with food allergies and for people who want to avoid or limit certain ingredients for health reasons.

Read the ingredients list and avoid foods that use the words: shortening, hard margarine, butter, hydrogenated oil or partially hydrogenated oil. They will contain unhealthy fat.



■ Reading Labels

Nutrition Facts Label:

The nutrition facts label provides information about one serving of the food. Each package usually holds more than one serving.

The company that makes the food decides how big a serving size is and lists how much of each nutrient is in one serving. Often the serving size on the package is more than a recommended Canada Food Guide Serving Size. This label tells us that one serving is six crackers.

The label will tell you the amount of fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates (fibre and sugar), protein, vitamins (A and C) and minerals (calcium and iron) contained in one serving. This label tells us that there is both saturated and trans fat in one serving. These crackers would not be a healthy choice.

The % daily value shows whether a food is high or low in nutrients. As a quick guide,

- 5% is low—the food provides a small amount of the nutrient.
- 15% is high—the food provides a large amount of the nutrient.

This label tells us this food has 23% sodium. These crackers provide a large amount of sodium. For a healthy choice, choose crackers with 5% or less sodium per serving.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size – 6 crackers (38 g)	
Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value
Calories 125	8%
Total Fat 5 g	6%
Saturated Fat 3 g	
+ Trans Fat 1 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	23%
Sodium 15 g	5%
Carbohydrate 15 g	14%
Fiber 4 g	
Sugar 6 g	
Protein 5 g	0%
Vitamin A	0%
Vitamin C	17%
Calcium	3%
Iron	

■ Reading Labels

What are Daily Values?

Daily values give you information about the nutrients in one serving. The daily values are for adults.

Health Canada has an easy way to understand daily values:

- 5% daily value or less means the food has a little of this nutrient.
- 15% daily value or more means the food has a lot.

Does one serving of this oatmeal have a little or a lot of calcium? A little.

Examples of a good choice:

≤ 5% Sodium

≥ 15% Calcium

Oatmeal			
Nutrition Facts			
Per 1/3 cup (30 g)			
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)		
Calories	120		
Fat	2 g		3%
Saturated	0.4 g		2%
+ Trans	0 g		
Cholesterol	0 mg		
Sodium	0 mg		0%
Carbohydrate	20 g		7%
Fibre	3 g		11%
Sugars	0 g		
Protein	4 g		
Vitamin A	0%	Vitamin C	0%
Calcium	2%	Iron	8%

Reading Labels

Let's Look at a Label:

Crackers

STEP 1:

One CFGSS serving size for crackers is 20 to 25 g.

These Nutrition Facts are for 20 g.

Are the serving sizes about the same? Yes.

STEP 2:

What does the Food Rating System recommend for crackers?

Look at page 14.

The food should be 100% whole grain. One serving should have:

- no more than 3 g of fat
- no more than 1 g of saturated fat
- no more than 140 mg of sodium
- 2 g of fiber or more
- no more than 8 g of sugars

STEP 3:

Compare the Nutrition Facts for these crackers with the recommendations in Step 2.

One CFG serving of these crackers has:

- 3 g of fat
- 0.5 g of saturated fat
- 120 mg of sodium
- 2 g of fibre
- 0 g of sugars

STEP 4:

Are these crackers a Choose Most Often food? Yes.

Crackers			
Nutrition Facts			
Per 10 Crackers (20 g)			
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)		
Calories	90		
Fat	3 g		5%
Saturated	0.5 g		3%
+ Trans	0 g		
Cholesterol	0 mg		
Sodium	120 mg		0%
Carbohydrate	20 g		
Fibre	2 g		11%
Sugars	0 g		
Protein	2 g		
Vitamin A	0%	Vitamin C	0%
Calcium	0%	Iron	8%

INGREDIENTS: WHOLE GRAIN WHEAT, SOYABEAN OIL, SALT.

Whole grain wheat is the first ingredient in the list.



■ Reading a Label for Choosing Packaged Mixed Dishes

Some packaged foods have ingredients from more than one food group. These foods are called mixed dishes.

