Healthy Eating for Children in Childcare Centres

A booklet to help you understand the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth

✓ Easy to read
✓ Simple steps
✓ Everyday ideas
What’s inside this booklet?

About this booklet  

Why is healthy food important for children?  

How can I help children eat healthy food?  

✓ Use Canada’s Food Guide (CFG)  
✓ Learn about serving sizes  
✓ Read labels on food  
✓ Use the Alberta Food Rating System from the *Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth*  
  
◊ The Food Rating System?  
  ◊ Choosing vegetables and fruit  
  ◊ Choosing grain products  
  ◊ Choosing milk and alternatives  
  ◊ Choosing meat and alternatives  

◊ A day of healthy food  

✓ Serve healthy drinks  
✓ Serve healthy snacks  
✓ Make a plan for special days  
✓ Help children enjoy healthy food  

Food safety  

Costs  

Resources  

Favourite foods  

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About this booklet

Who is this booklet for?
This easy-to-read booklet is for people who own or work at a childcare centre.

Childcare centres include:
- daycare centres
- nursery schools
- preschools
- family day homes

This book is also for parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents and other people who are taking care of young children.

Food guidelines
Healthy food is important for children. This booklet has food guidelines for licensed childcare centres. These guidelines are from the Alberta government. Many people helped make the guidelines.

Children often eat food away from home. For example: in childcare centres.

How can childcare centres help children eat healthy food? This booklet will give you everyday ideas.

More information
This booklet helps explain the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth.
Canada’s Food Guide

In this booklet, you will read about *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide*. In Alberta, all licensed childcare centres must follow *Canada’s Food Guide*.

Practice new skills

This booklet can help you learn new skills. For example: how to read food labels.

You can get *Canada’s Food Guide (CFG)* in different languages. There are also food guides for First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Examples:

You can find out how to order *Canada’s Food Guide* on page 35.

Packaged food must have a Nutrition Facts table.

Nutrition Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>% Daily Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin C</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Start with small changes

Read this booklet. Then start to make small changes. For example, always serve healthy drinks to children. Take small steps. Make changes over time.

Remember to use this booklet to create a food list for when you shop for groceries.
Why is healthy food important for children?

Eating healthy food helps children in many ways.

- It helps children get the vitamins and minerals their bodies need.
- It helps children have energy all day long.
- It helps their brains develop.
- Healthy food helps children’s bodies grow. It helps to form strong teeth, bones and muscles.
- Healthy food helps protect children against diseases now and in the future.
- It helps children develop healthy eating habits for life.
How can I help children eat healthy food?

✅ Use Canada’s Food Guide

*Canada’s Food Guide (CFG)* can help you choose healthy food for children. *Canada’s Food Guide* has 4 food groups. Look at the boxes below.

- **Vegetables and fruit**
- **Milk and alternatives**
- **Grain products**
- **Meat and alternatives**

*Canada’s Food Guide* uses a colour for each food group. For example: yellow for grain products. Look for these 4 colours in this booklet.

Watch for coloured checkmarks (✓) and circles (●).
Licensed childcare centres must follow Canada’s Food Guide

At mealtime
- For meals, choose from all 4 food groups. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔ cucumber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ pita</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ salmon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At snacktime
- For snacks, choose from 2 food groups. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morning snack</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔ berries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ yogurt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every day
- Every day, choose a variety of food within each food group. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetables and fruit</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔ orange juice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ avocado</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ frozen peas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ canned tomatoes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ sweet potato</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weekly
- Try to include foods from different cultures. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔ bok choi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ bannock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ queso fresco</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ tofu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ mango</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ tortilla</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ kebabs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ lentils</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here is a menu from a daycare centre.

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Learn about serving sizes

How many servings?

Canada’s Food Guide (CFG) recommends the number of servings people need to eat every day.

The number of servings is different for different ages. Adults need more servings per day than children.

For example:

Children 1 to 5 years old
This booklet is for childcare centres. It has information about healthy food for children 1 to 5 years old.

