

Health Unit Media Release

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Eat Well with Canada's Food Guide

A new version of Canada's Food Guide was released on February 5, 2007. Eat Well with Canada's Food Guide has a new look and specific number of servings suggested for various stages of life, including children, adults, older adults, and pregnancy. The new food guide includes information on physical activity, reading food labels, and is packed with messages on general healthy eating. The Health Unit's nutrition month campaign this year is focused on helping the public understand the new messages of Canada's Food Guide, and how to use it to make healthy food choices.

The four food groups in Eat Well with Canada's Food Guide are Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, Milk & Alternatives, and Meat & Alternatives. **The Vegetables & Fruit group is now the most prominent food group.** Dianne Oickle, Registered Dietitian, points out that "the basic messages of the new Canada's Food Guide are the same as the previous version – eat more vegetables and fruits, choose high fibre grain products, choose low fat animal based foods, eat a variety of foods from all food groups, and limit foods with added salt, sugar, and fat." **One striking change is the specific number of recommended servings based on age and gender, and the inclusion of children as young as 2 years of age.** "People at different stages of life need different amounts of food to meet their nutrient and energy needs," adds Oickle.

The focus on physical activity in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide draws attention to the fact that **eating well and being physically active go hand in hand.** "We need to both eat healthy and be active in order to achieve and maintain a healthy weight," says Oickle. "One won't work without the other."

Since the new food guide was developed for the whole population, it may be challenging to figure out where an individual's eating pattern fits within the four food groups. **Use the new food guide as a basic tool to help you make healthy choices that you can build upon.** The Health Unit will be working on resources to help individuals make healthy food choices that are less expensive, easy to prepare, accessible, and adapted to eating patterns and activity levels.

If you would like free resources or more information on Eat Well with Canada's Food Guide, food label reading, or making healthy lifestyle choices, contact the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit's Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853 (613-345-5685) and ask to speak with a Registered Dietitian. You can also visit our website at www.healthunit.org/nutrition.

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