

NUTRITION MONTH 2021

POSTER DISCUSSION GUIDE

Good for you! Dietitians help you find your healthy.

whatYOUeat.ca

INTRODUCTION

Let Our Dietitians Help You Find Your Healthy!

The dietitians at Dairy Farmers of Canada celebrate this year's Nutrition Month by offering you educational resources to support your professional practice.

This guide accompanies ten digital posters or visuals available on whatYOUeat.ca and builds on the 2021 Nutrition Month theme of diversity. These visuals feature a diverse range of individuals and variety of meals. Each visual includes statements that reflect the unique qualities of these individuals and the influences that impact their meals.

This guide provides supporting information related to the statements on each digital poster. Use this information as discussion starters with those you educate or to provide ideas and tips to support their health journey. The information in this guide is also accessible online by visiting whatYOUeat.ca in the "Find Your Healthy" tab, by clicking on the statements within each visual.

Happy Nutrition Month from the Dietitians at Dairy Farmers of Canada!

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In Tune with the Times



1. I listen to music while cooking

Happier, healthier eating starts with cooking at home

The more you cook at home, the more likely it is that you'll enjoy meals that are varied, nutritious and minimally processed, which can benefit your health. Cooking with a variety of fruits and veggies, whole grains, and proteins, will provide all the key essential nutrients you need for overall health. Protein foods such as milk, yogurt, and cheese provide 15 nutrients such as calcium and vitamin D to support bone health during your lifetime.

Are you looking for some tips to help you cook at home more often? First, make sure you always have some basic ingredients on hand in the fridge,

pantry and freezer, so you're more likely to have the ingredients you need when trying out a recipe.

When your schedule allows, wash and cut up different fruits and vegetables ahead of schedule to help you save time on those busier days. Once it's time to prep your meal, make a little bit extra: plan to cook double the amount of chicken and then use the leftovers to make chicken salad for the next day's lunch. You can also freeze the leftovers and save them for a rainy day!

ARTICLE

Getting Back to Basics with Healthy Eating

We are all aware of the influence our diet has on our health. More than ever, we are paying close attention to the way our food is produced and the need to prioritize cooking at home.

By preparing homemade meals for yourself and your family, you are more likely to include higher quality foods and support healthier eating habits. Would you like to cook at home more often? With a few basics, you can make it happen!

Great Taste That's Good for You

A diet that focuses on a wide variety of basic nutritious foods, and which minimizes the intake of highly processed foods, is beneficial for health. Minimally processed and naturally nutritious and tasty staples such as vegetables and fruit, whole grains and protein foods are loaded with nutrients that are essential for your body to function properly. Eating dairy products like milk, yogurt and cheese for example, provides your body with up to 15 nutrients - including calcium and vitamin D, which are valuable allies for healthy bones. On the other hand, eating highly processed foods contributes little nutritional value and is less beneficial to overall health.

Think cooking at home is difficult? Think again.

The key is proper planning. Good planning makes meal preparation easier and saves you both time and money. Become a planning pro:

- Take a few minutes to work out your weekly menu by checking in with your family members or drawing inspiration from cookbooks and online recipe sources
- Make a shopping list, noting what ingredients you need for your meals and snacks
- Why not check out specials for the week and include something new - each discovery will save you money and help introduce variety into your menu
- Wash and cut your vegetables ahead of time, to save time on busier days
- Plan larger quantities as you cook so you can easily whip up meals the next day, or freeze them to avoid waste
- Take advantage of extra weekend time to prepare freezable, homemade snacks in advance (chewy bars, muffins) and to cook meals that require more preparation time (soup, spaghetti sauce, lasagna)

The essentials

To prepare healthy and nutritious meals, try to have basic nutritious ingredients in the fridge, pantry and freezer so you are never caught off guard.

- Stock your **refrigerator** with colourful, fresh fruit and vegetables, and protein foods like meat, fish, eggs, as well as a variety of milk products like milk, yogurt and cheese.
 - Keep a variety of non-perishable foods in your **pantry**: fruit (canned or dried); different whole-grain foods including crackers, cereal, oats, flour, pasta, rice or couscous; proteins (canned legumes, canned fish, peanut butter, etc.) and cooking ingredients like oils and condiments.
 - For a quick meal that can be prepared ahead of time, make good use of your **freezer** by filling it with various frozen fruits and vegetables (berries, green peas, spinach); nuts and seeds; ready-to-eat whole-grain foods like homemade muffins, pita bread, bagels, etc. as well as easy-to-thaw protein foods such as cooked chicken strips, shrimps, and single servings of fish or grated cheese.
-

2. I enjoy spicy foods

Why skipping the salt is easier than you think!

There's a whole world beyond salt when it comes to seasoning your dishes. Spices and herbs are a great way to add plenty of rich flavour to your recipes — and they will please your taste buds, too. Dried or fresh herbs delicately flavour so many different dishes. Try herbs like parsley, coriander, chives, basil, mint, bay leaves, rosemary, sage, oregano, and thyme. If you've got extra herbs lying around, blend them together to make a quick pesto sauce and freeze for another time. Spices, on the other hand, add fragrance to food. Try spices like cumin, curry, cinnamon, cardamom, turmeric, garam masala, ginger, paprika, and pepper. Fresh ginger, fresh garlic, and flavoured vinegar, along with lemon and lime juice and zest, are other excellent options to use when replacing salt and adding unbelievable flavour to your meals.

3. I choose Canadian

Nothing says “quality” better than Canadian

In Canada, we're fortunate that food safety is highly regulated. In fact, the Canadian food system is considered to be one of the safest in the world. Whether it's related to Canadian agriculture or imported foods, strict regulations, safety systems, and standards are in place throughout the food chain to protect our food supply. Many Canadian agricultural sectors have on-farm food safety assurance programs that set the benchmarks for food safety and quality, animal welfare, and the environment. Such is the case for Canadian milk, which is produced with some of the world's strictest standards. Canadian dairy producers are very vigilant in producing milk of the highest quality, without the use of artificial growth hormones and ensuring that no antibiotics are present in the milk you drink.

4. I like reinventing old classics

Transform recipes you love into hearty, nutritious meals

We've all got those meals we love, dishes that are so comforting that we can't go too long without them. Though these may not always be the most nutritious, that doesn't mean you can't transform them into healthier options —and you can do it without compromising flavour! Depending on what your recipe calls for, adding more fibre, calcium, or protein is a great way to boost nutrition. **On the hunt for fresh ideas?** Increase your fibre intake by adding wheat bran, flaxseed, or nuts to homemade muffins or bread (this works in either sweet or salty recipes). If you're planning to make a Shepard's pie, try adding chunks of cooked carrots or squash into the ground beef. Enhance pasta sauces with baby spinach or kale leaves. Increase your calcium and protein intake by topping off desserts with Greek yogurt. Got a sweet tooth? We can work with that! All you need to do is strike a balance. Studies show that nutritious foods like whole-grain cereal or yogurt can be good for health even if they contain a moderate amount of added sugar. Some health authorities also acknowledge that a certain amount of sugar has its place in a healthy, well-balanced diet as long as you're continuing to choose nutritious foods the majority of the time.

ARTICLE

Healthy ways to satisfy your sweet tooth

Find yourself craving a little sweetness? If so, you're not alone! Research suggests that our taste for sweet foods is innate – we're actually born with it. Experts believe that we evolved with our liking for sweetness because our brain depends on glucose (a basic type of sugar) to function.

But with all the bad press sugar's getting lately, you might also be wondering if you should give up on the sweet stuff altogether. The good news is, as usual there's room for a healthy balance!

Aim for a healthy balance

While it's important to pay attention to our overall intake of added sugars, you don't have to eliminate all sources from your diet. It's okay to enjoy small amounts of added sugars as part of a healthy balanced diet. That's especially true when the added sugar is found in nutritious foods. For example, foods such as whole grain cereals and yogurt, that also provide you with many important essential

nutrients. So just how much is okay and how can you satisfy your sweet tooth in a healthy way? Keep this guideline in mind:

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that we limit our intake of added sugars to less than 5 to 10 percent of our total calories per day. What does this mean? In simple terms, for someone who eats 2,000 calories a day, this translates to a maximum of 6 to 12 teaspoons (or 25 to 50 g) of added sugars a day.

Choose foods that nourish

Studies indicate that nutritious foods, such as whole grain cereals or yogurt, can benefit our health even when they contain added sugar. Leading health authorities also agree there's room for a little sweetness in a healthy diet, provided you focus on choosing foods that nourish your body.

According to guidelines published by Diabetes Canada, nutritious foods such as whole grains and yogurt that contain some added sugars, aren't associated with adverse health effects.

The American Heart Association also advises that small amounts of sugars can be used to improve the taste of foods that provide many essential nutrients, like yogurt and whole grain cereals. This can encourage us to consume more of these nourishing foods, improving the nutritional quality of our diets as a result.

Have some fun experimenting

Making your own desserts is a great way to help control the amount of sugar you and your family eats. Just remember that sugar plays many functions in foods. So, it may not be possible to significantly reduce or completely remove the sugar in some recipes. If you're trying to reduce the amount of sugar in a home recipe, it's best to experiment by reducing the amount used by small increments. Then, see if the taste, texture, and colour remain to your liking.

Tips to help you keep your sugar intake to a healthy level:

- Make your meals with fresh, wholesome, nutrient-dense foods. You don't need to worry about the sugars **naturally** found in fruit, plain milk and plain yogurt.
 - Eat regular meals that are rich in protein and fibre. This can help prevent you from feeling overly hungry, so you won't be as tempted to reach for a sweet pick-me-up.
 - Use all added sugars in small amounts, including white table sugar, jams, maple syrup, honey and agave.
 - Reduce the amount of sugar you add to homemade baked goods, like cookies, muffins and quick breads (and be mindful of how much of these you eat).
 - Try using spices such as cinnamon, ginger or cloves instead to add flavour to reduced-sugar foods and baked goods.
 - Cut back on nutrient-poor sugary foods and beverages, such as pop, fruit drinks, sports drinks, sweetened specialty coffee and tea drinks, energy drinks, candies, candy bars, cakes, pastries, cookies, and doughnuts.
 - When you choose to eat sweet treats, try to pay attention to your portion sizes and listen to your hunger cues. It may take less than you think to be satisfied.
-

5. I care for the environment

Steps towards a healthy and sustainable diet

There are some simple, concrete steps you can take to help reduce your carbon footprint. Whether you're reducing food waste, eating just the right amount of food to meet your needs, or choosing to purchase Canadian-produced food, every little step helps.

