

Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit Media Release

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2016 International Year of Pulses

2016 is the International Year of Pulses, not heart beat pulses but rather the type of food called pulses. Pulses are dried peas, beans, lentils and chickpeas. If you've eaten split pea soup, baked beans, hummus or kidney beans in chilli then you've eaten pulses. Pulses do not include fresh green beans or peas, soybeans or peanuts.

Pulses are an excellent source of protein and a low cost alternative to meat, fish and poultry. They are high in both soluble and insoluble fibre. Fibre feeds healthy bacteria in our gut, plays a role in lowering cholesterol, helps us feel full, and helps keep our bowels regular. The carbohydrate in pulses is absorbed slowly - helpful for those dealing with diabetes. Pulses are gluten free - of great value to those dealing with celiac disease or gluten intolerances. They are low in sodium and contain important B-vitamins and minerals such as iron and potassium. To help reduce gas, increase the amount of pulses in your diet slowly, drink lots of water and rinse canned beans, lentils and chickpeas.

Pulses can be grown in wet or dry, hot or cold locations. They require little or no nitrogen containing fertilizers, they use less water to grow than other sources of protein and growing pulses helps keep the soil healthy. Pulses are grown Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec and can be homegrown.

The exact number of varieties of pulses could be in the hundreds because local varieties may not be exported or grown worldwide. Pulses are an old food. Evidence points to their existence in ancient Egypt, in Switzerland during the Stone Age, in the eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamia regions at least 5,000 years ago, and in Britain as early as the 11th century.

See [Pulse Canada](#) to access recipes and learn about cooking dried pulses. For more information about nutrition and healthy eating, visit www.healthunit.org or call 1-800-660-5853. Follow LGLHealthUnit on Facebook and Twitter for important public health updates.

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