



Food fit

10 smart bites to a *Healthier U*



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This booklet is all about how making healthy food choices can put you on the right track to healthy aging. Challenge yourself to follow these 10 smart bites for healthier eating, and you will see the results of practising a healthier lifestyle. One year from today, you'll have more energy, vitality and zest for life.

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Getting started

It's all about a *Healthier U*

When making changes to your eating habits, it's important to recognize the habits that can prevent you from eating healthier.

Changing your eating habits can be challenging, and this booklet will help you take it one step at a time. Take the challenge and begin the transformation to a Healthier U! Before long, you will be enjoying good food and great health.

Stay positive!

Focus on creating healthy new habits rather than breaking unhealthy old habits.

This booklet can help you make the small, daily changes to your eating habits that will lead to healthy results.

To track your progress, start by recording the following information:

Today's date: _____

My blood pressure: _____ / _____

My waist circumference: _____

My weight: _____

On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 meaning tired, lethargic and no energy and 5 meaning lots of energy and great health), how do you feel about your overall health:

- 1 2 3 4 5

Use this area to write down healthy recommendations from your doctor.



Take control of portion size

Achieving a healthy weight

Losing muscle mass is part of the aging process. We also know that muscle mass burns calories. Although your calorie needs may decrease by 15 to 20% between the ages of 40 and 70, your need for most vitamins and minerals stays the same or can even increase. Cutting out junk foods with extra calories and eating foods rich in nutrients, like brightly coloured vegetables and fruit, and whole grains, is a good way to watch your calories while maintaining a healthy diet.

Size matters.

- Pay attention to food portion size. This is key in trimming calories without sacrificing good taste and nutrition. Larger portions equal more calories.
- Having trouble with portion sizes? The answer is in the palm of your hand! A serving of Meat or Alternatives is equal to the size of the palm of your hand, and a serving of cheese is equal to the size of your thumb.
- Plan your meals around whole grain products and vegetables and fruit. Try to fill $\frac{2}{3}$ of your plate with these two food groups.



Quick tips

- Limit:
 - desserts, sweets and added sugar in coffee or tea,
 - added fats such as butter, margarine, salad dressing and oils,
 - high-fat snack foods like chips and deep-fried foods, and
 - sugary soft drinks, sweetened drinks and alcohol.
- Choose lower-fat and higher-fibre foods more often. Snacking between meals can add up to a lot of extra calories. Make sure that when you snack, it's a healthy choice. Try fruit, low-fat yogurt, celery or whole wheat crackers with peanut or nut butter.
- When you're craving something sweet, reach for some apple slices. If you feel like something salty, try low-salt crackers.

For more information on portion sizes, pick up *Food Smart: Your guide to healthy eating* from your local health centre, or check it out online at www.healthyalberta.com.

Keep your bones strong

Prevent osteoporosis

Calcium and vitamin D keep bones solid.

Calcium is a mineral that the body needs for building and maintaining healthy bones and teeth. Calcium also helps our heart, muscles, and nerves to function properly.

Calcium and vitamin D work together to keep your bones and teeth strong. Eating foods rich in calcium and vitamin D, combined with regular physical activity, will help prevent osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a condition where bones become smaller and more fragile, and therefore more likely to break.

Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium.

Easy ways to get calcium

Good sources of calcium include low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese, fortified soy beverages and orange juice (fortified with calcium), almonds, sesame seeds and salmon with bones.

Add skim milk powder to homemade cookies, breads or muffins, soups and casseroles.

A single tablespoon of non-fat powdered milk adds 52 mg of calcium. Two to four tablespoons can be added to most recipes.

Recommended calcium for men and women

50 years and over

1,200 mg daily



Keep your bones strong

Prevent osteoporosis

Easy ways to get vitamin D

In addition to helping the body absorb calcium, vitamin D may also help boost your immune system and reduce the risk of getting some types of cancer and heart disease.

- The main source of vitamin D is sunlight. Unfortunately this is not sufficient for older Albertans. Why? As you age your skin becomes less capable of using sunlight to make vitamin D. And, from October to March, sunlight is very weak—which means you'll need to get your vitamin D from other sources.
- Good sources include egg yolks, fatty fish such as salmon, fish liver oils and vitamin D-fortified foods like milk and soy beverages.

Recommended vitamin D for men and women

50 years and over

400 IU daily

Quick tip

Have three servings from the Milk and Alternatives food group daily, making sure two servings are liquid milk or fortified soy beverage. And don't forget your daily 400 IU vitamin D supplement.

