

TIME FOR CHANGE

LITTLE KNOWLEDGE - LARGE PROBLEMS

Nutrition literacy has never been higher. There is an ever-increasing awareness of calorie consumption, the dangers of unhealthy fats, and the importance of BMI. Despite this, our society is still struggling to understand how to create a healthy diet. Being a consumer in today's media-driven society can leave us feeling confused. We are constantly bombarded with new research, varying opinions, and food fads that come and go. While we have tried to understand and use this information to formulate the "perfect diet," we have instead created a stressful relationship with food and the decision-making that surrounds it.

Can I eat this?

Should I eat more of that?

Most decisions that we make can easily be swayed by external factors like media and advertising, and internal factors like our thoughts and emotions. Decisions around food, however, also involve a physical component. Taste buds can reject bitter foods like greens, blood sugar fluctuations can make you crave sweets, deficiencies can make you crave unhealthy fast food, salt, or chocolate. It can feel like we are out of control!

What CAN we rely on to make positive decisions around the food that we choose to purchase and consume?



Be an Educated Consumer

**The New
Canada
Food Guide**



**Food
Labels**



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Eat Well. Live Well.

This is a positive and key message for Canadians. The new Canada Food Guide has taken a progressive leap, moving beyond the idea of food groups and portion sizes, to an evidence-based focus on what to eat, what not to eat, and how to eat! So, when your taste buds are leading you astray, or you see a social media post about the latest fad diet, choose the Canada Food Guide as your trusted reference to eat well and live well.

Get your copy here: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/food-guide-snapshot/>

Food Guide Highlights

Consume More Plant-Based Proteins. Where do you get your protein? Higher in fibre and lower in saturated fat, plants can be a great source of protein and other nutrients. You can still eat meat, but including plant-based protein can be a subtle shift to optimize your health. Some great examples are chickpeas, lentils, tofu, quinoa and chia seeds.



Whole Grains Are In. Refined is out and whole is in! Unlike refined grains that remove one or more of the germ, bran, and endosperm, whole grains include all parts of the grain. In their whole form, grains like oats, barley, and rice deliver more fibre, vitamins, and minerals.

Find a Recipe. Avoiding additives, preservatives, and excess salt, sugar, and fat is a critical step to eating and living well. Cooking more at home means you know exactly what is in the food you are consuming. It also adds diversity to your diet, and saves you money! Plan your weekly meals, stock your pantry, and be ready to tackle the day.

Make Water Your Drink of Choice. In 2015, beverages were noted as the largest contributor to sugar in the diet. Opting for water limits sugar-based beverages and promotes hydration.

Be Mindful, Not Mindless. Knowing how, why, what, when, and where you eat connects your food choices to your emotions, thoughts, and behaviours. You are more likely to make healthy choices, take time to eat, and enjoy your food. Think of eating as an experience rather than a mindless mouthful.

Food is Social, so Eat with Others. Quality, face-to-face interactions seem to have become a lost art. Mealtimes can be a great way to share and connect with family, friends, and co-workers. Schedule time for family dinners, plan a weekly lunch date with an elderly person who would otherwise eat alone, or participate in community fundraisers, events, or outreach programs.

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Read the Label. Know the Label.

In addition to the Canada Food Guide, consumers can use the food label to make informed choices, quickly and conveniently. Nutrition labels offer valuable information when making decisions about the food that we choose to purchase and eat. They allow consumers to make healthy food choices by comparing ingredients and nutrition details and choosing products that suit their preferences and dietary needs.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 Brownie (60 g)	
Calories 270	
Fat 15 g	% Daily Value* 20 %
Saturated 6 g	30 %
+ Trans 0.2 g	
Carbohydrate 31 g	
Fibre 1 g	4 %
Sugars 21 g	21 %
Protein 5 g	
Cholesterol 40 mg	
Sodium 230 mg	10 %
Potassium 125 mg	3 %
Calcium 40 mg	3 %
Iron 1 mg	6 %
* 5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot	

Ingredients: Sugars (brown sugar, sugar), Peanut butter, Wheat flour, Butter, Eggs, Baking powder, Salt.

- **Ingredients** are listed in order of weight. The food contains more of the ingredients at the beginning of the list than the end.

- **Serving** is not the suggested serving size for consumption, but rather a unit of measure used to compare the item to other products.
- **% Daily Value (DV)** indicates if a serving has a lot or a little of a particular nutrient. It's not meant to track intake, but is a reference point to compare nutrient content in products. It's based on the Reference Daily Intake for an average adult.
- **% DV for total sugars** is based on a reference point of 100 grams, where sugar consumption is mostly coming from fruits, vegetables, and milk. This is NOT a recommended daily intake.
- **No % DV needed for Protein, Cholesterol, and Carbs.**
 - Protein: Canadians consume adequate protein when following a mixed diet.
 - Cholesterol: Not an essential nutrient. Your body can make what it needs. Eat as little dietary cholesterol as possible and cut out saturated fats as recommended.
 - Carbohydrate: % DV is captured in the two main components of fibre and sugars (starch, sugar).
- **% DV rule of thumb:** 5% DV or less is a little, and 15% DV or more is a lot. Look for higher values for beneficial nutrients like fibre, and lower values for nutrients like sodium and sugars.

While the nutrition label is a valuable resource, always remember to look at the food as a whole rather than its parts. For example, while the additional fibre in a fibre bar may seem beneficial, the equivalent amount can be found in a whole food that delivers far greater benefits than a processed food product.

Sources: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/food-labels.html>
<http://www.mondaq.com/canada/x/557244/food+drugs+law/Canada+Finalizes+Changes+To+Nutrition+Labelling+Requirements+For+Package+d+Foods>
<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>