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There are plenty of ways to reduce your environmental footprint

Everything we do makes a difference when it comes to reducing our environmental footprint. Here are a few concrete ideas to try.

- **Reduce food waste.** Avoid throwing away food that is still edible: plan your meals and snacks and shop for the foods you need, use wilted vegetables in soups and sauces, store your food properly and freeze any extras. Save your leftovers for a future meal instead of throwing them away. Avoiding food waste is the easiest thing you can do to reduce the environmental impact of your diet.
- **Eat to satisfy hunger and support health.** Eat the right amount of food to meet your needs—no more and no less. By consuming what we need (with occasional indulgences of course!), we use fewer agricultural resources, such as land, water and livestock, and ensure a better food supply globally.
- **Buy fresh, local products.** For fresher products, choose local foods, grown and produced in Canada. And don't hesitate to ask farmers questions about the practices they use to protect the environment!
- **Choose a healthy and varied diet.** A sustainable diet must, above all, meet your nutritional needs! Eat fewer processed foods that are less nutritious as they contribute to your environmental footprint without providing nutritional benefits. Look for nutritious, minimally processed whole foods, such as fruit, vegetables and milk. Because reducing your environmental impact starts with a healthy and balanced diet.
- **Support agricultural producers who reduce their environmental impact...** like Canadian dairy farmers. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with Canadian milk production represents just 1% of all GHGs in Canada. The adoption of new technologies, optimal cow feeding strategies and major investments in research and innovation have helped substantially reduce the impact of Canadian milk production over the past 30 years—and this commitment is on-going!!

Related recipes:

Cinnamon Apple Dessert with yogurt and nut topping

Active Lifestyle



1. I rehydrate after physical activity

Rehydration: An essential part of recovery!

Canada's Food Guide recommends making water your drink of choice to stay hydrated and quench thirst, over those that contain added sugar, salt or fats. Health Canada also recommends unsweetened carbonated water and white milk as healthy drink choices. Milk offers both fluids and nourishment thanks to its 90% water content and 15 essential nutrients. Complete protein, like that found in milk helps build and repair muscles after physical activity.

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Stay Healthy by Staying Hydrated

Staying hydrated allows the body to perform multiple vital functions and keeps it functioning properly. As well as eating water-rich foods, such as vegetables and fruit, adults should drink about two litres of fluids every day and children about one litre. Luckily, it's not generally difficult to stay hydrated; drink when you are thirsty and choose better for you beverage options!

A variety of healthy drink options

Canada's Food Guide recommends making water your drink of choice to stay hydrated, rather than choosing drinks with added sugar, salt or fat. Plain water is a good way to quench your thirst, but did you know that there are other great choices too? Unsweetened carbonated water, plain milk, as well as coffee (in moderation), tea and herbal tea without added sugar can also meet your body's water needs. These are among the healthy drinks recommended by Health Canada in *Canada's Food Guide*. All of these will quench thirst, but milk is unique in that it can also satisfy hunger, because it has the added benefit of protein. Plus – it has many other essential nutrients!

Mom, Dad—I'm thirsty!

For feeding children up to two years of age, the gold standard is laid out in a joint statement from Health Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada, and the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada. They recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and for up to two years or longer, along with appropriate complementary foods beginning at about six months of age. For older infants who are no longer breastfeeding after the age of 9 to 12 months, whole cows' milk (3.25% M.F.) is recommended as the main source of milk. Plant-based beverages including soy, almond and rice are advised against until age two. Cow's milk contains 15 nutrients, including high-quality complete

protein, calcium and vitamin D, which are essential for growth, development and for healthy bones and teeth.

For older children aged two to eight, the Canadian Paediatric Society and Dietitians of Canada advise that, with the exception of soy beverages, fortified plant-based beverages may not be appropriate as the main beverage. These beverages are generally low in protein, calories and fat and may not support good health and optimal growth.

As well, milk may be a more reliable source of calcium than fortified plant-based beverages. Calcium added to plant-based beverages may not be as well absorbed by the body as that naturally found in milk. And there is evidence showing that as much as 40% of the calcium added to plant-based beverages can stay at the bottom of the container, even if you shake it vigorously.

Rehydrate after physical activity

Depending on weather conditions, how hard you work out and certain other factors such as sweating heavily, you can lose up to two liters of water per hour while being active! That's why drinking enough water makes sense before, during and after being active.

Aside from water, milk is a good drink choice after being active because it helps both rehydrate and provide complete protein, ideal for building and repairing your muscles after working out. And when training is intensive, long-lasting, and repeated over several days, it may be ideal to consume a recovery drink that provides protein, carbohydrates and electrolytes. Electrolytes, such as potassium and sodium, replace those lost in your sweat, in addition to helping your body retain water, while protein helps build and repair muscle. The carbs replace the glycogen stored in our muscles and which fuels activity.

Whip up your own recovery drink by making a nutritious smoothie—simply blend fresh or frozen fruit with milk (and yogurt for a thicker texture). Use your imagination and try different flavour combinations, like peach and nectarine, strawberries and raspberries or honeydew and apple. To mix things up, add grated fresh ginger, lemon zest, chia seeds, unsweetened coconut or fresh mint.

2. I look for healthy carbs to fuel my sport

Winning foods to power you pre-workout!

When you need to eat less than two hours before physical activity, choose foods that deliver enough of the right carbs (sugars). For example, you can enjoy a bowl of cereal with milk, a banana, yogurt, apple sauce or dried fruit. And don't forget to stay hydrated to ensure you feel at the top of your fitness game!

ARTICLE

Healthy ways to satisfy your sweet tooth

Find yourself craving a little sweetness? If so, you're not alone! Research suggests that our taste for sweet foods is innate – we're actually born with it. Experts believe that we evolved with our liking for sweetness because our brain depends on glucose (a basic type of sugar) to function. But with all the bad press, sugar's getting lately, you might also be wondering if you should give up on the sweet stuff altogether. The good news is, as usual there's room for a healthy balance!

Aim for a healthy balance

While it's important to pay attention to our overall intake of added sugars, you don't have to eliminate all sources from your diet. It's okay to enjoy small amounts of added sugars as part of a healthy balanced diet. That's especially true when the added sugar is found in nutritious foods. For example, foods such as whole grain cereals and yogurt, that also provide you with many important essential nutrients. So just how much is okay and how can you satisfy your sweet tooth in a healthy way? Keep this guideline in mind:

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that we limit our intake of added sugars to less than 5 to 10 percent of our total calories per day. What does this mean? In simple terms, for someone who eats 2,000 calories a day, this translates to a maximum of 6 to 12 teaspoons (or 25 to 50 g) of added sugars a day.

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The American Heart Association also advises that small amounts of sugars can be used to improve the taste of foods that provide many essential nutrients, like yogurt and whole grain cereals. This can encourage us to consume more of these nourishing foods, improving the nutritional quality of our diets as a result.

Have some fun experimenting

Making your own desserts is a great way to help control the amount of sugar you and your family eats. Just remember that sugar plays many functions in foods. So, it may not be possible to significantly reduce or completely remove the sugar in some recipes. If you're trying to reduce the amount of sugar in a home recipe, it's best to experiment by reducing the amount used by small increments. Then, see if the taste, texture, and colour remain to your liking.

Tips to help you keep your sugar intake to a healthy level:

- Make your meals with fresh, wholesome, nutrient-dense foods. You don't need to worry about the sugars **naturally** found in fruit, plain milk and plain yogurt.
 - Eat regular meals that are rich in protein and fibre. This can help prevent you from feeling overly hungry, so you won't be as tempted to reach for a sweet pick-me-up.
 - Use all added sugars in small amounts, including white table sugar, jams, maple syrup, honey and agave.
 - Reduce the amount of sugar you add to homemade baked goods, like cookies, muffins and quick breads (and be mindful of how much of these you eat).
 - Try using spices such as cinnamon, ginger or cloves instead to add flavour to reduced-sugar foods and baked goods.
 - Cut back on nutrient-poor sugary foods and beverages, such as pop, fruit drinks, sports drinks, sweetened specialty coffee and tea drinks, energy drinks, candies, candy bars, cakes, pastries, cookies, and doughnuts.
 - When you choose to eat sweet treats, try to pay attention to your portion sizes and listen to your hunger cues. It may take less than you think to be satisfied.
-

3. I need a protein boost

Protein in milk products: completely “complete”!

Protein found in milk, yogurt and cheese is considered a “complete protein.” All animal-based foods such as meat, fish, milk, yogurt and cheese contain complete protein. Complete protein provides enough of all nine essential amino acids in the right proportions. These amino acids are considered ‘essential’ because your body cannot make them. On the other hand, plant-based protein, found in most legumes, nuts and grains, for example, are deemed “incomplete.” **So interesting!**

ARTICLE

PROTEIN FOR YOUR FITNESS AND HEALTH

Protein plays many roles in your body and is essential for health at every age. So, it's not surprising that protein is so popular these days!

Become a protein pro

Protein plays a number of key roles in supporting your health. It helps to:

- promote children's optimal growth and development
- maintain healthy muscles and bones in adults;
- facilitate muscle recovery after a workout;
- repair body tissues after an injury;
- support a healthy immune system.
-

It's important to eat some protein with every meal in order to meet your body's needs. Since our bodies aren't designed to store excess protein, we need a regular supply.

Protein is found naturally in a number of foods: meat, poultry, fish and seafood, milk products, eggs, legumes, nuts and seeds. Protein foods, along with vegetables, fruit and whole grains, form the foundation for healthy eating that *Canada's Food Guide* recommends we consume on a regular basis.

Protein from animal sources: “complete” protein

Protein found in milk, yogurt and cheese is considered a “complete protein.” All animal-based foods such as meat, fish, milk, yogurt and cheese contain complete protein. Complete protein provides enough of all nine essential amino acids in the right proportions. These amino acids are considered ‘essential’ because your body cannot make them. On the other hand, plant-based protein, found in most legumes, nuts and grains, for example, are deemed “incomplete.”