For more information and tips, check out the Dietitians of Canada website at: www.dietitians.ca.



Pump up your protein

Build your muscles

The pros of protein

As you get older, adequate protein intake and body protein reserves are important—especially during times of emotional and physical stress. It's common for people to lose muscle mass as they age, which can mean greater susceptibility to illness and falls. Protein not only helps repair your muscles, skin and nails, and maintain immune function, it can also help you heal if you've been ill or have just had surgery.

Are you getting enough?

- *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide* recommends two, 2½ ounce (75 g) servings from the Meat and Alternatives food group daily for adults over 50 years of age.
- One serving is equal to two eggs, 2½ ounces (75 g) of cooked fish or lean meat, or two tablespoons (30 mL) of peanut or nut butter.
- The best sources of protein are lean meat, fish, poultry, low-fat milk, eggs, cheese and yogurt, legumes (dried peas, beans and lentils), nuts, seeds and soy products (tofu or soy beverages).

Quick tips

To increase your protein intake:

- Add a slice of low-fat cheese to your sandwich or cut up a hard-boiled egg for your salad.
- Drink low-fat milk instead of water at one meal.
- Eat a handful of unsalted nuts, or sprinkle nuts and seeds on your cereal, salad or stir-fry.
- Spice up your menu by preparing a new recipe with beans or tofu.

For more information, check out the *Healthy U* website at www.healthyalberta.com.



Fill up your basket with vegetables and fruit

Prevent chronic disease

Building blocks of good health

Research has shown that vegetables and fruit are packed full of vitamins and minerals that are important for good health. The fibre, vitamins and minerals found in vegetables and fruit may protect us against diseases such as cancer, osteoporosis and eye disease. These foods will give you vitamins, minerals and fibre with fewer added calories. Plus they're low in fat and sodium and contain no cholesterol.

Getting enough of the good stuff?

Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide recommends that people over 50 years eat seven servings from the Vegetables and Fruit food group daily. One serving of fruit could be an apple, orange or banana or ½ cup of 100% fruit juice. One serving of vegetables could be ½ cup (125 mL) of fresh, frozen or canned vegetables, or one cup of raw leafy vegetables or salad.

You get the same health benefits from canned, frozen or dried vegetables and fruit as you do from fresh—and they're usually cheaper. Just make sure that canned fruit is packed in water or juice, rather than syrup, and that canned vegetables are packed with little or no salt.

Quick tips

- The brightest and most colourful vegetables and fruit—the dark green, orange, yellow and red ones—are packed with essential vitamins and minerals.
- Enjoy fresh vegetables and fruit in season when they're less expensive.
- Follow *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide* and eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable every day.

For delicious recipes using vegetables and fruit, check out www.healthyalberta.com.



Fill up on fibre

Reduce your unhealthy cholesterol and stay regular

Fibre fact

Most Canadians only get about half the fibre they need each day.

So what exactly is fibre?

Dietary fibre consists of naturally occurring plant materials and includes two types: insoluble and soluble fibre. Insoluble fibre helps improve the absorption of nutrients and the movement of food waste through the digestive tract. Soluble fibre helps increase the growth of “good” bacteria in the digestive tract, which aids in the digestive process.



Do you really need it?

You need both forms of fibre to keep your bowels regular and healthy. Fibre has been linked with reducing the risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity and certain types of cancer. Eating high-fibre foods can also help lower unhealthy blood cholesterol levels, control blood sugar levels and help prevent high blood pressure. Fibre also makes you feel full for longer, so it can help with weight control.

How do you get enough?

The recommended daily consumption of fibre for adults is 38 g for men and 25 g for women.

Foods high in insoluble fibre include whole-wheat breads, wheat cereals, wheat bran, rye, rice, barley, cabbage, beets, carrots, brussels sprouts, turnips, cauliflower and apples with their skin.

Foods high in soluble fibre include oat bran, oatmeal, beans, peas, rice bran, barley, citrus fruit, strawberries and apple pulp.

Fill up on fibre

Reduce your unhealthy cholesterol and stay regular

Quick tips

To get more fibre:

- Add flax seeds to muffins and homemade bread.
- Look for labels that say “high” or “very high source of fibre.” These foods have at least 4 to 6 g of fibre per serving.
- Try sprinkling wheat bran on your yogurt or oatmeal.
- Make sure at least half of all the grains (bread, pasta, cereal) you eat are whole grains.

If you haven't eaten a lot of fibre in the past, be sure to increase the amount you are consuming gradually and drink plenty of fluids.

