The Healthy Eating Strategy was launched October 2016

Vision: Make the healthier choice the easier choice for all Canadians

Better nutrition information
- Revise Food Guide
- Improve Food Labels
- Front-of-Package Labelling

Improve food quality
- Reduce Sodium in Food
- Prohibit Industrial Trans Fat

Protect vulnerable populations
- Restrict Marketing of Unhealthy Food & Beverages to Children

Improve food access & availability
- Expand and update Nutrition North Canada

Meaningful impacts on long-term health outcomes for Canadians

Mutually-reinforcing initiatives developed using strong evidence and meaningful, open, and transparent consultations

Collaboration with other federal initiatives such as A Food Policy for Canada
Openness & Transparency

- On October 24th, 2016 the Minister of Health announced a new approach regarding transparency of stakeholder communications for healthy eating initiatives.

- All meetings and correspondence in which views, opinions, information and requests for information are relayed with the intent to inform development of policies will be published on a searchable / sortable table on the Canada.ca website, including the name of the organization as well as the topics and purpose of discussion.

- **Exemption**: formal submissions of feedback on policy proposals during consultation periods.
The new Food Guide is an **online suite of resources** that better meets the needs of different users including the general public, policy makers, and health professionals. Highlights include:

- Actionable advice for Canadians on healthy food choices and healthy eating habits including cooking more often and being mindful of eating habits.

- Updated recommendations on saturated fat, sodium, and sugars including guidance on confectioneries and sugary drinks such as soft drinks, sweetened milk and juice.

- Mobile-responsive web content to support Canadians to eat healthy whenever, and wherever they go.
Why the Food Guide matters to Canadians?

• Integrated widely by governments and stakeholders into nutrition policies, programs, and resources.

• Taught in schools and promoted by health professionals when supporting Canadians to eat well.

• Can help influence the foods served and sold in Canada’s public institutions from day cares and schools, to long-term care facilities, as well as the foods Canadians choose for themselves and their families.
Solid Evidence

- The best available evidence was considered, including:
  - only high-quality scientific reports on food and health from respected authorities including systematic reviews on over 100 food-related topics
  - over 400 convincing conclusions


- Industry-commissioned reports were excluded to reduce the potential for, or the perception of, conflict of interest.
• Canada’s Dietary Guidelines for Health Professionals and Policy Makers
• Food Guide snapshot
• Videos, recipes and actionable advice
• Evidence including the *Evidence Review for Dietary Guidance 2015* and the *Food, Nutrients and Health: Interim Evidence Update 2018*
Canada’s Dietary Guidelines

• For Health Professionals and Policy Makers
• For use when developing policies, programs, and educational resources.
• Forms the foundation for the Food Guide resources.
• Provides guidance on:
  • Nutritious foods and beverages that are the foundation for healthy eating
  • Foods and beverages that can have a negative impact on health when consumed on a regular basis
  • Food skills as a practical way to support healthy eating
  • Supportive environments for healthy eating
**Guideline 1: Foundation for healthy eating**

Vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and protein foods should be consumed regularly. Among protein foods, consume plant-based more often.

**Why?** Patterns of eating that emphasize plant-based foods typically result in higher intakes of vegetables and fruit, nuts, soy protein, and fibre; and lower intake of processed meats and foods that contain mostly saturated fat.

- Eating more vegetables and fruit is linked to a lower risk of cardiovascular disease.
- Eating more nuts or soy protein is linked to improved blood lipid levels.
- Higher fibre intake is linked to improved blood lipid levels and a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, colon cancer, and type 2 diabetes.
- Processed meat has been linked to colorectal cancer and foods that contain mostly saturated fat are linked to unfavourable blood lipid levels and a higher risk of type 2 diabetes.

**Protein foods include legumes, nuts, seeds, tofu, fortified soy beverage, fish, shellfish, eggs, poultry, lean red meat including wild game, lower fat milk, lower fat yogurts, lower fat kefir, and cheeses lower in fat and sodium.**
Guideline 1: Foundation for healthy eating

Foods that contain mostly unsaturated fat should replace foods that contain mostly saturated fat.