Variety promotes health

A diet that includes a variety of protein foods matters, because it provides us with the various essential nutrients we need for our overall health. For example, fatty fish, such as salmon and trout, contain valuable omega-3; red meat is especially rich in iron and zinc that is easy for the body to absorb; milk products are an important and reliable source of calcium and other key nutrients essential for bone health; legumes and nuts are fabulous sources of fibre in addition to other nutrients. That’s why it’s important to include a wide variety of protein foods in your everyday diet.

Did you know that the majority of Canadians do not consume enough calcium? Including milk products, such as milk, yogurt, and cheese, in your daily diet is an easy way to make sure you’re getting your recommended dose of calcium. [Learn more about calcium.](#)

Protein: An ally for active lives

Eating enough protein is important to help build and maintain healthy muscles. Protein helps repair muscles after intense physical activity and stimulates muscle development after training. Looking for post-workout protein ideas? Try our [green mango tango smoothie](#).

Protein and your appetite

Protein plays a key role in promoting satiety, the feeling of fullness you get after you eat. Not eating enough protein, may leave you feeling hungry, which could lead you to snack more (often on less nutritious foods). Another good reason to eat enough protein with your meals and snacks.

Protein...all day long

Does your breakfast keep you full until lunch? Do your energy levels tend to “crash” in the middle of the afternoon? Do your snacks contain enough protein? Here are a few satisfying recipe ideas that are sure to tickle your taste buds:

Breakfast

- Start the day off right with a delicious oven-cooked omelette the whole family will love: [Roasted broccoli mushroom mozza frittata](#).
- Enjoy a colourful smoothie bowl before heading to work: [Blueberry smoothie bowl](#).

Lunch

- Fuel up on energy at lunch with an Italian-inspired sandwich: [Super easy chicken parm.](#)
- Always round out your salads with a source of protein, as in this delicious [Pasta and edamame salad](#).

Snack

- Pair your fruit with a yogurt dip the whole family will enjoy: [Fruidelicious and dip](#).
 - Make yourself a refreshing afternoon snack, like this [Raspberry-ricotta smoothie](#).
-

4. I bike to school and work

Get Active: Live Better

According to the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, adults should be physically active every day to reap a whole host of health benefits. This includes a decrease in the risk of several types of cancer, depression and anxiety, and an improvement in bone health, quality of life and physical functioning. **Move more to get a total of at least 150 minutes of moderate to intense physical activity each week.** Start today by adopting active transportation, taking a walk at lunch time or going for a hike with family on the weekend.

5. I look for tasty and easy meals

Cooking for a healthy life!

When hunger pangs hit, never find yourself unprepared! You don't need to be a great chef to transform the food you have on hand into a delicious, healthy meal! It's easy-peasy; plan meals that will fill half your plate with fruit and vegetables, a quarter with whole grains and another quarter with wholesome proteins such as meat, chicken, fish, dairy products, legumes and nuts. Limit added fat, sugar and salt. Choose recipes that tempt you, and get creative! As you experiment, you will develop your culinary skills and meal preparation will become second nature. Who knows, you may even impress your loved ones!

ARTICLE

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- Wash and cut your vegetables ahead of time, to save time on busier days
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The essentials

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- Stock your **refrigerator** with colourful, fresh fruit and vegetables, and protein foods like meat, fish, eggs, as well as a variety of milk products like milk, yogurt and cheese.
- Keep a variety of non-perishable foods in your **pantry**: fruit (canned or dried); different whole-grain foods including crackers, cereal, oats, flour, pasta, rice or couscous; proteins (canned legumes, canned fish, peanut butter, etc.) and cooking ingredients like oils and condiments.
- For a quick meal that can be prepared ahead of time, make good use of your **freezer** by filling it with various frozen fruits and vegetables (berries, green peas, spinach); nuts and seeds; ready-to-eat whole-grain foods like homemade muffins, pita bread, bagels, etc. as well as easy-to-thaw protein foods such as cooked chicken strips, shrimps, and single servings of fish or grated cheese.

Related recipes:

Grilled cheese with asparagus and mushrooms
Red lentil soup

Tummy Troubles



1. I am lactose intolerant

Simple strategies for managing lactose intolerance

Does lactose bother you? Lactose intolerance is a digestive disorder caused by the body's deficiency of lactase, the enzyme needed to digest the natural sugars found in milk (lactose). You maybe surprised to find out that, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the highest authority on health in the United States, most of those who live with lactose intolerance can still enjoy milk products and all their benefits simply by following a few simple steps.

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The Scoop on Lactose Intolerance

Chances are that if you've experienced tummy troubles or intestinal discomfort you've been advised by friends, family, or social media to avoid milk products because of the lactose they contain. But when it comes to lactose intolerance, there's a lot of misunderstanding. Let's take stock of the facts.

What is lactose?

Lactose is a natural sugar found in milk and certain milk products. In order for your body to absorb and use lactose for energy, it needs to be broken down with the help of an enzyme known as lactase that is produced in your small intestine.

What is lactose intolerance?

Lactose intolerance is not an allergy, but rather the result of the body's inability to fully digest lactose. People with lactose intolerance don't produce enough of the lactase enzyme in their digestive system to digest large amounts of lactose all at once.

As a result, undigested lactose gets into the large intestine, where it is fermented by the intestinal flora. This fermentation can cause symptoms such as gas, bloating, and cramps when large amounts of lactose are consumed all at once. While this fermentation is harmless, it can sometimes lead to bothersome symptoms for some people.

Do people with lactose intolerance have to avoid milk completely?

No! The good news is that the majority of people with lactose intolerance can continue to enjoy milk and milk products every day without experiencing the digestive discomfort associated with this condition.

In fact, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the United States specifically recommends that people with lactose intolerance *not* avoid milk and milk products because almost everyone can tolerate a certain amount, and those who do avoid milk products are at risk of developing a calcium or vitamin D deficiency.(1)

Furthermore, a large number of carefully conducted studies show that the majority of people living with lactose intolerance can continue to enjoy the nutritional benefits of dairy products without experiencing undesirable symptoms. You simply have to find your own personal tolerance threshold.

Fun fact: The bacteria in fermented dairy products like yogurt, cheese, and kefir breaks down some of the lactose in these foods, making them easier for people with lactose intolerance to tolerate.

8 tips for managing lactose intolerance

If you have been diagnosed with lactose intolerance by your doctor, you don't have to avoid dairy products and deprive yourself of the health benefits they provide. The following tips will help you determine your level of tolerance to lactose and will allow you to continue to enjoy dairy foods.

1. Enjoy milk in small portions throughout the day instead of drinking a large glass all at once. That way you won't exceed your digestive system's tolerance threshold.
2. If you've been avoiding milk, you can reintroduce it into your diet, by starting with small amounts (less than 125 mL), then gradually increasing your intake over the course of a few weeks.
3. Drink milk with a meal or with other food to slow down digestion and facilitate the absorption of the lactose in your intestine.
4. Eat yogurt or drink kefir. They contain good bacteria that help the body digest lactose, making them easier for people with lactose intolerance to tolerate.
5. Opt for ripened cheeses such as Cheddar, Brie, Parmesan, and Swiss. They contain almost no lactose at all! You'll love these [Fish and cheddar tacos](#), this [Beet Carpaccio with Parmesan](#), and this [Grilled Swiss cheese sandwich with asparagus](#).
6. Use milk products in recipes – let yourself be inspired by these ideas:
 - Start the day with a delicious muesli recipe made with yogurt and milk, like this [Peach, strawberry, and almond muesli](#).
 - Pair your favourite pasta with a creamy milk-based sauce like in this recipe for [Super-fast tortellini with vegetables](#).
 - Prepare the rice or quinoa you cook for supper in milk like in this recipe for [Sesame ginger veggie quinoa with salmon](#).
 - Top your sandwiches with melted cheese like in this [Open-faced creamy avocado turkey melt](#).
7. Take lactose enzyme drops or tablets before consuming dairy products (they're available in pharmacies).
8. Try lactose-free milk products; you can easily find lactose-free milk, yogurt, and cheese in the grocery store (look for the "lactose-free" mention on the label).

Good to know: Milk is more than lactose; it's a source of 15 essential nutrients. A single cup (250 ml) gives you more protein than a large egg, as much calcium as 8 cups (2 litres) of raw broccoli, as much potassium as a medium-size banana, and almost half the vitamin B12 you need daily.

Having tummy troubles?

If you're experiencing gastrointestinal discomfort, it's important to consult your doctor in order to identify the real source of your troubles. This can help you obtain a proper diagnosis, and find a strategy best suited to your situation. Your symptoms might not be due to lactose intolerance.

SOURCES

1. National Institutes of Health. *NIH Consensus Development Conference Statement: Lactose Intolerance and Health. NIH Consensus State Sci Statements 2010;27(2).*

2. I have gluten sensitivity

Is sensitivity to gluten to blame for your digestive issues?

In some ways, the symptoms associated with gluten sensitivity are similar to those experienced by people with celiac disease. After consuming gluten foods, a person may begin to notice abdominal pain, bloating, abnormal bowel movements (either diarrhea or constipation), fatigue, and even skin conditions like eczema. Usually, these symptoms disappear once gluten is removed from the diet. **If you think you may be sensitive to gluten, check with a healthcare professional** first to give you a proper diagnosis. They can develop a treatment plan tailored for you to ensure you still get all the nutrients you need. The primary sources of gluten in our diets are foods made from wheat, barley, and rye.

3. I opt for decaffeinated beverages

Drink caffeine in moderation

Do you usually reach for a cup of caffeine-free tea? That's probably for the best because consuming excessive amounts of caffeine can cause several unwanted side effects such as insomnia, headaches, nervousness, and irritability. According to Health Canada, the average adult should limit their caffeine intake to 400 mg of caffeine a day, roughly the equivalent of two 250 mL (8 oz) cups of drip coffee. The maximum recommended amount for pregnant women, women trying to become pregnant, or breastfeeding women is 300 mg a day. Try to stay on top of how much caffeine you drink — some cafés or restaurants serve their beverages in oversized cups, which typically exceed the daily recommendations. On the other hand, **tea is an excellent alternative to coffee** as it contains only 15-50 mg of caffeine per cup. Is your tea decaffeinated? If yes, that's fantastic news, as it means you're drinking a caffeine-free beverage! How do you take your tea? The choices are endless: black, green, white, or chai, a tea-based drink made using hot milk, cinnamon, and star anise.

