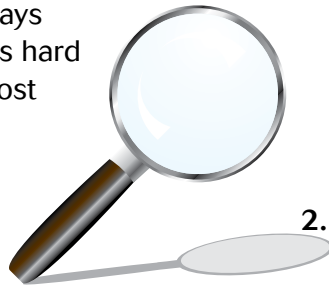


Evaluating Nutrition Information - What Should You Believe?

The science of nutrition is always changing and evolving and it is hard to keep up to date with the most current research. Every day, we hear claims about herbal supplements, specialty foods, vitamin and mineral blends or new diets. Some products may claim to cure diseases, while others claim to help you lose 20 pounds in one month. Sources like the Internet, TV, radio, magazines, newspapers and self-made 'nutrition experts' overwhelm us with nutrition information every day.



Be careful if the source makes claims like 'world's foremost nutritionist' or 'nutrition specialist.'

Where should you go for your nutrition information? Whom should you trust?

A lot of nutrition information is untrue or misleading, and it is hard to figure out what to believe and what not to believe. Ask yourself the following questions when you are selecting resources for use in your classroom:

- 1. Is the information from a professional source?** Organizations like Health Canada or Dietitians of Canada give reliable information and are qualified to speak on nutrition. In Ontario, anyone with the initials 'RD' after his or her name is a registered dietitian. The title, registered dietitian, is protected by law and can be used only by those who have met national standards. Registered dietitians are recognized professionals in nutrition and they provide reliable information.
- 2. Is the information scientific (ie, not based on an opinion or a personal story)?**
Good health and nutrition advice is based on research that has been carefully checked and tested to see if it is reliable. If you do not see a list of sources at the end of the document, it may be based on personal opinions and not on facts. Beware of personal success stories or testimonials as they can bend the truth and leave out important information.
- 3. Is the resource current?** Always check the date on the article or website. Information older than five years may be outdated.
- 4. Does it sound too good to be true? Does the claim rely on special products?** Healthy eating patterns are developed over time. There are no fast fixes or instant cures. Claims that sound too good to be true most likely are. Be cautious of catchy claims that try to sell you a special product. Ask yourself if the person promoting the product might profit from its sale in some way.

Does the information follow *Canada's Food Guide*? Be aware of claims that advise you not to eat from one or more food groups (eg, no-carbohydrate diets). Scientific studies show that you need to eat a variety of foods from all four food groups to meet your nutrient needs. Using *Canada's Food Guide* in your classroom emphasizes the importance of using Canadian resources and avoiding materials that refer to food guides and healthy eating guidelines from other countries. *Canada's Food Guide* is uniquely designed to reflect national

issues and promote the nutritional health of Canadians. The Food Guide is based on scientific research related to dietary needs, national nutrition goals, data on what people are actually eating, issues of food supply and production, and much consultation with consumers and other groups.

If you would like a second opinion regarding healthy eating information that you find, contact a registered dietitian at your public health unit/department.



http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index_e.html



**For More Information, Call the Health ACTION Line
1-800-660-5853 or 613-345-5685
or visit our website at www.healthunit.org**

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