For more information and tips on fibre, check out the Canadian Diabetes Association website at: www.diabetes.ca.



Water and you

Prevent dehydration

Stay hydrated.

Fluids are essential to healthy living. They help you think clearly and regulate your body temperature while helping your bowels stay healthy and regular.

As you get older, your body's signals tend to become a little weaker. By the time you feel thirsty, you could already be dehydrated, which means you've lost water. This can make you feel tired, hot, flushed and even nauseated. Drink fluids regularly, whether you are thirsty or not.

How much is enough?

Women need to drink about nine eight-ounce glasses of fluids each day, and men need about 12 eight-ounce glasses. Drink more when it's hot, after you exercise and especially if you are ill.

Easy ways to get water

Drinking water is a calorie-free way to quench your thirst, but there are many other sources of fluid, including:

- vegetable and fruit juices (watch out for the added sugar and salt),
- low-fat milk and unsweetened fortified soy beverages,

- low-fat yogurt drinks and low-salt soups, and
- coffee and tea (preferably decaffeinated or herbal varieties).

Quick tips

- Start your lunch or dinner with a low-salt vegetable soup. You'll get your veggies and fluids all at once, and you'll feel fuller faster.
- Fill a few bottles with water and keep them on hand in the fridge. Whenever you go out, grab a refreshing bottle of water and take it with you!
- Remember, alcohol does not count as a source of fluid.

Check out the *Healthy U* website for more hydration information for older adults, as well as other articles on healthy eating. www.healthyalberta.com.

Caution

If you have heart, kidney, liver, adrenal or thyroid disease, you may need to drink less. Always consult with your doctor.



Shake your salt habit

Reduce your blood pressure

Get a grip on salt.

Salt has its place in a healthy diet. However, most of us consume two or even three times the recommended amount, often without even realizing it. But don't blame the salt shaker; it contributes only about 10% of total salt consumption. The real culprits are processed foods.

Eating too much salt can raise blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease. Recent research shows that high blood pressure can speed up the body's loss of calcium, which can lead to osteoporosis. Lowering your salt intake little by little each day can reduce your blood pressure.

How much salt is too much?

We need small amounts of salt to maintain a proper fluid balance in the body. Recommended salt intake is no more than one teaspoon (5 mL) per day.



Easy ways to reduce salt

- Cut down on prepared and processed foods including fast foods, prepared meals, processed meats (hot dogs and lunch meats), packaged sauces, condiments and salty snacks, canned soups, and bottled dressings.
- Reduce the amount of salt you add while cooking.
- Check the Nutrition Facts label on food products for "sodium" or "salt." If the product has less than 10% of the daily value of sodium, the product is considered low in salt.
- Replace the salt shaker on your dinner table with a salt-free seasoning.

Quick tips

- Eat more fresh vegetables and fruit.
- Experiment with other seasonings like garlic, lemon juice and fresh or dried herbs.
- Avoid using commercially softened water for drinking or cooking.

For more information and tips, check out the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada website at www.heartandstroke.ca.

Facts about fat

Prevent heart disease

Not all fat is bad for you. There are healthy and unhealthy fats; it's the type and amount of fat that matters most. Everyone needs some fat in their diet. What's important is to focus on getting the right amount of the good, healthy fats into your diet.

Watch out for (unhealthy) saturated and processed trans fats.

Saturated fats are found mostly in foods that come from animals. Processed trans fats come from vegetable oils that have been hydrogenated. Unhealthy fats are typically fats that are solid at room temperature.

Some examples

- High-fat milk products such as cream, sour cream, ice cream, butter and cheese all have saturated fat.
- Fatty red meat, dark poultry meat and lard contain saturated fat.
- Hydrogenated margarine and vegetable shortening are sources of processed trans fat.
- Deep fried and processed foods can have both of the unhealthy types of fats.



Facts about fat

Prevent heart disease

Focus on the healthy fats.

Healthy unsaturated fats are found in plant sources and fatty fish. Healthy fats are typically liquid at room temperature. Good sources are:

- oily and fatty fish, such as salmon, anchovies, trout and sardines,
- nuts and seeds, such as walnuts and flaxseed,
- vegetable oils, such as canola and olive oil, and
- wheat germ and avocados.

How much fat is healthy?

Choose foods that are naturally low in fat.

Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide

recommends that adults eat no more than two to three tablespoons (30 mL – 45 mL) of unsaturated fat each day including oil used for cooking, salad dressings, margarine and mayonnaise.

Quick tips

- Substitute butter or hydrogenated margarine with canola oil, olive oil, or non-hydrogenated margarine when cooking.
- Choose low fat foods.

