



Healthy Food Choices

Vegetables and Fruit

*Choose seasonal vegetables and fruit whenever possible.
Serve at least one dark green, orange, and red vegetable or fruit each day.*

Choose “Most Often” Foods:

High in nutrition and lowest in salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats.
Best choices to serve each day.

- ✓ Fresh and frozen vegetables and fruit
- ✓ Low sodium canned tomatoes
- ✓ Low sodium or home-made vegetable soups prepared with little or no salt
- ✓ No sugar added fruit sauce or purée, e.g. applesauce

Choose “Sometimes” Foods:

Nutritious but lower in fibre and higher in salt, sugar, or unhealthy fats. Serve occasionally.

- Canned fruit in juice or water
- Canned vegetables, rinsed and drained
- Canned reduced sodium vegetable soups and sauces
- Dried fruits as part of other foods or as snacks, e.g. cereal & dried fruit mix

Choose “Least Often” Foods:

Very low in nutrients, fibre and very high in salt, sugar, or unhealthy fats. Avoid serving.

- ✗ All juices and fruit flavoured drinks, e.g. 100% fruit or vegetable juice with or without added sugar, fruit beverage
- ✗ Canned or processed vegetables and fruit with added fat, sugar, salt, and artificial sweeteners
- ✗ Canned fruit in syrup
- ✗ Deep fried or battered vegetables, e.g. French fries, fried zucchini
- ✗ Dried fruit on its own
- ✗ Fruit jellied desserts
- ✗ Fruit leathers or fruit snacks made with juice, fruit concentrate, or purée
- ✗ Sweetened applesauce or fruit purées

Grain Products

*Serve at least one whole grain product per day where whole grain is the first ingredient.
Choose foods high in fibre, low in saturated fat, sugar, and salt.*

Choose “Most Often” Foods:

High in nutrition and lowest in salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats.

Best choices to serve each day.

- ✓ All whole grains, e.g. whole grain wheat, cracked wheat (bulgur), barley, rye, triticale, oats, buckwheat, corn, quinoa, millet, amaranth, spelt, kamut
- ✓ Bread, buns, bagels, wraps, and pancakes where ‘whole grain’ is the first ingredient are preferred
- ✓ Brown and wild rice
- ✓ Cereals: 6 grams or less of sugar, 2 grams or more of fibre and where whole grain is the first ingredient
- ✓ Crackers: 2 grams or more of fibre and whole grain is the first ingredient
- ✓ Whole wheat (100%) bread, buns, bagels, pita, naan, pasta, couscous, etc.

Choose “Sometimes” Foods:

Nutritious but lower in fibre and higher in salt, sugar, or unhealthy fats. Serve occasionally.

- Bread, bagel, buns where whole grain is not a first ingredient, e.g. multigrain, 60% whole wheat, white
- Muffins/cookies: homemade with whole wheat/whole grain flour and less sugar
- White rice, couscous, and pasta

Choose “Least Often” Foods:

Very low in nutrients, fibre and very high in salt, sugar, or unhealthy fats. Avoid serving.

- ✗ Bakery items such as pies, pastries, croissants, donuts, cakes, cupcakes, muffins, and other baked goods that are mostly fat and/or sugar
- ✗ Cereals: frosted, high sugar and low fibre
- ✗ Cookies and granola bars coated and containing candy-like ingredients
- ✗ Crackers: high in fat, low in fibre and where whole grain is not the first ingredient
- ✗ Flavoured pre-packaged or instant rice and pasta
- ✗ Pre-packaged waffles and pancakes

Milk and Alternatives

Support parents to continue breastfeeding for up to 2 years and beyond.

Choose “Most Often” Foods:

High in nutrition and lowest in salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats.
Best choices to serve each day.

- ✓ Whole 3.25% M.F. cow’s milk for children from 9-12 months to 2 years
- ✓ 2 % or 1% M.F. cow’s milk for children over 2 years
- ✓ Cheese curds, cheese strings
- ✓ Fortified soy beverage (only for children allergic to cow’s milk)
- ✓ Hard cheese, e.g. cheddar, Swiss, mozzarella
- ✓ Smoothies made with yogurt and fresh/frozen fruit
- ✓ Soft cheese, e.g. cottage, goat, quark, feta
- ✓ Yogurt: regular, Greek-style, or soy

Choose “Sometimes” Foods:

Nutritious but lower in fibre and higher in salt, sugar, or unhealthy fats. Serve occasionally.

- Flavoured cow’s milk and fortified soy beverage, e.g. chocolate, strawberry, vanilla
- Homemade hot chocolate using cocoa, milk, and less sugar

Choose “Least Often” Foods:

Very low in nutrients, fibre and very high in salt, sugar, or unhealthy fats. Avoid serving.