How many servings does Canada’s Food Guide recommend?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children age 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables and fruit</td>
<td>up to 4 servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain products</td>
<td>up to 3 servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk and alternatives</td>
<td>2 servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat and alternatives</td>
<td>1 serving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children ages 2 and 3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables and fruit</td>
<td>4 servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain products</td>
<td>3 servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk and alternatives</td>
<td>2 servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat and alternatives</td>
<td>1 serving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children ages 4 and 5</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables and fruit</td>
<td>5 servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain products</td>
<td>4 servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk and alternatives</td>
<td>2 servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat and alternatives</td>
<td>1 serving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Babies
Many childcare centres take care of babies. Babies need different foods than children. They also need different amounts of food.

You can find this information in the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth.

This woman needs 8 servings of vegetables and fruit per day.

This child needs 4 servings of vegetables and fruit per day.

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How big is one serving?

In *Canada’s Food Guide*, different types of food have different serving sizes. Here is an example:

**One CFG serving of milk and alternatives**

- **250 mL** (1 cup) milk
- **175 mL** (¾ cup) yogurt
- **50 g** (1½ ounces) cheese

* Each food is a different amount. But they are all one serving of milk and alternatives.

Servings and portions

Servings are not the same as portions. For children, divide servings into small portions. Spread the portions over the day.

For example:

Niko should have **2 servings** (● ●) of milk and alternatives per day. His stomach is small. So he has **4 portions** (●●●●) of milk and alternatives per day:

- 125 mL of milk at breakfast
- 90 mL of yogurt at snacktime
- 125 mL of milk at lunch
- 125 mL of milk at dinner

**Remember**

Young children have small stomachs. They need to eat small amounts of food often. They need a meal or snack every 2 to 3 hours.

Use these icons

The icons below will help you remember the serving sizes for different foods. You will see the icons in this booklet.

- **baseball** = 250 mL (1 cup)
- **tennis ball** = 175 mL (¾ cup)
- **hockey puck** = 125 mL (½ cup)
- **2 golf balls** = 60 mL (¼ cup)
- **2 erasers** = 50 g (1½ ounces)
Read labels on food

Many foods come in packages, bags and boxes. In Canada, these packaged foods must have labels.

The labels have important information. For example, you can find a Nutrition Facts table and a list of ingredients.

What should you look for on labels?

Look at the Nutrition Facts table

The Nutrition Facts table shows important nutrients that are in the food. It also shows how much of these nutrients are in the food.

For example:

☞ How much fat do these vegetables have?
☞ How much sodium (salt) do they have?
☞ How much fibre do they have?

What do the symbols mean?

- g = grams
- mg = milligrams
- mL = millilitres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition Facts</th>
<th>Per 1/2 cup (85 g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount</strong></td>
<td>% Daily Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calories 60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat 0 g</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated 0 g</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Trans 0 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol 0 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium 80 mg</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrate 10 g</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fibre 3 g</strong></td>
<td>13 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars 4 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein 3 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A 25 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin C 15 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium 2 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron 6 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It takes time to learn how to read labels. You will practice reading labels throughout this booklet.
Look at the serving size

Nutrition Facts are for one serving size. What is the serving size on this Nutrition Facts table?

Per 10 crackers (20 g)

The serving size is 20 g.

Number of servings
Remember that Canada’s Food Guide (CFG) recommends the number of servings people need to eat every day.

For example:

- Children ages 2 and 3 need 3 servings of grain products.
- Children ages 4 and 5 need 4 servings of grain products.

How big is one serving?
Canada’s Food Guide recommends how big one serving should be. For example, one CFG serving of crackers is 20 to 25 g.

Look at the serving size on the Nutrition Facts table above. Is the serving size about the same as the CFG serving size? Yes.

Always remember
Nutrition Facts are for one serving. But the serving size on the Nutrition Facts table may be different from the CFG serving size.