Want to cut the fat? Check out the recipes on the *Healthy U* website, www.healthyalberta.com.



Plan for success

Plan healthy meals and save money

Start with a grocery list.

- Plan ahead what you want to eat for the week.
- Check your fridge, freezer and pantry to see what you already have.
- Write a list of everything you need to buy. Organize the list the same way the store is laid out (vegetables and fruit in one section, milk and dairy in another section). Write out your list to make sure you make choices from each food group when you are at the store.

Saving money at the grocery store

- Check local newspapers and flyers for coupons to help save money.
- Try buying canned or frozen vegetables rather than fresh when they're out of season. They're less expensive, have the same health benefits and are just as nutritious.
- Compare prices between brands. The store brand is often cheaper.
- Be flexible. You might have to change your planned meals to take advantage of bargains.

Quick tip

- When you are chopping vegetables, cut some extra and keep them in the fridge so you have leftovers to toss into a salad or soup.

Try shopping online in the "Virtual Grocery Store," where you can learn how to use the nutrition information on packaged food labels and make healthier choices. Check it out at www.healthyeatinginstore.ca.



Easy cooking for one or two

Make healthy meals

Cooking for one or two people can be a challenge. Here are some ways to make cooking for one or two easier.

- Find recipes that serve one or two people, or cut your old recipes in half.
- Collect simple recipes that use few ingredients and are fast to make.
- Prepare your meals when you're in a creative mood or have a burst of energy. Make a little extra to freeze for another day.
- When you are chopping up vegetables, cut up some extra so you have some left over to toss into a salad or soup.

Simple suggestions for easy meals.

Breakfast

- scrambled eggs, toast and orange juice
- cereal, milk and fruit
- pancakes, yogurt and fruit



Lunch

- vegetable soup with crackers and cheese
- turkey sandwich (whole-wheat bread with turkey, tomato and lettuce) and milk
- tuna melt (mix tuna, celery, low-fat mayonnaise and shredded cheese, spread on buns and melt in the oven)

Supper

- fish baked with mushroom soup, potato, peas
- beef stew (beef, broth, potatoes, carrots), whole-wheat bun and milk
- salmon chowder (salmon, creamed corn and evaporated milk) and whole-wheat toast

Enjoy some healthy snacks between meals too!

Quick tip

Try making your own TV dinners! Make your own convenience food by preparing a double batch of your favourite healthy recipe and then freezing individual portions in containers that can be easily microwaved or popped into the oven.

For delicious recipes, visit the *Healthy U* website, www.healthyalberta.com.

Putting it all together

Taking control of your health and making healthier food choices doesn't have to be hard work.

This booklet provides useful tips and smart bites of information to get you on your way to a *Healthier U*. While it's important to keep up the healthy habits you have started, nobody's perfect. If you get off track, don't worry—just get right back on when you're ready!

Record your new measurements here after three months, six months or 12 months. Compare these numbers to when you started. See any improvements? The numbers don't lie!

Today's date: _____

My blood pressure: _____ / _____

My waist circumference: _____

My weight: _____

On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 meaning tired, lethargic and no energy and 5 meaning lots of energy and great health), how do you feel about your overall health?

- 1 2 3 4 5

Although it's important to keep your weight and blood pressure within a normal range for your age, height and build, how you feel is important too.

For more information on healthy eating and active living, go to www.healthyalberta.com.



Resources

If you don't have Internet access

The following resources can provide information about health issues and healthy food choices:

Health Link Alberta is a nurse telephone advice and health information service available 24 hours a day. You can call Health Link from anywhere in the province by dialing:

Calgary Health Region 403-943-5465,
Capital Health Region 780-408-5465, or
toll-free 1-866-408-5465.

Grocery stores and pharmacies often have free booklets and pamphlets to help you make healthier food choices.

Your local library is a good source of information.

You can also request information by mail from:

Food Smart

Alberta Health and Wellness
23rd Floor Telus Plaza North Tower
10025 Jasper Avenue NW
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1S6
Phone: 780-427-7164

Canada Food Guide

Phone: 1-800-622-6232
TTY: 1-800-926-9105

Osteoporosis Canada's Alberta Chapter

Currie Barracks, Suite 104, Bldg B8
2526 Battleford Drive
Calgary, Alberta T3E 7J4
Phone: 403-237-7022
Fax: 403-220-1727

Canadian Diabetes Association

General Inquiries
1400-522 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2R5
Phone: 1-800-226-8464
Or call your local Canadian Diabetes
Association office.

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