- × All processed cheese products, e.g. processed cheese slices or spreads
- × Any unfortified milk
- × Fat-free yogurt, including Greek
- × Ice cream and frozen yogurt
- × Instant or pre-packaged puddings
- × Rice milk, almond milk, potato milk
- × Yogurt or any milk products with artificial sweetener
- × Yogurt tubes, pre-mixed yogurt drinks



Meat and Alternatives

*Choose lean beef, pork, lamb, and poultry (without skin), and fish.
If choosing deli meats or prepackaged meats, choose those lower in salt and fat.*

Choose “Most Often” Foods:

High in nutrition and lowest in salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats.

Best choices to serve each day.

- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Lean or extra lean meat and poultry, e.g. beef, lamb, pork
- ✓ Legumes: canned, drained and rinsed, or home cooked, e.g. beans, chickpeas
- ✓ Fish (low in mercury), fresh, frozen, or canned, e.g. cod, sole, haddock, salmon, tilapia, trout, light tuna, whitefish
- ✓ Hummus
- ✓ Nut butters
- ✓ Nuts and seeds, ground to size of sesame seeds to prevent choking
- ✓ Nut-free spread made with seeds or legumes, e.g. pea butter, soy butter, tahini
- ✓ Tofu, tempeh, textured vegetable protein

Choose “Sometimes” Foods:

Nutritious but lower in fibre and higher in salt, sugar, or unhealthy fats. Serve occasionally.

- Deli meats, e.g. sliced turkey, roast beef, ham

Choose “Least Often” Foods:

Very low in nutrients, fibre and very high in salt, sugar, or unhealthy fats. Avoid serving.

- ✗ Breaded or coated fried chicken or other meat or meat alternative (store-bought)
- ✗ Canned baked beans, e.g. pork and beans
- ✗ Deli meats, e.g. bologna, salami, macaroni and cheese loaf, sausage
- ✗ High fat cuts of meat, e.g. bacon, shoulder cuts, wings, ribs
- ✗ Prepared/seasoned meats, e.g. wieners, sausages, pepperoni sticks

Note: Seeds larger than sesame seeds cannot be used whole (cooked, raw, or as an ingredient because of choking risk.



Oils and Fats

Use oils and non-hydrogenated margarine in cooking and baking.

Choose “Most Often” Foods:

High in nutrition and lowest in salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats.
Best choices to serve each day.

- ✓ Oils, e.g. canola, olive, safflower, soybean, sunflower oil
- ✓ Non-hydrogenated margarine
- ✓ Mayonnaise or mayonnaise-type salad dressing
- ✓ Homemade and commercial oil and vinegar-type salad dressing, e.g. balsamic, Italian, raspberry

Choose “Sometimes” Foods:

Nutritious but lower in fibre and higher in salt, sugar, or unhealthy fats. Serve occasionally.

- Butter
- Commercial creamy salad dressings and dips, e.g. Caesar, Ranch

Choose “Least Often” Foods:

Very low in nutrients, fibre and very high in salt, sugar, or unhealthy fats. Avoid serving.

- × Hard or hydrogenated margarine, shortening
- × Lard
- × Coconut and palm oil



Mixed Dishes and Soups

Prepare foods from scratch as much as possible.

Use healthy cooking methods such as baking, broiling, stir-frying, and poaching.

Choose “Most Often” Foods:

High in nutrition and lowest in salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats.
Best choices to serve each day.

- ✓ Prepared meals from scratch using basic and fresh ingredients (see recipes)
- ✓ Low sodium broths for dishes such as soups and stews

Choose “Least Often” Foods:

Very low in nutrients, fibre and very high in salt, sugar, or unhealthy fats. Avoid serving.

- ✗ Pre-packaged frozen, and/or store bough dishes, e.g. lasagna, meat pie, pizza
- ✗ Canned or pre-packaged soups

Condiments and Other Foods

These do not count towards food group servings.

Choose “Least Often” Foods:

Very low in nutrients, fibre and very high in salt, sugar, or unhealthy fats. Avoid serving.

- Use small amounts (5 to 15 mL or 1 tsp to 1 tbsp) of condiments, spreads, and toppings, e.g. ketchup, gravies, sauces, sour cream, cream cheese, jam, honey, syrup, and coconut

Do Not Serve Foods:

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- ✗ All pop (regular and diet), energy and sports drinks, flavoured water, slushies, frozen juice snacks
- ✗ Caffeinated drinks, e.g. coffee, tea
- ✗ Candy, chocolate, and chocolate bars
- ✗ Chips and cheezies
- ✗ Popcorn (children under 4 years)

