

# Media Release



## Nutrition Month 2019 – Canada Food Guide

### For immediate release

New Canada’s Food Guide – the foundation for healthy eating,  
but action needed to ensure everyone can benefit

For this nutrition month Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) is shining a spotlight on healthy eating & food insecurity.

Last updated over 12 years ago, [Canada’s New Food Guide](#) catches up with science in recommending a healthy diet for Canadians including eating a variety of proteins, especially plant-based. While meat and dairy are good sources of protein, the new Food Guide helps us focus on the benefits of proteins such as beans, tofu or nuts which have more fibre and less saturated fat, smaller impact on the environment and cost less.

Other new recommendations relate to the way we eat:

- Drink water. Limit the sugary drinks that are often around us (e.g. pop, sports drinks and 100% fruit juice).
- Eat meals with others. Social time is good for our health, and eating together helps share cooking skills and knowledge with each other, especially young people.
- Limit highly processed food such as chips, cookies, or pre-made meals. They add too much salt, sugar and saturated fat to our diet.
- Be aware of the ways food advertising affects your food choices. Use food labels to find the healthier options.
- Traditional food, even in limited amounts, improves diet quality among Indigenous Peoples.

Laura Dias, a Public Health Dietitian, explains how eating well influences health: “Poor eating habits are a big risk factor for diseases such as type 2 diabetes or heart disease, which account for about one third of direct healthcare costs. Reliable healthy eating guidelines are essential in supporting Canadians adopting healthy eating habits.” For more information about the Canada Food Guide visit <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>.

THU also acknowledges the challenges that many face in following Food Guide recommendations. While excited with this update, THU recognizes that more collaborative work is needed to support the 1 in 10 households in Timiskaming that struggle to afford food. Adults in food insecure households are more likely to suffer from chronic conditions such as diabetes, and high blood pressure; children are more likely to suffer from mental health problems and teenagers are at greater risk of depression, social anxiety and suicide.

Food insecurity is not solved with budgeting or cooking skills. It requires addressing poverty, including by governments working together on effective solutions. Dr. Monika Dutt, Timiskaming’s Medical Officer of Health, states “The Food Guide is a great step forward but cannot be used alone.” She continues, “To ensure that everyone in our communities can eat well there also needs to be investments in social assistance rates, affordable housing, accessible and affordable public transportation, decent wages, and quality employment opportunities.”

Working together in applying the Guide, we can help our communities eat healthy where they live, play and work, but also take a step in ensuring that everyone is able to afford its recommendations. To learn more, visit [www.timiskaminghu.com](http://www.timiskaminghu.com).

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