Why? Cardiovascular disease is one of the leading causes of death in Canada.

Water should be the beverage of choice.

Why? Water supports health and promotes hydration without adding calories to the diet.
Guideline 2: Foods and beverages that undermine healthy eating

Processed or prepared foods and beverages that contribute to excess sodium, free sugars, or saturated fat undermine healthy eating and should not be consumed regularly.

Why? Canadians are purchasing more highly processed foods.

Considerations

There are health risks associated with alcohol consumption.

Why? Alcoholic beverages can contribute a lot of calories to the diet with little to no nutritive value. They also increase the risk of developing chronic disease.

Foods and beverages offered in publically funded institutions should align with Canada’s Dietary Guidelines.

Why? Offering healthier options and limiting the availability of highly processed foods and beverages, such as sugary drinks and confectioneries, creates supportive environments for healthy eating.
**Guideline 3: Importance of food skills**

Cooking and food preparation using nutritious foods should be promoted as a practical way to support healthy eating.

Why? There has been a shift from cooking meals with basic ingredients towards use of highly processed products, which requires fewer or different skills.

Food labels should be promoted as a tool to help Canadians make informed food choices.

Why? Food labels can help Canadians make informed food choices in various settings, such as grocery stores.
Food Guide Snapshot

• For Canadians

• At-a-glance presentation of food choices and eating habits.

• An interactive, mobile-responsive online resource that is also printer-friendly.

• Online entry point to Canada’s healthy eating recommendations.
Healthy Eating Recommendations

• Make it a habit to eat a variety of healthy foods each day.

• Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein foods. Choose protein foods that come from plants more often.
  • Choose foods with healthy fats instead of saturated fat.

• Limit highly processed foods. If you choose these foods, eat them less often and in small amounts.
  • Prepare meals and snacks using ingredients that have little to no added sodium, sugars or saturated fat.
  • Choose healthier menu options when eating out.

• Make water your drink of choice.
  • Replace sugary drinks with water.

• Use food labels.

• Be aware that food marketing can influence your choices.
Healthy Eating Recommendations

• Healthy eating is more than the foods you eat. It is also about where, when, why and how you eat.

• Be mindful of your eating habits.
  • Take time to eat.
  • Notice when you are hungry and when you are full.

• Cook more often.
  • Plan what you eat.
  • Involve others in planning and preparing meals.

• Enjoy your food.
  • Culture and food tradition can be a part of healthy eating.

• Eat meal with others.
Government of Canada commitment on food in health (2015)

- Introduce new prohibitions on the advertising of certain foods and beverages that meet nutrient criteria for advertising restrictions, similar to those in place in Quebec.
- Key element of the Healthy Eating Strategy.

Bill introduced in Parliament - September 2016

- Senator Greene Raine introduced Bill S-228 – the Child Health Protection Act – in the Senate.
  - Aims to protect children’s health by prohibiting the advertising of certain foods and beverages that meet nutrient criteria for advertising restrictions to children under 13.

Broad Public Consultation (Summer 2017)

- 1,146 submissions from consumers, health professionals, food industry, advertising sector, sport and non-governmental organizations.
- Input from all the above stakeholders helped inform the Government’s approach.
- Update on policy direction published on May 8, 2018 + webinar with stakeholders.
Development of Health Canada’s Proposed Policy Approach for Restricting Advertising to Children

Determine if an advertisement is primarily directed at children

Set out the nutrient criteria for foods that would be subject to advertising restrictions

Define exemptions such as children’s sporting activities

Where applicable, Quebec’s model helped inform Health Canada’s proposal
The impact of advertising to children is a result of both exposure to unhealthy food ads and the power of the techniques used.

The proposed approach addresses both by considering the context of the ad’s presentation, in particular, the following three factors:

1) The setting of the advertisement (include places, events or activities);

2) The medium used to deliver the advertisement (includes Internet, TV, films, radio, print, websites and digital applications); and

3) The message, design, characteristics and techniques of the advertisement (includes a wide range of powerful and influential mechanisms and tactics)
Health Canada is proposing the following criteria to determine if a food would be subject to advertising restrictions:

- food with added sodium and where the total sodium exceeds thresholds\(^2\), or
- food with added fat and where the total saturated fat exceeds thresholds\(^2\), or
- food with free sugars\(^1\) and where the total sugars exceeds thresholds\(^2\)

\(^1\) Free sugars include sugars, except those naturally present in whole or cut fruits; whole or cut vegetables; dairy products; grains; legumes; or nuts and seeds.

