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PERSONALIZED FITNESS AND WELLNESS FOR MEN 50+

Canada's New Food Guide: A Review

Introduction

In January of this year Health Canada unveiled the new Canadian Health Food Guide along with a interactive, mobile-friendly website, <https://food-guide.canada.ca>. The Ontario Public Health Association gave the new guide two thumbs up, calling it, "relevant and evidence-based... and will help Canadians make healthy food choices." However, not everyone is happy with the new guide.

This Newsletter will examine what is new, what the guide emphasizes for healthy nutrition and why some health experts don't agree with all it suggests.

Did You Know

Based on the New Health Food Guide:

1. Envision your dinner plate half-full of veggies and fruit (see picture).
2. You should eat mostly plants, choosing alternative proteins, such as tofu, over food from animal sources, such as steak.
3. More than ever, focus on eating behaviors, such as when and how you eat. Enjoy your food and try to eat with others.
4. Avoid alcohol. It is loaded with calories and when mixed in a cocktail can be a significant source of salt, sugar and saturated fat.
5. Avoid fast and processed foods, including deep-fried take-out, sugary breakfast cereals

Have plenty of vegetables and fruits

Eat protein foods

Make water your drink of choice

Choose whole grain foods



What's New

The iconic Canadian Food Guide has been redone to better reflect growing scientific literature that a plant based diet is more inline with a healthy lifestyle than an emphasis on meat and dairy.

Here are the biggest changes with the new Food Guide:

1. Three Food Groups

The four basic food groups; milk and milk products; meat and alternatives; grain products; and fruits and vegetables have been reduced to three. Those three are now; fruits and vegetables; whole grains; and proteins, a new umbrella category that combines both dairy and meat, along with plant-based proteins such as tofu and chickpeas. The key message in that change is clear: Eat more plants, and less meat and dairy. The new guide clearly states, “Among protein foods, consume plant-based more often...The regular intake of plant-based foods – vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and plant-based proteins – can have positive effects on health,” including lower risk of cardiovascular disease, colon cancer and type 2 diabetes.

2. The Half Fruit and Vegetable Rule

Portion sizes, such as 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, 1.5 ounces of cheese or 2.5 ounces of meat and the number of servings per day, such as 7 grain products or 3 meats are out. There is a new simplified rule to follow: eat a diet made up of roughly half fruits and vegetables, and half of the remaining two categories, whole grains and protein. The new guide is all about “proportions not portions” and this is accomplished by the “half fruits and vegetables” rule.

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3. Drink Water

The new guidelines encourages Canadians to make water their “beverage of choice.” This instruction is meant to fulfill two purposes. First to promote hydration and second to limit the consumption of sugary or alcoholic beverages. In 2015, sugary drinks were the main source of total sugars in the diets of Canadians, with children and adolescents having the highest average daily intake. Previous versions of Canada’s Food Guide had recommended 100-per-cent fruit juice as a healthy option equivalent to a serving of fruit. The new version reverses this. The new guide labels 100-per-cent fruit juice as a “sugary drink” associated with dental decay, obesity and type 2 diabetes.

The new guide also introduces new warnings against alcohol consumption. Alcohol, the guide says, “contributes a lot of calories to the diet with little to no nutritive value.”



