

Healthy Eating for Adult Weight Management

Are you ready to make changes to how you eat for your health and weight? If your answer is *yes*, then the ideas in this handout may help you.

Calories and weight

Calories are fuel (or energy) for your body. We get calories from what we eat and drink.

- **Weight gain** can happen when the calories you get from food and drink are more than the calories you burn.
- **Weight stays the same** when the calories you get from food and drink are the same as the calories you burn.
- **Weight loss** happens when the calories you get from food and drink are less than the calories you burn.

What works for weight management?

Have breakfast every day

- Eat within 2 hours of waking up.
- Include a high protein food like low fat yogurt, an egg, or low fat meat.
- Have fruit instead of juice to fill up with fewer calories.
- If you don't have enough time to make a meal, try a meal replacement drink or bar.

Eat 4 to 5 times per day

- Include 3 meals and 1–2 snacks.

Aim for smaller portions and a healthy plate at every meal.

- Make half your plate Vegetables and Fruit.
- First, start with a smaller plate.
- Divide the other half into smaller portions of Grain Products and Meat and Alternatives.

Include foods that help you to feel full

- Choose foods with at least 2 grams fibre per serving.
- Add vegetables or fruit to your meals.
- Include a protein food at meals. Foods higher in protein come from the Meat and Alternatives and Milk and Alternatives groups. See the *Guide to healthy food choices* on the next page.

Avoid drinks with calories (except skim or 1% milk)

- Drink water throughout the day.
- Drinks with calories include pop, iced tea, fruit flavoured drinks, slushes, alcoholic drinks, energy drinks, coffee and tea drinks made with sugar, syrups, cream, and whitener.

Shop for groceries with your goals in mind

- The food and drinks you bring home are the food and drinks you will be eating.
- Go to the grocery store with a list, and follow it.
- Don't shop when you're hungry.

Limit high fat foods and added fats

- Choose small portions of healthy fats.

Limit eating out to 0–2 times per week




- Choose foods that are grilled, broiled, barbequed, or baked. Avoid fried or deep fried foods.
- Ask for lower fat dressings and sauces on the side.
- Choose drinks without calories. Limit alcohol.
- Share a meal, or eat only half and take the rest home for another day.


Choose more *Go* foods

- Use the *Guide to healthy food choices* that starts on the next page.
- In each food group, there are lower and higher calorie choices. Both low calorie and high calorie foods count toward your total calories each day.

Guide to healthy food choices

To get the nutrients you need, eat at least the lower number of servings listed in each food group every day. Use the chart below as a guide to make food choices.

 Choose most often	 Choose sometimes	 Choose least often
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> high in vitamins, minerals, and fibre lower in sugar, fat, salt, and/or calories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains some vitamins and minerals, but may be lower in fibre may be higher in sugar, fat, salt, and/or calories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> low in vitamins, minerals, and fibre high in sugar, fat, or salt may be higher in calories

Foods with  beside them are higher in sodium (salt). Limit foods higher in sodium.

Vegetables and Fruit











7 to 10 servings a day

Choose bright orange and deep green vegetables and fruit more often because they are higher in vitamins and minerals.



Examples of 1 serving:

- ½ cup (125 mL) fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables or fruit
- 1 cup (250 mL) raw leafy vegetables
- 1 medium fruit
- ½ cup (125 mL) 100% pure fruit or vegetable juice
- ¼ cup (60 mL) dried fruit

 Choose most often	 Choose sometimes	 Choose least often
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fresh or frozen vegetables and fruit plain baked or boiled potatoes canned vegetables with no added salt canned fruit in water homemade tomato or spaghetti sauce with no added salt homemade salsa with no added salt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% fruit juice (limit to ½ cup (125 mL) per day) canned or frozen fruit in 100% juice or light syrup dried fruit with no added sugar low sodium vegetable juice canned vegetables with added salt  salsa; tomato or spaghetti sauce  lower sodium tomato-based vegetable soups  creamy vegetable soup made with low fat milk  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> canned fruit in heavy syrup French fries and hashbrowns  dried fruit or fruit snacks with added sugar breaded or fried vegetables vegetables in cream sauce  creamy vegetable soup made with high fat milk or cream 

Grain Products








6 to 8 servings a day

Choose whole grain foods most often. They have fibre, B vitamins, and minerals. Choose foods with at least 2 grams of fibre per serving.