4. I keep fruit on hand for a tasty, nutritional boost

Fruit, a valuable source of fibre

According to Health Canada's recommendations, women should consume 25 g of fibre a day while men should consume 38 g of fibre. However, the majority of Canadians only get about half of these daily recommended amounts. There are so many fibre sources, from vegetables, fruit, whole-grain

foods, legumes, nuts, and other types of grains. **It's important to get enough fruit in our diets, as these contain a high amount of fibre per portion, with an average of 2-4 g of fibre per serving.** If you're wondering which fruit are the most fibre-rich, here's a brief list:

- Pears (5.5 g for one medium-sized fruit);
- Raspberries and blackberries (4 g per ½ cup serving);
- Apples with their peels (3.5 g per medium-sized fruit).

5. I make time away from work to enjoy mealtimes, stress-free

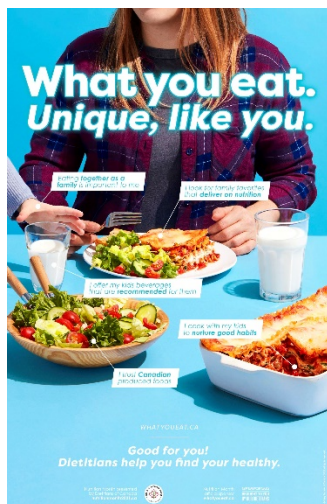
Unwind before you dine

Taking the time to relax and enjoy your meals is great for your health. Creating a calming setting allows you to savour every bite, be more attentive to your hunger and fullness signals, and make the healthiest dietary choices possible, among other things. It's important to note that stress plays a part in our digestion and how well the intestine absorbs nutrients. Our intestine has hundreds of millions of neurons in constant communication with the brain, and stress can disrupt this. Interferences with this exchange of information can trigger muscle spasms in the intestine that may be painful, along with bloating and other sorts of discomfort. To support your wellness, try making eating a pleasant experience. Put aside any distractions like your smartphone, computer, or television and find pleasure in eating in the company of others. By focusing on the food in front of you, you'll truly appreciate and enjoy every last bite.

Related recipes:

Kasha bowl with Vegetables and Chicken

Little Mouths to Feed



1. I offer my kids beverages that are recommended for them

Healthy beverages for healthy kids

Serving your children nutritious beverages is important for their health. *Canada's Food Guide* recommends making water the drink of choice to stay hydrated and quench thirst rather than those that contain added sugar, salt or fats. Health Canada also recommends white milk, unsweetened carbonated water and herbal teas. Milk is a healthy choice as it contains **15 nutrients** including “complete” protein. Complete protein provides enough of all nine essential amino acids in the right proportions. These amino acids are considered ‘essential’ because your body cannot make them. Included in milk’s 15 nutrients are calcium and vitamin

D, key for strong teeth and bones.

Milk also offers more nutrition than plant-based beverages, as most fortified plant-based beverages contain far less protein per serving than milk, with the exception of soy beverages. Interestingly, our bodies absorb calcium found in cow’s milk better than the calcium added to plant-based beverages. There is some evidence that up to 40% of calcium added to plant-based beverages may remain at the bottom of the carton, even if shaken vigorously.

ARTICLE

Stay Healthy by Staying Hydrated

Staying hydrated allows the body to perform multiple vital functions and keeps it functioning properly. As well as eating water-rich foods, such as vegetables and fruit, adults should drink about two litres of fluids every day and children about one litre. Luckily, it’s not generally difficult to stay hydrated; drink when you are thirsty and choose better for you beverage options!

A variety of healthy drink options

Canada's Food Guide recommends making water your drink of choice to stay hydrated, rather than choosing drinks with added sugar, salt or fat. Plain water is a good way to quench your thirst, but did you know that there are other great choices too? Unsweetened carbonated water, plain milk, as well as coffee (in moderation), tea and herbal tea without added sugar can also meet your body’s water needs. These are among the healthy drinks recommended by Health Canada in *Canada's Food Guide*. All of these will quench thirst, but milk is unique in that it can also satisfy hunger, because it has the added benefit of protein. Plus – it has many other essential nutrients!

Mom, Dad—I’m thirsty!

For feeding children up to two years of age, the gold standard is laid out in a joint statement from Health Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada, and the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada. They recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and for up to two

years or longer, along with appropriate complementary foods beginning at about six months of age. For older infants who are no longer breastfeeding after the age of 9 to 12 months, whole cows' milk (3.25% M.F.) is recommended as the main source of milk. Plant-based beverages including soy, almond and rice are advised against until age two. Cow's milk contains 15 nutrients, including high-quality complete protein, calcium and vitamin D, which are essential for growth, development and for healthy bones and teeth.

For older children aged two to eight, the Canadian Paediatric Society and Dietitians of Canada advise that, with the exception of soy beverages, fortified plant-based beverages may not be appropriate as the main beverage. These beverages are generally low in protein, calories and fat and may not support good health and optimal growth.

As well, milk may be a more reliable source of calcium than fortified plant-based beverages. Calcium added to plant-based beverages may not be as well absorbed by the body as that naturally found in milk. And there is evidence showing that as much as 40% of the calcium added to plant-based beverages can stay at the bottom of the container, even if you shake it vigorously.

Rehydrate after physical activity

Depending on weather conditions, how hard you work out and certain other factors such as sweating heavily, you can lose up to two liters of water per hour while being active! That's why drinking enough water makes sense before, during and after being active.

Aside from water, milk is a good drink choice after being active because it helps both rehydrate and provide complete protein, ideal for building and repairing your muscles after working out. And when training is intensive, long-lasting, and repeated over several days, it may be ideal to consume a recovery drink that provides protein, carbohydrates and electrolytes. Electrolytes, such as potassium and sodium, replace those lost in your sweat, in addition to helping your body retain water, while protein helps build and repair muscle. The carbs replace the glycogen stored in our muscles and which fuels activity.

Whip up your own recovery drink by making a nutritious smoothie—simply blend fresh or frozen fruit with milk (and yogurt for a thicker texture). Use your imagination and try different flavour combinations, like peach and nectarine, strawberries and raspberries or honeydew and apple. To mix things up, add grated fresh ginger, lemon zest, chia seeds, unsweetened coconut or fresh mint.

2. I cook with my kids to nurture good habits

Make your kitchen a family kitchen!

Encouraging your children to participate in meal prep is a great way to get them learning about and exploring all kinds of food and flavours. This will help them develop a positive relationship with food and to enjoy an overall eating pattern that supports health. **By involving them in age-appropriate tasks, you'll help them develop, over time, important culinary skills that they will use for the rest of their lives.** For example, little ones will be delighted to garnish their bowl of oatmeal with blueberries or raspberries, children will be great at whisking eggs and stirring muffin mixes or grating cheese and cutting up vegetables. Your teens can give you a much needed (and well-deserved!) break by whipping up pancakes or homemade pizzas. Are you looking to make food prep a regular family activity? Start gradually! Introduce homemade pizza-veggie nights every Friday and get the whole family involved

in pulling the meal together. This positive experience will help you bond and create warm, family memories all while filling up on delicious and nutritious meals!

ARTICLE

Cooking with kids: A delicious way to have fun!

Encouraging your children to help with meal prep is an excellent way of getting them interested in new foods and flavours, all while helping them develop their autonomy. And it's bound to work on even those who are hesitant to explore new taste experiences! Here are a few recipes and tips, perfect for when you want to cook as a family.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- By teaching children to cook from a young age, you're helping them satisfy their abundant curiosity, all while teaching them skills that will serve them throughout their entire life.
- Double the benefits by giving them easy tasks to accomplish, that way they'll feel useful and valued.
- Cooking together as a family is a great way to spend quality time with the people you love. Plus, you all get to sit down in front of a delicious home-cooked meal that everyone helped make!

Naturally curious . . . even in the kitchen!

Are your kids picky when it comes to trying new food or textures? Do you frequently hear "no, I don't want that!" at your dinner table?

When you involve your children in the cooking process, you're helping them develop an interest in various foods and flavours. And that means they get to put their senses into action, which is great for naturally curious kids! Let them touch rice before and after it's been cooked, smell different types of cheeses, whisk eggs and milk together, and of course, taste all their creations . . . and watch as their taste buds and culinary opinions develop!

Aspiring chefs, are you ready?

To ensure your family cooking time is safe and enjoyable, assign your children tasks they can easily accomplish. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Garnish and enhance:** Even a child as young as two or three can sprinkle cheese on top of pizza or garnish a bowl of yogurt with fresh berries.
- **Stir and mix:** Young children love to see ingredients transform ask them to whisk together eggs and milk to make an omelette, or stir together dry and wet ingredients for a batch of homemade muffins.
- **Grate and cut:** These tasks require careful instructions and a few tips but will instill older children with a sense of accomplishment and pride.
- **Cook and heat:** Once your older kids have learned how to use the stove, you can enlist their help making pancakes or pizza . . . or even breakfast in bed for you!

Trust your kids! Allowing them to join in on meal prep will make them proudly exclaim, “I made it myself!”.

Quality family time

Obviously, meal prep with kids requires lots of supervision and a little extra time, but it’s an activity that lets you spend some quality time with the whole family. It’s the perfect opportunity to make healthier food choices and enjoy delicious home-cooked meals.

In closing, keep in mind how much little kids enjoy playing “grown-up”. Sure, your kitchen is bound to be a mess, the results might not be perfect, and you might end up having to throw some ingredients away (you can’t make an omelette without breaking a few eggs, right?), but the moments spent as a family will stay in your heart forever and will definitely be worth it in the end!

3. Eating together as a family is important to me

Eating as a family is the secret ingredient to making healthy eating enjoyable

Eating with your loved ones doesn’t just strengthen the relationship between you and your family, but it also provides lots of health benefits including adopting healthy eating habits. **In addition to spending some important time together as a family, research shows that eating together is related to healthier eating patterns.** By the way, eating together also benefits children’s social and academic performance. Busy schedules and lives can sometimes get in the way of eating together, but when you can, the payoff is well worth it.

4. I trust Canadian produced foods

Canadian-produced food – the quality you want, right at home!

Choosing to buy Canadian produced food is a fantastic way to support the local economy. Seeing as the food doesn’t have too long a path to your door, you will ultimately benefit from maximum flavour and freshness too. Food produced and grown here meets high standards of production. Such is the case with Canadian milk, which is produced with some of the highest standards in the world. Canadian dairy farmers are very vigilant in producing milk of the highest quality, without the use of artificial growth hormones and ensuring that no antibiotics are present in the milk you drink.