For example:

- burritos
- casseroles
- frozen dinners
- pizzas
- sandwiches
- smoothies
- soups



The Food Rating System has recommendations for packaged mixed dishes. The Food Rating System uses 3 groups of mixed dishes:

- 1 meat, fish or poultry based
- 2 vegetarian based
- 3 soups

The recommendations look like Nutrition Facts tables. Look at the example on the right.

Meat/Fish/Poultry Based	
Nutrition Facts	
Per Mixed dish	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 200 – 299	
Fat ≤ 7 g	
Saturated ≤ 2 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.3 g	
Sodium ≤ 500 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Fibre ≥ 2 g	
Sugar	
Protein ≥ 10 g	

Here is a table from the Food Rating System in the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Adults.

The table is for Choose Most Often mixed dishes with 200 to 299 calories.

The table uses these symbols:

- ≥ greater than or equal to
- ≤ less than or equal to

■ Reading a Label for Choosing Packaged Mixed Dishes

Let's Look at a Label:

PASTA AND VEGETABLE DINNER

Step 1: The Food Rating System

uses 3 groups of mixed dishes:

- 1 meat, fish or poultry based
- 2 vegetarian based
- 3 soups

Which group is this frozen dinner in?

vegetarian based group

Step 2: Read the Nutrition Facts for this pasta and vegetable dinner.

How many calories does this mixed dish have?

340 calories

This mixed dish has grains. It must have a whole grain for the food to be Choose Most Often.

Nutrition Facts			
Per 1 tray (300 g)			
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)		
Calories 340			
Fat 8 g			8%
Saturated 3 g			19%
+ Trans 0.2 g			
Cholesterol 10 mg			
Sodium 420 mg			8%
Carbohydrate 52 g			8%
Fibre 9 g			4%
Sugars 6 g			
Protein 15 g			
Vitamin A	15%	Vitamin C	45%
Calcium	20%	Iron	35%

INGREDIENTS: COOKED WHOLE WHEAT PENNE PASTA (WATER, WHOLE DURUM WHEAT SEMOLINA), TOMATOES (CONTAIN TOMATO JUICE, CITRIC ACID, CALCIUM CHLORIDE), ROASTED VEGETABLES (RED AND YELLOW BELL PEPPERS, ZUCCHINI, RED ONIONS, YELLOW SQUASH), WATER, CONCENTRATED TOMATO PASTE, PARMESAN CHEESE (PARTLY SKIMMED MILK, BACTERIAL CULTURES, SALT, MICROBIAL ENZYMES, CELLULOSE), CARROTS, MUSHROOMS, EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL, MODIFIED CORN STARCH, GARLIC, WHITE VINEGAR, HERBS AND SPICES, SALT.



■ Reading a Label for Choosing Packaged Mixed Dishes

Step 3: Now you can find the tables for mixed vegetarian dishes on page 19.

Here are the 2 tables for a vegetarian based mixed dish with 300 to 399 calories.

Choose Most Often

Vegetarian Based	
Nutrition Facts	
Per Mixed dish	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 300 – 399	
Fat ≤ 10 g	
Saturated ≤ 3 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.5 g	
Sodium ≤ 700 mg	
Carbohydrate	
Fibre ≥ 2 g	
Sugar	
Protein ≥ 10 g	

Choose Sometimes

Vegetarian Based	
Nutrition Facts	
Per Mixed dish	
Amount	% Daily Value (DV)
Calories 300 – 399	
Fat ≤ 15 g	
Saturated ≤ 6 g	
+Trans ≤ 0.7 g	
Sodium ≤ 900 mg	
Protein ≥ 7 g	

Step 4: Compare the Nutrition Facts for the pasta dinner with the recommendations in the 2 tables above.

Step 5: This pasta dinner is:

- a Choose Most Often dish
- a Choose Sometimes dish
- Neither

Resources

YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION ON NUTRITION AT THE FOLLOWING SITE:

www.hc-sc.gc.ca