\(^2\) Proposed thresholds equivalent to the thresholds for the nutrient content claims “low in sodium”, “low in saturated fatty acids”, and “low in sugars”.
Health Canada proposes to exempt, subject to conditions, children’s sport sponsorship.

For many Canadian families, access to and participation in sports is an important part of maintaining an active lifestyle.

Conditions of exemption would include:

- Cannot depict food that meets the nutrient criteria for advertising restrictions;
- Cannot depict or use child-directed characters, animals, creatures, mascots or celebrities;
- Cannot offer voucher or coupon for free or discount food that meets the nutrient criteria for advertising restrictions;
Advertising to Children: Next Steps

• Refine policy approach and regulatory proposal based on further evidence development and what we are hearing through consultations with stakeholder groups.

• Royal assent of Bill S-228.

• Seek feedback on detailed regulatory proposal through Canada Gazette, Part I.

• Monitoring will be a critical element for the successful implementation of marketing regulations.
Current Nutrition Information: Useful but has Limitations

Voluntary Nutrient Content & Health Claims
- Highlights positive attributes of a food
- Used as marketing tool

Mandatory Nutrition Facts table
- Location on side/back limits visibility when consumers are making choices
- Complexity makes it difficult for some consumers to understand
- Amount of detail can overwhelm some consumers

Front-of-package labelling will complement existing nutrition information
Front-of-Package Labelling: a quick and easy tool that will change grocery shopping experience

• Proposed regulations would require mandatory front-of-package nutrition symbol on foods high in sodium, sugars or saturated fat.

• Received approximately 16,000 responses from Canadians on the design of the proposed front-of-package nutrition symbol; ~7800 comments on proposed regulations (222 unique submissions).

• These responses as well as consumer research informed the final regulatory proposal.

Publish final regulations in Canada Gazette, Part II in the near future
Published a Notice of Modification in September 2017 to prohibit the use of PHOs in foods by adding them to Part 1 of the *List of Contaminants and Other Adulterating Substances in Foods*.

New prohibition took effect in September 2018.
Sodium Reduction in Processed Foods

For example:
• Cottage cheese
• Bacon bits
• Tomato paste
• Toddler mixed dishes

For example:
• Cookies
• Ready-to-eat cereals
• Vegetable juices

The targets were designed to impact the most popular foods within a category and to have the greatest influence on Canadians’ sodium intakes.

For example:
• Dry cured and fermented deli meats
• Refrigerated and frozen appetizers and entrees (>170 g)
• Frozen potatoes

For example:
• Breads
• Crackers
• Hot instant cereals
• Canned vegetables and legumes
Sodium Intake of Canadians in 2017: Overall Results

- The average daily sodium intake of Canadians is 2760mg, which is higher than the established goal of 2300mg per day.
- Sodium reduction in processed foods contributed an 8% reduction in intakes.
FIGURE 2. Percent contribution of major food categories to the average daily sodium intake of Canadians in 2017

- Bakery products
- Mixed dishes
- Processed meats
- Cheeses
- Soups
- Sauces, dips, gravies and condiments
- Fat, oils, spreads and dressings
- Snack foods
- Fish and seafood products
- Breakfast cereals
- Processed vegetables and veg. juice
- Nut butters

Percent
Canadians are eating out more frequently, and when they do, they consume more sodium from foods prepared in restaurants and foodservices settings.

Health Canada held a targeted online survey from September 20 to November 20, 2017 to collect information on sodium reduction in the foodservices sector.

Next steps

- Work towards establishing new/updated targets for restaurants and pre-packaged foods and monitor progress.

The average restaurant meal item contains 1 DAY’S WORTH of the recommended intake of sodium.³
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Thank You!