Examples of 1 serving:

- 1 slice of bread (35 g)
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) hot cereal
- 1/2 pita, tortilla, muffin (35 g)
- 2 cups (500 mL) popcorn, popped
- 30 g cold cereal
- 1/2 hot dog, hamburger bun, or roll
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) cooked pasta or rice
- 1/2 bagel (45 g)

 Choose most often	 Choose sometimes	 Choose least often
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whole grain bread, naan, pita, tortilla, roti • brown or wild rice, bulgur, millet, quinoa • whole grain pasta or barley • unsweetened whole grain hot or cold cereal • low fat and lower sodium whole grain crackers • homemade, small, low fat, whole grain muffins • air popped popcorn with no toppings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • white bread, pita, tortilla (not whole grain) • white rice and pasta • store-bought, small, low fat, whole grain muffins • lower fat granola or cereal bars • low fat microwave popcorn, flavoured rice cakes  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • garlic or cheese bread  • sugary cereals • packaged instant noodle soups  • croissants • store-bought muffins • dipped granola bars • regular microwave popcorn, theatre popcorn 

Milk and Alternatives












2 to 3 servings a day

Choose lower fat Milk and Alternatives more often. Limit foods with added sugar. Milk and Alternatives are a source of protein. Milk also contains calcium and vitamin D to help keep bones and teeth strong.



Examples of 1 serving:

- 1 cup (250 mL) milk
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) evaporated milk (undiluted)
- 1 1/2 oz (50 g) cheese
- 1 cup (250 mL) fortified soy beverage
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) yogurt
- 1/2 cup cottage cheese

 Choose most often	 Choose sometimes	 Choose least often
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low fat milk, skim or 1% • unflavoured fortified soy beverage • lactose-reduced milk, skim or 1% • evaporated skim milk • buttermilk, 1%  • lower fat cheese (7% MF or less)  • plain or flavoured yogurt or yogurt drinks, less than 2% MF, without added sugar • dry curd, no salt added cottage cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2% milk, 2% evaporated milk • flavoured 1% milk, reduced sugar • flavoured fortified soy beverages • cheese, 8–20% MF  • cottage cheese (fat-free, 1%, or 2% MF)  • ricotta cheese • lower fat cheese spread  • lower fat cream cheese • yogurt or yogurt drinks, with sugar added and/or 2% MF or higher • creamy soups made with low fat milk  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homogenized milk (whole, 3.4%) • chocolate or other flavoured milk • whole buttermilk (3.25%) • whole evaporated milk • cheese, higher than 20% MF • cheese sauce, regular cheese spread, cream cheese • cottage cheese higher than 2% MF  • creamy soup made with cream or whole milk  • coffee cream, half and half

MF = milk fat

Meat and Alternatives











2 to 3 servings a day

Choose lean meats and poultry. Eat fish at least twice a week. Choose beans and lentils more often. Meat and alternatives are a good source of protein and iron.



Examples of 1 serving:

- 2½ oz (75 g) or ½ cup (125 mL) cooked lean meat, fish, or shellfish
- ¾ cup (175 mL) cooked dried peas, beans or lentils
- ¾ cup (175 mL) tofu
- 2 eggs

 Choose most often	 Choose sometimes	 Choose least often
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ground or roasted skinless chicken or turkey • trimmed lean beef, pork, lamb, veal, bison, and wild game (moose, venison) • extra lean ground beef • broiled, baked, steamed fish, and seafood without sauce • fish canned with water, no salt added • tofu • eggs • dried cooked beans, peas, and lentils • canned beans, peas, and lentils  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low fat breaded fish or chicken  • lean ground beef • duck and goose • low fat deli/processed meats such as chicken, beef, ham  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular ground beef and untrimmed meats • high fat deli/processed meats such as bologna, salami  • bacon, sausage, smokies and wieners  • battered deep fried fish and chicken fingers  • chicken wings and fried chicken with skin 




Oils and Fats

Include a small amount of healthy fat each day.

Oils and fats added to food at the table or during cooking add extra calories. All oils and fats are high in calories; 1 teaspoon of fat has about 45 calories.