5. I look for family favorites that deliver on nutrition

When it comes to food – basic is best!

A diet based mainly on fresh, naturally nutritious and minimally processed foods is an excellent commitment to your health. By making it a habit to choose nutritious and less processed foods such as fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and milk products and by limiting highly processed foods you’re giving your body the best possible chance at getting the essential nutrients it needs to function properly. For example, milk, yogurt, and cheese provide 15 nutrients, including “complete” protein, calcium, and

vitamin D, all of which are considered allies in overall bone health development during your lifetime. **Are you looking for tips to help you make cooking at home a part of your routine?** First, make sure you have basic ingredients handy in your fridge, cupboard, or freezer so that you're never missing what you need. When your schedule allows, try washing or cutting up vegetables ahead of time so that you don't have to worry about it on those busier days. When it comes to prepping your meal, plan to make twice the amount of meat, chicken, or fish and use the leftovers to whip up an easy salad or sandwich the next day. You can also freeze leftovers and enjoy them another time.

ARTICLE

Getting Back to Basics with Healthy Eating

We are all aware of the influence our diet has on our health. More than ever, we are paying close attention to the way our food is produced and the need to prioritize cooking at home. By preparing homemade meals for yourself and your family, you are more likely to include higher quality foods and support healthier eating habits. Would you like to cook at home more often? With a few basics, you can make it happen!

Great Taste That's Good for You

A diet that focuses on a wide variety of basic nutritious foods, and which minimizes the intake of highly processed foods, is beneficial for health. Minimally processed and naturally nutritious and tasty staples such as vegetables and fruit, whole grains and protein foods are loaded with nutrients that are essential for your body to function properly. Eating dairy products like milk, yogurt and cheese for example, provides your body with up to 15 nutrients - including calcium and vitamin D, which are valuable allies for healthy bones. On the other hand, eating highly processed foods contributes little nutritional value and is less beneficial to overall health.

Think cooking at home is difficult? Think again.

The key is proper planning. Good planning makes meal preparation easier and saves you both time and money. Become a planning pro:

- Take a few minutes to work out your weekly menu by checking in with your family members or drawing inspiration from cookbooks and online recipe sources
- Make a shopping list, noting what ingredients you need for your meals and snacks
- Why not check out specials for the week and include something new - each discovery will save you money and help introduce variety into your menu
- Wash and cut your vegetables ahead of time, to save time on busier days
- Plan larger quantities as you cook so you can easily whip up meals the next day, or freeze them to avoid waste
- Take advantage of extra weekend time to prepare freezable, homemade snacks in advance (chewy bars, muffins) and to cook meals that require more preparation time (soup, spaghetti sauce, lasagna)

The essentials

To prepare healthy and nutritious meals, try to have basic nutritious ingredients in the fridge, pantry and freezer so you are never caught off guard.

- Stock your **refrigerator** with colourful, fresh fruit and vegetables, and protein foods like meat, fish, eggs, as well as a variety of milk products like milk, yogurt and cheese.
- Keep a variety of non-perishable foods in your **pantry**: fruit (canned or dried); different whole-grain foods including crackers, cereal, oats, flour, pasta, rice or couscous; proteins (canned legumes, canned fish, peanut butter, etc.) and cooking ingredients like oils and condiments.
- For a quick meal that can be prepared ahead of time, make good use of your **freezer** by filling it with various frozen fruits and vegetables (berries, green peas, spinach); nuts and seeds; ready-to-eat whole-grain foods like homemade muffins, pita bread, bagels, etc. as well as easy-to-thaw protein foods such as cooked chicken strips, shrimps, and single servings of fish or grated cheese.

Related recipes:

Lasagna with Ratatouille Sauce

[illegible]

Big Game Stew

Adapted from *Dietitians Working with First Nations – Saskatchewan*

Yield: 4 servings

- 1 kg (2 lb) big game meat (or beef stew meat), cubed
- 45 mL (3 tbsp) vegetable oil
- 4 cubes beef bouillon, crumbled
- 1 litre (4 cups) water
- 5 mL (1 tsp) dried rosemary
- 5 mL (1 tsp) dried parsley
- 2.5 mL (1/2 tsp) ground black pepper
- 3 large potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 250 mL (1 cup) frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 10 mL (2 tsp) cornstarch

In a large pot, cook big game meat or beef in vegetable oil over medium heat until brown. Dissolve bouillon in water and pour into the pot. Stir in rosemary, parsley and pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat, cover and simmer for 1 hour.

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Budget Conscious



1. I value Canadian-produced foods

Nothing says “quality” better than Canadian

In Canada, we're fortunate that food safety is highly regulated. In fact, the Canadian food system is considered to be one of the safest in the world. Whether it's related to Canadian agriculture or imported foods, strict regulations, safety systems, and standards are in place throughout the food chain to protect our food supply. Many Canadian agricultural sectors have on-farm food safety assurance programs that set the benchmarks for food safety and quality, animal welfare, and the environment. Such is the case for Canadian milk, which is produced with some of the world's strictest standards.

2. I love nutritious one-pot meals that can be made ahead

Plan, prepare, savour!

Eating nutritious, balanced meals requires **proper planning**. It all begins with a little inspiration! Dive into your recipe bank to find ideas for meals and snacks! Prepare your grocery list while thinking about ways to use the food you already have on hand. When you are ready to cook, plan to make larger quantities, so you have some left over to use for future meals. For example, extra rice can be the basis for a delicious stir-fry the following day. Otherwise, freeze it so it doesn't go to waste. Don't throw out your not-so-fresh vegetables either! They can be used to make soups, sauces and stir-fries. You can even prepare them and then store them in the freezer for use later. When you have more time, prepare homemade snacks that freeze well such as nutritious granola bars and muffins. Set some time aside on the weekend to cook more time-consuming meals such as soups, spaghetti sauce or lasagna. This way, when hunger strikes, you won't be caught empty-handed!

ARTICLE

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for your body to function properly. Eating dairy products like milk, yogurt and cheese for example, provides your body with up to 15 nutrients - including calcium and vitamin D, which are valuable allies for healthy bones. On the other hand, eating highly processed foods contributes little nutritional value and is less beneficial to overall health.

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- Keep a variety of non-perishable foods in your **pantry**: fruit (canned or dried); different whole-grain foods including crackers, cereal, oats, flour, pasta, rice or couscous; proteins (canned legumes, canned fish, peanut butter, etc.) and cooking ingredients like oils and condiments.
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3. I choose foods that provide good nutritional value for the cost

Basic foods for affordable nutrition

To easily prepare healthy, nutritious and affordable meals, try to have wholesome nutritious basic foods and ingredients on hand. By using nutritious, minimally processed foods such as milk, legumes, eggs, whole grain bread, vegetables, etc., you will get the most nutritional bang for your buck! In fact, commercially prepared foods often cost more and those that are highly processed generally offer very poor nutritional benefits for the price. **Turn into a planning pro!** With a fridge that contains nutritious

foods, a pantry that has a variety of basic ingredients and a freezer with foods that will help out in a pinch, you'll never be short of ideas for a healthy and flavourful meal.

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-

4. I freeze my bread in the freezer to reduce food waste

Mission: Become a freezer master!

Apart from preventing needless waste, freezing extends the life of your food and ensures you always have something on hand when life gets busy. **Are you a freezer master?** A wide range of foods freeze well, with storage time depending on their category. Most cooked dishes can easily be kept in the freezer, along with bread, muffins and bagels, which defrost in no time. Fresh vegetables and fruit can be kept up to one year in the freezer, so make the most of summer's abundant harvest to stock up. Do the same for fresh herbs: transform them into pesto and then divide up into individual portions for later. Place raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood in airtight bags to preserve their freshness.

5. I reach for frozen produce when fresh ones are not in season

Four seasons of fresh fruit and vegetables

In the summer, seasonal fruit and vegetables are abundant and inexpensive. Look for freshness and a variety of colours: broccoli, cucumbers, zucchini, beans, lettuce, corn, melons, berries (blueberries, strawberries, raspberries), bell peppers, radishes and field tomatoes. Now's the time to fill up your freezer and do some canning ahead of the colder months when the supply of fresh produce is limited. The fall is another productive season for gardens and late harvests typically keep longer. When the mercury drops, make your plate a showcase for comforting foods: eggplants, beets, carrots, celery, cabbage, squash and onions. Mid-winter, frozen fruit and vegetables come in very handy. They contain just as many vitamins and minerals as their fresh versions, since they were picked ripe and immediately frozen.

Related recipes:

Family Favourite Chili

On the Go



1. I stay hydrated the healthy way

Stay hydrated the healthy way

Proper hydration starts with choosing healthy beverages. *Canada's Food Guide* recommends drinking water instead of reaching for sugary drinks. Sugar-free carbonated water, white milk, coffee (in moderation, of course), tea, and herbal tea with no added sugar are other healthy drink choices recommended by Health Canada in *Canada's Food Guide*. **Good to know:** Milk is about 90% water, and it also contains 15 nutrients like complete protein, calcium, and vitamin D, important for strong and healthy bones.

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Rehydrate after physical activity

Depending on weather conditions, how hard you work out and certain other factors such as sweating heavily, you can lose up to two liters of water per hour while being active! That's why drinking enough water makes sense before, during and after being active.

Aside from water, milk is a good drink choice after being active because it helps both rehydrate and provide complete protein, ideal for building and repairing your muscles after working out. And when training is intensive, long-lasting, and repeated over several days, it may be ideal to consume a recovery drink that provides protein, carbohydrates and electrolytes. Electrolytes, such as potassium and sodium, replace those lost in your sweat, in addition to helping your body retain water, while protein helps build and repair muscle. The carbs replace the glycogen stored in our muscles and which fuels activity.

Whip up your own recovery drink by making a nutritious smoothie—simply blend fresh or frozen fruit with milk (and yogurt for a thicker texture). Use your imagination and try different flavour combinations, like peach and nectarine, strawberries and raspberries or honeydew and apple. To mix things up, add grated fresh ginger, lemon zest, chia seeds, unsweetened coconut or fresh mint.