You will practice comparing serving sizes on pages 18, 19, 23 and 27.
What are Daily Values?

Daily Values give you information about the nutrients in one serving. The Daily Values are for **adults**.

Health Canada has an easy way to understand Daily Values:

- **5% Daily Value or less** means the food has a little of this nutrient.
- **15% Daily Value or more** means the food has a lot.

Does one serving of this oatmeal have a little or a lot of calcium? **A little**.

**Daily Values for children and youth**

Except for calcium and vitamin D, daily values on Nutrition Facts tables do not apply to children and youth.

**Nutrition Facts**

Per 1/3 cup (30 g) uncooked

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>% Daily Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat 2 g</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated</td>
<td>0.4 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Trans 0 g</td>
<td>2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol</td>
<td>0 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td>0 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrate</td>
<td>20 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibre 3 g</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars 0 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein 4 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin C</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium</td>
<td>2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron</td>
<td>8 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Look at the list of ingredients**

**The order is important**

Packaged foods have a list of ingredients. The order is very important. The first ingredient is the largest by weight.

Here is a list of ingredients for an apple drink.

**INGREDIENTS: WATER, SUGAR, CONCENTRATED APPLE JUICE, MALIC ACID, NATURAL FLAVOUR, ASCORBIC ACID, COLOUR.**

What is the first ingredient? **Water**. It is the largest ingredient by weight. Sugar is the second ingredient.

**The type of ingredients is important**

It is important to look at the type of ingredients in foods. Choose foods with 100% whole grains for children.

Is this macaroni made from 100% whole grain? **Yes**.

**INGREDIENTS: DURUM WHOLE WHEAT SEMOLINA.**

Is this macaroni made from 100% whole grain? **No**.

**INGREDIENTS: ENRICHED WHEAT FLOUR.**
What to look for on labels

☞ Look for whole grains. Whole grains should be the first ingredient in bread and cereals.

☞ Juice should be 100% juice with no added sugar.

☞ Sugar should not be the first ingredient. Be careful. There are many types of sugars. For example:
- glucose
- honey
- sucrose
- corn syrup

☞ Avoid foods with nuts and peanuts. For example:
- peanuts and peanut butter
- nuts and nut butter
- peanut oil or nut oils

Some children are allergic to these foods.

☞ Look for healthy fats. For example:
- canola oil
- olive oil
- soybean oil

Children should not have food or drinks with caffeine. For example: cola and diet cola.

They should not have food or drinks with artificial sweeteners. Some examples of artificial sweeteners are: aspartame, sorbitol, sucralose.

Check labels for caffeine and artificial sweeteners.

It takes time to learn how to read labels. You will practice reading labels on pages 18, 19, 23 and 27. You can practice with your co-workers too.
Use the Alberta Food Rating System

What is the Food Rating System?

The Alberta Food Rating System is part of the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth. The Food Rating System puts foods into 3 groups:

1. Choose Most Often
2. Choose Sometimes
3. Choose Least Often

What do the Nutrition Guidelines recommend? Children at childcare centres should only eat food from the Choose Most Often group.

Use the Food Rating System to choose foods that have:

- less fat
- less sugar
- less salt

On pages 14 to 27, you will learn to use the Food Rating System. You will learn how to choose foods from the Choose Most Often group.

Choose Most Often group

There are many Choose Most Often foods. Here are some examples:

Choose Sometimes group

Examples:

Choose Most Often and Choose Sometimes foods can look the same. But Choose Sometimes foods have more fat, sugar or salt. Use the Food Rating System to make healthy choices.

Choose Least Often group

Examples:
Use the Food Rating System—choosing vegetables and fruit

Pages 14 and 15 will help you choose healthy vegetables and fruit.
You will practice reading a label for vegetables and fruit on page 18.

Remember! The Food Rating System uses the same serving sizes as Canada’s Food Guide.

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100% fresh and dried

How big is one CFG serving?