Note: Fat-free foods are not calorie free; they may contain added sugar. Count fat-free foods as *Extras* if you eat more than 2 Tbsp (30 mL). See the *Extras* list below.






 Choose most often	 Choose sometimes	 Choose least often
<p>Healthy fats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • canola, olive, soy, safflower, corn oil • non-hydrogenated soft tub margarines • salad dressings, low fat or regular • mayonnaise, low fat or regular avocado • nuts and seeds, unsalted peanut, or nut butters with no salt added 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low fat sour cream and cream cheese • nuts and seeds, with salt or oil added • peanut or nut butters with added salt 	<p>Saturated or trans fats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • butter, hard margarine, lard, shortening • tropical oils such as palm and coconut oil • regular sour cream or cream cheese • half & half, whipping cream, or coffee cream • cream sauces and gravies • sweetened nut spreads such as Nutella®

Mixed Dishes

Examples of mixed dishes are soups, stews, casseroles, stir fries, and sandwiches. Use the tips below to decide if a mixed dish is a *Go*, *Yield*, or *Stop* food.







 Choose most often	 Choose sometimes	 Choose least often
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ingredients are all <i>Go</i> foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ingredients are mostly <i>Go</i> foods with at least one <i>Yield</i> or <i>Stop</i> food. • dishes have added salt, sugar, or fat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ingredients are mostly <i>Yield</i> or <i>Stop</i> foods • includes ingredients such as cream sauces, meat with visible fat, regular ground beef, little or no vegetables, and is fried or deep fried




Choose Least Often – Extras (high fat, high sugar foods)

Limit to 0–2 each week

Extras are foods higher in fat and/or sugar. They give you extra calories. Instead of eating extras regularly, eat them only once in a while in small portions.

 Choose least often	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • potato chips, nachos, taco chips  • regular microwave popcorn, theatre popcorn  • cookies, Danishes, donuts, pies, cakes • trail mix, granola  • regular or low fat ice cream, frozen desserts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fruit roll ups, fruit flavoured gummy snacks • chocolate, candy • sugar, honey, syrup, regular jam • pudding • sauces like ketchup, barbeque, tartar, sweet and sour, teriyaki (if you eat more than 2 Tbsp)

Drinks

 Choose most often	 Choose sometimes	 Choose least often
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water, unflavoured low fat milk (skim or 1%), low fat fortified soy beverage • lactose-reduced milk, skim, or 1% • calorie-free drinks, coffee and tea <p>Note: Coffee, tea and diet colas have caffeine in them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flavoured 1% milk, reduced sugar • flavoured fortified soy beverages • low sodium vegetable juice • fortified almond, rice, coconut, or hemp beverages with no added sugar • 100% pure fruit juice (limit to ½ cup (125 mL) per day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drinks high in calories with added sugar or fat (slushes, regular pop, fruit) • flavoured crystals, ice tea, fruit drinks, and energy drinks) • alcohol is high in calories. • almond, rice, coconut, or hemp beverages with added sugar

How can I get started?

Choose more *Go* foods than *Yield* or *Stop* foods.

- Read food labels. The Nutrition Facts table on packaged foods tells you how much fibre, fat, and calories are in a serving.
- Ask yourself if the serving at the top of the Nutrition Facts table is the amount you would eat. If you eat more or less than the serving size in the table, you need to adjust the calories listed. For example, if you eat double the serving size, you eat double the calories on the Nutrition Facts table.
- Foods labelled low fat or fat-free may not be lower in calories. Use the Nutrition Facts table to compare calories.
- Before eating out, check if the restaurant has nutrition information in a pamphlet or on their website.
- You can find the calories for many foods in *Nutrient Value of Some Common Foods* (Health Canada, 2008). Type the title in your favourite Internet search engine.

Use a lifestyle journal

People who use a journal succeed at making changes more often. You can write your progress on paper, or use a phone, computer, or tablet.

- Every day record
 - ✓ what you eat and drink and how much,
 - ✓ how much and what kind of activity you do
 - ✓ any problems, pain, or other symptoms
- Write down your weight.
- Review your progress:
 - ✓ What am I doing well?
 - ✓ What do I still need to work on?
 - ✓ Do I need any help to meet my goals?