2. I opt for healthier options when ordering in

Healthy dishes for restaurant food lovers

Eating restaurant food can be a great way to treat yourself every once in a while. If you want to make some healthier choices, it's doable; look for dishes where veggies or fruit are featured or can be added on the side. Choose meals that include beans, lentils or leaner meats, add some whole grains, and go for dishes prepared with little added fat, sodium or sugar. Top it off with better for you drinks and milk-based desserts.

ARTICLE

Eating Well with Restaurant Food

Love restaurant food but unsure how to make healthy choices when ordering in or eating out? It's easy and doable given the wide range of options available and with a little know-how by using our tips below!

- Think about how you might include some **veggies** in your meals by choosing a vegetable soup starter or by adding a side salad to your main course.
- Choose foods that **aren't cooked using a lot of fat**, for example opt for grilled, roasted, oven baked, sautéed or steamed foods.
- Ask for any **saucers to be served on the side** (creamy salad dressing, mayonnaise, vinaigrettes, etc.).
- Rather than ordering nutrient-poor **sugary drinks** (pop, energy drink, fruit-flavoured concoctions), choose sparkling water or a nutritious drink such as **milk to make sure you're getting enough calcium, a nutrient that most Canadians don't get enough of**.
- If you're ordering dessert, go for something that offers a nutritional boost and minimizes sugar, such as a fruit salad or yogurt parfait. Or why not finish your meal with a hot drink, like a latte?
- Don't forget to **eat till satisfied, rather than clearing your plate**. You can always take home the leftovers to enjoy the next day!

Let's talk pizza!

- Increase your fibre intake by going for **wholewheat crusts**.
- Get creative and **pile on the veg**: tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, mushrooms, zucchini, whatever you feel like — the choices are practically endless!
- Choose **better-for-you toppings** like grilled chicken or shrimp rather than deli meats.
- And while you're waiting for your takeout to arrive, why not prepare a salad or some grilled vegetables to eat on the side?

Let's talk burgers!

- Choose **non-breaded** burgers, like grilled chicken breast or beef patties.
- **Add a side salad to your meal**.
- Round off your meal with a glass of milk, a latte or a yogurt.

Let's talk sandwiches!

- Increase your fibre intake by choosing **wholegrain bread**.
- If you like condiments choose one **lower in fat**, such as mustard, rather than creamy dressings or mayonnaise.
- Add a slice of cheese (preferably not processed) for a calcium boost!
- Make sure you're getting **plenty of vegetables** by adding a side salad, vegetable soup starter or vegetable juice to your order.

Let's talk Asian food!

- Focus on **food that's prepared simply**—steamed dishes, stir-fries, soups, sushi, spring rolls—rather than fried or breaded dishes.
- Use modest amounts of **salty sauces**, like soy sauce, teriyaki and fish sauce, as they are very high in sodium. For example, you can halve your sodium intake by only dipping every other piece of sushi in soy sauce!
- End your meal with a yogurt or milk-based drink, such as a chai latte to top up your calcium intake.

3. I turn to foods that provide bone building nutrients

Calcium please

You probably already know that you need calcium for strong bones. Did you know that 99% of the calcium in your body is stored in your bones and teeth? If you don't get enough calcium daily from your diet, your body will take it from your bones. That's why it's important to eat calcium-rich foods every day during your lifetime. Milk products like milk, yogurt, and cheese contain calcium that is easily absorbed by your body and contain other essential nutrients, including complete protein and vitamin D – all important for bone health.

Think that nutrients found in milk products are easy to find elsewhere? Think again! According to the most recent Canadian Community Health Survey conducted by Statistics Canada and Health Canada, calcium intakes have fallen in the Canadian population over an 11-year period. This decrease also coincides with a reduction in milk product consumption. Have you topped up your calcium today?

ARTICLE

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Eat well every day

Milk products are nutritious, affordable, accessible and versatile. Along with vegetables, fruit, whole grains and other protein foods, they are part of a healthy diet. There are all kinds of simple and nourishing recipes made with milk, cheese and yogurt that are sure to please your whole family.

4. I make sure half of my plate are vegetables

There's a whole world of possibility when you cook with vegetables

Get creative! When it comes time to prep vegetables, let your imagination be your guide. From raw, steamed, stir-fried, or starring in your favourite dishes, there are endless ways to eat and enjoy vegetables. **Are you looking for a unique way to prep veggies?** Make some vegetable kabobs by threading peppers, zucchinis, and onion chunks onto skewers and then roast them in the oven. Treat your taste buds to a Pico de Gallo or a scrumptious salsa made with tomatoes, red onion and fresh cilantro. Master the art of emptying your fridge by using everything on hand to whip up a delicious vegetable soup or "enhance" your pasta sauce with tons of nutritious vegetables. If you're making homemade muffins, why not add some sweet potato puree or shredded carrots into your muffin mix? Finally, add some baby spinach to your smoothies — an excellent way to start your day.

ARTICLE

Eleven tips that make it easier to add more vegetables and fruit to your diet

We all know that vegetables and fruit are important in a healthy diet. But it can be challenging to meet the recommendations for including these foods in your daily diet as described in *Canada's Food Guide*. Here are a few simple strategies to help you get enough vegetables and fruit each day:

- Aim for **half your plate** to include a mix of colourful vegetables and fruit at lunch and dinner.
- **Eat seasonally** and savour the taste of fresh, locally grown vegetables and fruit.
- **Snack on pieces of fruit; add a yogurt-based dip for extra zip!**
- Add vegetables to **your sandwiches**: grated carrot, roasted zucchini, spinach leaves, diced or sliced tomato, avocado slices, or sautéed mushrooms.
- Try featuring more **vegetable-based dishes** in your repertoire such as chicken minestrone soup or a hearty egg salad packed with vegetables.
- Opt for **frozen vegetables and fruit** to make preparing soups, spaghetti sauces, smoothies and muffins easier. They are just as nutritious as fresh vegetables and fruit, with the added advantage of being a cinch to use.
- Reserve some time after grocery shopping to **wash and cut up** larger vegetables and fruit (e.g., melons, pineapple, mango). You'll save time during the week and always have some conveniently on hand to snack on.
- Have prewashed and precut **vegetables** on hand (for example: baby carrots, prewashed lettuce, baby spinach, green beans, diced squash, coleslaw). They may cost a little more but will save time when life gets busy.
- Keep a variety of **dried fruit** on hand to quell hunger in between meals.
- Excite your taste buds by discovering **new vegetables and fruit**. Add a little adventure to your grocery basket with some fennel, kale, Cara Cara oranges or an orange honeydew melon.
- Get **creative** in the kitchen by preparing veggies and fruit in new ways: make vegetable skewers, create a spicy salsa, incorporate overly ripe fruit into your muffins or have fun varying your milkshake flavours.

5. I pack nutritious snacks to keep me going

Get inspired for snack time

When hunger strikes between meals, you want a nutritious snack to give your body the fuel it needs to handle whatever life throws your way. Snacks are an opportunity to fill the nutrition gap, by topping up with fruit, vegetables, or milk products. And when you have nourishing options on hand, you're less likely to eat less nutritious options. **Follow these simple tips:** Select nutrient packed foods, plan out your snacks the same way you do your meals, and eat when hunger pangs strike. **Need inspiration?** Slices of apples with cheddar cheese make for a great sweet-and-savoury combo! A homemade, whole wheat muffin or a high-fibre protein bar and drinkable yogurt is a great snack that fits neatly into a backpack. Prepare veggies and hummus for lunch or afternoon cravings. Mix handfuls of dried fruits and unsalted nuts to create your own tasty trail mix. Pre-cut vegetables or hard-boiled eggs are always great to have in the fridge, so you aren't left without a healthy snacking option!

Related recipes:

Mhalbi Pudding with White Chocolate, Cinnamon and Cardamom

Breakfast Challenge



1. I enjoy lattes for a nutritional boost

Healthy beverages to stay hydrated all day long!

Water is an excellent choice for staying hydrated, but did you know that, Health Canada also recommends other healthy drinks? Milk is one example. Not only is it hydrating but it contains 15 nutrients, including complete protein, calcium and vitamin D. **Love coffee?** You're in luck! Unsweetened coffees are also on the list of recommended drinks. Made with a shot of espresso, a nice cup of hot milk and a light layer of froth, **lattes are more than a source of comfort**, they also provide a range of nutrients, including calcium. To jazz up your latte, sprinkle some ground cinnamon or cocoa powder on top.

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Milk, cheese and yogurt are naturally rich in calcium that your body absorbs well. Enjoying them each day, throughout life, can help you meet your essential nutrient needs, especially those that many Canadians have trouble meeting. This includes calcium, of course, but also five other essential nutrients that many of us lack in our diet, namely vitamin D, vitamin A, magnesium, zinc and potassium. **Very few foods provide as much calcium in one serving and in a form that your body can absorb so well.** For example, you would have to eat 8 cups of spinach or 8 cups of kidney beans to obtain the amount of calcium found in a single glass of milk. While other foods can provide calcium, studies show that, in real life, people who eat few or no dairy products often have a diet that's lacking in calcium.

Milk also has nutritional advantages over plant-based beverages

With the exception of soy beverages, most fortified plant-based beverages have significantly less protein per serving than cow's milk. In addition, the calcium naturally present in cow's milk is often better absorbed by our body than what's added to fortified plant-based beverages. Some research also shows that up to 40% of the calcium added to plant-based beverages can stick to the bottom of the container even if it is shaken vigorously.

How can you tell if you are deficient in calcium?

A calcium deficiency often goes unnoticed because a blood or urine test won't tell you if you are deficient in this critical nutrient. The calcium in your blood is tightly controlled in order to provide a constant supply to help your body work. If calcium is in short supply, your body will take calcium from your bones and, over time, your bones will slowly get weak and be more likely to break. To prevent this from happening, it's important to eat calcium-rich foods every day throughout your life.

Where is dairy in the *Food Guide*?

Milk, cheese and yogurt are included in the protein foods category in the new *Canada's Food Guide*. Along with vegetables, fruit, whole grains and other protein foods, nutritious milk products are among the foods that form the foundation for healthy eating and that *Canada's Food Guide* recommends we consume on a regular basis. Within the protein foods category, milk products offer a unique set of nutrients along with complete protein that set them apart from other sources of protein.

Eat well every day

Milk products are nutritious, affordable, accessible and versatile. Along with vegetables, fruit, whole grains and other protein foods, they are part of a healthy diet. There are all kinds of simple and nourishing recipes made with milk, cheese and yogurt that are sure to please your whole family.

2. Protein keeps my hunger at bay

The power of protein

Protein is an essential nutrient that plays multiple roles in maintaining your health. In particular, protein is known for its power to provide a feeling of fullness. A meal or snack that provides enough protein will help satisfy your hunger for a longer period of time. This will reduce cravings and the desire to consume nutrient-poor foods. Try to eat protein foods, like yogurt, meat, or eggs, in adequate amounts throughout your day, starting with breakfast!

ARTICLE

PROTEIN FOR YOUR FITNESS AND HEALTH

Protein plays many roles in your body and is essential for health at every age. So, it's not surprising that protein is so popular these days!

Become a protein pro

Protein plays a number of key roles in supporting your health. It helps to:

- promote children's optimal growth and development
- maintain healthy muscles and bones in adults;
- facilitate muscle recovery after a workout;
- repair body tissues after an injury;
- support a healthy immune system.

It's important to eat some protein with every meal in order to meet your body's needs. Since our bodies aren't designed to store excess protein, we need a regular supply.

Protein is found naturally in a number of foods: meat, poultry, fish and seafood, milk products, eggs, legumes, nuts and seeds. Protein foods, along with vegetables, fruit and whole grains, form the foundation for healthy eating that *Canada's Food Guide* recommends we consume on a regular basis.

Protein from animal sources: "complete" protein

Protein found in milk, yogurt and cheese is considered a "complete protein." All animal-based foods such as meat, fish, milk, yogurt and cheese contain complete protein. Complete protein provides enough of all nine essential amino acids in the right proportions. These amino acids are considered 'essential' because your body cannot make them.

Variety promotes health

A diet that includes a variety of protein foods matters, because it provides us with the various essential nutrients we need for our overall health. For example, fatty fish, such as salmon and trout, contain valuable omega-3; red meat is especially rich in iron and zinc that is easy for the body to absorb; milk products are an important and reliable source of calcium and other key nutrients essential for bone health; legumes and nuts are fabulous sources of fibre in addition to other nutrients. That's why it's important to include a wide variety of protein foods in your everyday diet.

Did you know that the majority of Canadians do not consume enough calcium? Including milk products, such as milk, yogurt, and cheese, in your daily diet is an easy way to make sure you're getting your recommended dose of calcium. [Learn more about calcium.](#)

Protein: An ally for active lives

Eating enough protein is important to help build and maintain healthy muscles. Protein helps repair muscles after intense physical activity and stimulates muscle development after training. Looking for post-workout protein ideas? Try our [green mango tango smoothie](#).

Protein and your appetite

Protein plays a key role in promoting satiety, the feeling of fullness you get after you eat. Not eating enough protein, may leave you feeling hungry, which could lead you to snack more (often on less nutritious foods). Another good reason to eat enough protein with your meals and snacks.

Protein...all day long

Does your breakfast keep you full until lunch? Do your energy levels tend to “crash” in the middle of the afternoon? Do your snacks contain enough protein? Here are a few satisfying recipe ideas that are sure to tickle your taste buds:

Breakfast

- Start the day off right with a delicious oven-cooked omelette the whole family will love: [Roasted broccoli mushroom mozza frittata](#).
- Enjoy a colourful smoothie bowl before heading to work: [Blueberry smoothie bowl](#).

Lunch

- Fuel up on energy at lunch with an Italian-inspired sandwich: [Super easy chicken parm](#).
- Always round out your salads with a source of protein, as in this delicious [Pasta and edamame salad](#).

Snack

- Pair your fruit with a yogurt dip the whole family will enjoy: [Fruidelicious and dip](#).
 - Make yourself a refreshing afternoon snack, like this [Raspberry-ricotta smoothie](#)
-

3. I favor whole fruit for their full benefits

Whole fruit: Surprising allies when it comes to your health

Fruit provides a range of essential nutrients and other components that are good for your health, including valuable fibre, antioxidants and vitamins. Unfortunately, most Canadians eat only half of the amount of fibre recommended by Health Canada. Fruit is an important source of fibre, and breakfast is a great opportunity to add them to your daily routine. **Try to opt for the whole fruit (with the peel) since a large proportion of the fibre is found in the skin.** For example, a peeled apple has 40% less fibre than a whole apple.

4. I keep healthy homemade options on hand

Healthy breakfasts that can be made in a jiffy

If you're racing out the door in the morning and don't have much time for breakfast, choose meals you can make quickly or ahead of time. **Need some inspiration?** Overnight oats, that you make the night before, are nourishing, nutritious and ready to eat first thing in the morning: simply combine oatmeal, milk, yogurt and fruit in a Mason jar and refrigerate overnight. Make your own breakfast sandwich and say goodbye to long lines at the drive-through: cook two beaten eggs in the microwave (about 90 seconds), then lay the omelette, a slice of Cheddar cheese and a leaf of lettuce on a whole wheat English muffin. Homemade nutritious cereal bars and muffins are another quick fix: make them on the weekend and keep them in the freezer. Simply take them out the night before and serve them with yogurt and fresh fruit for breakfast. Smoothies are also super quick to make: simply combine milk, Greek yogurt and frozen fruit in a blender.

5. When I'm in a hurry, I pack something for the road

Healthy breakfasts on the go

Are you racing around in the morning and don't have a lot of time for breakfast? Instead of stopping along the way and buying a breakfast that may not be very nutritious, pack a bag that includes fruit, a source of protein, such as Greek yogurt or cheese, and a whole grain product, such as a cereal bar or bagel. You may be able to eat the food on your commute or at your destination.

Related recipes:

Simple Yogurt and Fruit Breakfast Bowl

Pursuing Wellness



1. I choose wholesome, naturally nutritious foods

The secret to a delicious, nutritious smoothie? It's milk!

Fruit smoothies are so easy to prepare at home and take no time at all. All you need is naturally nutritious ingredients like fresh or frozen fruit, yogurt (if you want to create a thicker version) and a splash of milk. Best of all, when you make a fruit smoothie at home, you can control the amount of sugar you add to the beverage. Milk is an ingredient of choice for health because it contains 15 nutrients, including “complete” protein. Complete protein provides enough of all nine essential amino acids in the right proportions. These amino acids are considered ‘essential’ because your body cannot make them. Milk also provides a highly bioavailable form

of calcium along with vitamin D, both of which are key nutrients for bone health. Milk also offers more nutrition than plant-based beverages, as most fortified plant-based beverages contain far less protein per serving than milk, with the exception of soy beverages. Interestingly, our bodies absorb calcium found in cow's milk better than the calcium added to plant-based beverages. There is some evidence that up to 40% of calcium added to plant-based beverages may remain at the bottom of the carton, even if shaken vigorously.

ARTICLE

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Eat well every day

Milk products are nutritious, affordable, accessible and versatile. Along with vegetables, fruit, whole grains and other protein foods, they are part of a healthy diet. There are all kinds of simple and nourishing recipes made with milk, cheese and yogurt that are sure to please your whole family.

2. I pay attention to what is in my food

Nothing says "quality" better than Canadian

In Canada, we're fortunate that food safety is highly regulated. In fact, the Canadian food system is considered to be one of the safest in the world. Whether it's related to Canadian agriculture or imported foods, strict regulations, safety systems, and standards are in place throughout the food chain to protect our food supply. Many Canadian agricultural sectors have on-farm food safety assurance programs that set the benchmarks for food safety and quality, animal welfare, and the environment. Such is the case for Canadian milk, which is produced with some of the world's strictest standards. Canadian dairy producers are very vigilant in producing milk of the highest quality, without the use of artificial growth hormones and ensuring that no antibiotics are present in the milk you drink.

3. I enjoy a variety of whole grains

Fibre-rich foods are a must for your health

“Eat more fibre!” is something you’ve no doubt heard before. When it comes to our health, fibre plays an important role. Fibre helps to regulate bowel function, helps you stay fuller for longer, helps with weight management and to control blood sugar levels in people living with diabetes. Fibre-rich foods can even help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and certain types of cancer. Health Canada guidelines recommend that women should consume 25 grams of fibre daily, while men should consume 38 grams of fibre daily. Despite that, most Canadians typically consume half of this daily recommended amount. Many foods provide fibre such as vegetables, fruit, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole-grain products. In general, highly processed foods - such as pulp-free fruit juice, white bread and pasta, and refined cereal - contain less fibre. In fact, the husk of the grain (commonly known as "bran") is removed during the refining process which greatly reduces the fibre content in these foods. This is yet another great reason why it's important to eat as many unprocessed foods as possible!

4. I believe that a healthy body equals a healthy mind

It's no secret — healthy living starts with staying active

We all know that physical activity is a vital part of a healthy lifestyle. Moving regularly helps prevent a number of health problems such as anxiety, depression, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, Type 2 Diabetes, weight gain, and even many different forms of cancer. It also helps promote a better quality of life overall. **To benefit from physical activity fully, adults should engage in moderate to vigorous activity for at least 150 minutes a week, while children and youth should be moderately or vigorously active for 60 minutes every day.** The key to staying active is choosing an activity you like such as speed walking, swimming, biking, running, skating, cross-country skiing, hiking, etc. What's important is that you move – any activity at all is the change maker.

5. I want to reduce my environmental footprint

There are some simple, concrete steps you can take to help reduce your carbon footprint. Whether you're reducing food waste, or eating just the right amount of food to meet your needs, or choosing to purchase Canadian-produced food, every little step helps.

ARTICLE

There are plenty of ways to reduce your environmental footprint

Everything we do makes a difference when it comes to reducing our environmental footprint. Here are a few concrete ideas to try.

- **Reduce food waste.** Avoid throwing away food that is still edible: plan your meals and snacks and shop for the foods you need, use wilted vegetables in soups and sauces, store your food properly and freeze any extras. Save your leftovers for a future meal instead of throwing them away. Avoiding food waste is the easiest thing you can do to reduce the environmental impact of your diet.

- **Eat to satisfy hunger and support health.** Eat the right amount of food to meet your needs—no more and no less. By consuming what we need (with occasional indulgences of course!), we use fewer agricultural resources, such as land, water and livestock, and ensure a better food supply globally.
- **Buy fresh, local products.** For fresher products, choose local foods, grown and produced in Canada. And don't hesitate to ask farmers questions about the practices they use to protect the environment!
- **Choose a healthy and varied diet.** A sustainable diet must, above all, meet your nutritional needs! Eat fewer processed foods that are less nutritious as they contribute to your environmental footprint without providing nutritional benefits. Look for nutritious, minimally processed whole foods, such as fruit, vegetables and milk. Because reducing your environmental impact starts with a healthy and balanced diet.
- **Support agricultural producers who reduce their environmental impact...** like Canadian dairy farmers. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with Canadian milk production represents just 1% of all GHGs in Canada. The adoption of new technologies, optimal cow feeding strategies and major investments in research and innovation have helped substantially reduce the impact of Canadian milk production over the past 30 years—and this commitment is on-going!!

Related recipes:

Vegetarian Curry with Chickpeas and Squash
Mango Lassi

Healthy Future



1. I aim for foods with bone-building nutrients at every meal

Milk products: Your partner in health

According to *Canada's Food Guide*, milk products are among the protein foods that together with vegetables and fruit and whole grains, make up the foundation for healthy eating and that the Food Guide recommends we consume on a regular basis. Milk products such as milk, yogurt and cheese are foods of choice for your health as they contain up to 15 nutrients, including complete protein, calcium and vitamin D, which are essential for bone health, no matter what age you are.

Think the nutrients in milk products are easy to find elsewhere?

According to data from the latest Canadian Community Health Survey conducted by Statistics Canada and Health Canada, calcium intakes have dropped in the Canadian population over an 11-year period, and this drop coincides with a decrease in milk product consumption. The result? The vast majority of Canadians of all ages do not have enough calcium in their diet.

What about plant-based beverages? It is important to know that not all plant-based beverages are nutritionally comparable. And, in general, they don't have the same characteristics as milk. With the exception of soy beverages, plant-based beverages generally contain much less protein than milk. In addition, the calcium naturally present in milk is often better absorbed by the body than that added to fortified plant-based beverages. There is evidence that as much as 40% of the calcium added to plant-based beverages can stay to the bottom of the container, even after you shake it vigorously.

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Dairy, your dependable daily dose of essential nutrients

Think the nutrients in dairy are easy to find elsewhere? According to data from the most recent Canadian Community Health Survey conducted by Statistics Canada and Health Canada, calcium intakes have fallen in the Canadian population over an 11-year period and this drop coincides with a decrease in consumption of dairy products. The result? The vast majority of Canadians don't get enough calcium. For instance, 66% of teenage boys, 86% of teenage girls and more than 73% of adult women are not

getting enough calcium every day. Calcium is crucial for maintaining bone health as well as keeping your heart beating and blood pressure normal. It also helps your muscles contract and relax, your blood clot and your nerve cells communicate.

Milk, cheese and yogurt are naturally rich in calcium that your body absorbs well. Enjoying them each day, throughout life, can help you meet your essential nutrient needs, especially those that many Canadians have trouble meeting. This includes calcium, of course, but also five other essential nutrients that many of us lack in our diet, namely vitamin D, vitamin A, magnesium, zinc and potassium. **Very few foods provide as much calcium in one serving and in a form that your body can absorb so well.** For example, you would have to eat 8 cups of spinach or 8 cups of kidney beans to obtain the amount of calcium found in a single glass of milk. While other foods can provide calcium, studies show that, in real life, people who eat few or no dairy products often have a diet that's lacking in calcium.

Milk also has nutritional advantages over plant-based beverages

With the exception of soy beverages, most fortified plant-based beverages have significantly less protein per serving than cow's milk. In addition, the calcium naturally present in cow's milk is often better absorbed by our body than what's added to fortified plant-based beverages. Some research also shows that up to 40% of the calcium added to plant-based beverages can stick to the bottom of the container even if it is shaken vigorously.

How can you tell if you are deficient in calcium?

A calcium deficiency often goes unnoticed because a blood or urine test won't tell you if you are deficient in this critical nutrient. The calcium in your blood is tightly controlled in order to provide a constant supply to help your body work. If calcium is in short supply, your body will take calcium from your bones and, over time, your bones will slowly get weak and be more likely to break. To prevent this from happening, it's important to eat calcium-rich foods every day throughout your life.

Where is dairy in the *Food Guide*?

Milk, cheese and yogurt are included in the protein foods category in the new *Canada's Food Guide*. Along with vegetables, fruit, whole grains and other protein foods, nutritious milk products are among the foods that form the foundation for healthy eating and that *Canada's Food Guide* recommends we consume on a regular basis. Within the protein foods category, milk products offer a unique set of nutrients along with complete protein that set them apart from other sources of protein.

Eat well every day

Milk products are nutritious, affordable, accessible and versatile. Along with vegetables, fruit, whole grains and other protein foods, they are part of a healthy diet. There are all kinds of simple and nourishing recipes made with milk, cheese and yogurt that are sure to please your whole family.

2. I have protein foods at every meal

Adding protein to every meal: A healthy habit to adopt

Protein foods are an important part of a healthy diet and should make up a quarter of your plate, according to *Canada's Food Guide*. Protein is important for maintaining muscle mass and strong bones. In addition, it helps form antibodies in your immune system. In fact, every cell in your body depends on it. **Make it a priority at every meal!** Since the body cannot store large amounts of protein, it is essential to consume protein foods regularly, ideally at every meal. Protein is found in meat, poultry, fish and seafood, eggs, milk and milk products, legumes, nuts and seeds.

ARTICLE

PROTEIN FOR YOUR FITNESS AND HEALTH

Protein plays many roles in your body and is essential for health at every age. So, it's not surprising that protein is so popular these days!

Become a protein pro

Protein plays a number of key roles in supporting your health. It helps to:

- promote children's optimal growth and development
- maintain healthy muscles and bones in adults;
- facilitate muscle recovery after a workout;
- repair body tissues after an injury;
- support a healthy immune system.

It's important to eat some protein with every meal in order to meet your body's needs. Since our bodies aren't designed to store excess protein, we need a regular supply.

Protein is found naturally in a number of foods: meat, poultry, fish and seafood, milk products, eggs, legumes, nuts and seeds. Protein foods, along with vegetables, fruit and whole grains, form the foundation for healthy eating that *Canada's Food Guide* recommends we consume on a regular basis.

Protein from animal sources: "complete" protein

Protein found in milk, yogurt and cheese is considered a "complete protein." All animal-based foods such as meat, fish, milk, yogurt and cheese contain complete protein. Complete protein provides enough of all nine essential amino acids in the right proportions. These amino acids are considered 'essential' because your body cannot make them. On the other hand, plant-based protein, found in most legumes, nuts and grains, for example, are deemed "incomplete."

Variety promotes health

A diet that includes a variety of protein foods matters, because it provides us with the various essential nutrients we need for our overall health. For example, fatty fish, such as salmon and trout, contain

valuable omega-3; red meat is especially rich in iron and zinc that is easy for the body to absorb; milk products are an important and reliable source of calcium and other key nutrients essential for bone health; legumes and nuts are fabulous sources of fibre in addition to other nutrients. That's why it's important to include a wide variety of protein foods in your everyday diet.

Did you know that the majority of Canadians do not consume enough calcium? Including milk products, such as milk, yogurt, and cheese, in your daily diet is an easy way to make sure you're getting your recommended dose of calcium. [Learn more about calcium.](#)

Protein: An ally for active lives

Eating enough protein is important to help build and maintain healthy muscles. Protein helps repair muscles after intense physical activity and stimulates muscle development after training. Looking for post-workout protein ideas? Try our [green mango tango smoothie](#).

Protein and your appetite

Protein plays a key role in promoting satiety, the feeling of fullness you get after you eat. Not eating enough protein, may leave you feeling hungry, which could lead you to snack more (often on less nutritious foods). Another good reason to eat enough protein with your meals and snacks.

Protein...all day long

Does your breakfast keep you full until lunch? Do your energy levels tend to "crash" in the middle of the afternoon? Do your snacks contain enough protein? Here are a few satisfying recipe ideas that are sure to tickle your taste buds:

Breakfast

- Start the day off right with a delicious oven-cooked omelette the whole family will love: [Roasted broccoli mushroom mozza frittata](#).
- Enjoy a colourful smoothie bowl before heading to work: [Blueberry smoothie bowl](#).

Lunch

- Fuel up on energy at lunch with an Italian-inspired sandwich: [Super easy chicken parm](#).
- Always round out your salads with a source of protein, as in this delicious [Pasta and edamame salad](#).

Snack

- Pair your fruit with a yogurt dip the whole family will enjoy: [Fruidelicious and dip](#).
 - Make yourself a refreshing afternoon snack, like this [Raspberry-ricotta smoothie](#).
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3. I enjoy dinner with my significant other

Eating together: The secret to savouring healthy eating

Eating meals with others is a great way to stay connected and also provides a number of health benefits! It's a wonderful way to adopt better eating habits because **in addition to enjoying quality time, meals eaten with others are often more balanced and prepared with fresh, more nutritious foods.** If getting together with your loved ones isn't possible, just use a little ingenuity and cook and eat together virtually! Want to make this experience a regular activity? Start a routine: for example, plan a dinner every Saturday featuring a food you're less familiar with. It's a great way to experiment, while exploring new textures and flavours. The conversation, positive emotions and memories you create will strengthen your connections while you fill up on satisfying, nutritious meals.

4. I love trying new recipes

Dairy Farmers of Canada has tasty and nutritious recipes for you

Lacking mealtime inspiration? The nutritious "Our dietitians' favourite" recipes on the Canadian Goodness website were created and endorsed by the team of Registered Dietitians at Dairy Farmers of Canada. Their nutritional value meets specific criteria for certain nutrients, including protein, fibre and sodium. [Click here to see the recipes.](#)

5. I make sure to eat lots of vegetables

Cultivating your creativity can increase your veggie intake

Get creative with vegetables and let your imagination be your guide! In the form of veggie sticks, steamed, sautéed or added to your favourite dishes, any way you serve them is a great way to eat more vegetables. **Looking for original ideas?** Thread large cubes of onion, bell pepper and zucchini onto a baking skewer and grill or bake. Take your taste buds on a journey by concocting a sensational pico de gallo or salsa with tomatoes, red onion and fresh cilantro. Become a pro at cleaning out your fridge by making a yummy vegetable soup or a pasta sauce bursting with veggies. Add mashed sweet potatoes or grated carrot to your muffins or baby spinach to your smoothies.

Related recipes:

Lemony ginger-milk and honey tea



BROUGHT TO YOU
BY OUR DIETITIANS

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