- 1 small or medium vegetable or fruit
- 125 mL (½ cup) vegetables or fruit
- 40 g (¼ cup) dried fruit
- 250 mL (1 cup) leafy salad

Most fresh vegetables and fruit do not have labels. All fresh and dried vegetables and fruit are healthy!

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Canned and frozen

How big is one CFG serving?

- 125 mL (½ cup) vegetables or fruit
- 125 mL (½ cup) fruit sauce

Read the label

The food should be 100% vegetables or fruit. One serving should have:

- no more than 100 mg of sodium
- no added sugar and no artificial sweeteners
100% Dried fruit or vegetable bars and snacks

How big is one CFG serving?

- 14 g dried fruit bar (or dried fruit and vegetable bar)
- 20 g dried fruit snacks

Read the label

The food should be 100% vegetables or fruit. One serving should have:
- no more than 100 mg of sodium
- no more than 20 g of sugars
- no added sugar and no artificial sweeteners

Juice

How big is one CFG serving?

- 125 mL (½ cup) juice

Read the label

The juice should be 100% juice. One serving should have:
- no more than 100 mg of sodium
- no added sugar and no artificial sweeteners

Did you know?

Children should brush their teeth after eating (especially after eating dried fruit and vegetables).
- Fruit roll-ups and dried fruit like snacks are not 100% fruit

Baked with added fat

How big is one CFG serving?

- 50 g (½ cup) vegetables or fruit, baked from fresh or frozen
- 125 mL (½ cup) vegetable or fruit product

Read the label

One serving should have:
- no more than 5 g of fat
- no more than 2 g of saturated fat
- no trans fat
- no more than 100 mg of sodium
- no added sugar and no artificial sweeteners

Use Alberta’s Food Rating System

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Use the Food Rating System—choosing grain products

Pages 16 and 17 will help you choose healthy grain products. You will practice reading a label for grain products on page 19.

Always choose whole grains for children
☞ Look at the list of ingredients. The first ingredient must be a whole grain. For example: whole wheat flour or whole grain oats.

Whole grain cereal, breads and pasta

How big is one CFG serving?

- 35 g bread, bun, naan, roti, pita, wrap, pizza crust or baked bannock
- ½ bagel (45 g)
- 20 g to 25 g crackers
- 175 mL (¾ cup) hot cereal
- 250 mL (1 cup) or 30 g cold cereal
- 125 mL (½ cup) cooked or 43 g uncooked grains or pasta
- 125 mL cooked (or 25 g uncooked) brown, wild or brown parboiled rice
- 125 mL (½ cup) cooked congee or polenta
- 2 medium rice cakes
- 175 mL cooked (or 25 g uncooked) brown, wild or brown parboiled rice
- 125 mL (½ cup) cooked congee or polenta
- 2 medium rice cakes

Read the label

One serving should have:
☞ no more than 3 g of fat
☞ no more than 1 g of saturated fat
☞ no trans fat
☞ no more than 140 mg of sodium
☞ 2 g of fiber or more
☞ no more than 8 g of sugars and no artificial sweeteners

Remember! The Food Rating System uses the same serving sizes as Canada’s Food Guide.
### Whole grain baked products

**How big is one CFG serving?**
- ½ muffin (35 g)
- 35 g quickbread (For example: banana bread.)
- 35 g pancake or waffle

**Read the label**
The baked food should be made with whole grains. One serving should have:
- no more than 5 g of fat
- no more than 2 g of saturated fat
- no trans fat
- no more than 200 mg of sodium
- 2 g of fiber or more
- no more than 10 g of sugars and no artificial sweeteners

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### Baked whole grain products with vegetables and fruit

**How big is one CFG serving?**
- ½ muffin (35 g)
- 35 g quickbread (For example: banana bread.)
- 30 to 35 g (⅓ cup or 80 mL) granola type cereal
- 35 g blueberry pancake or waffle

**Read the label**
The baked food should be made with whole grains. One serving should have:
- no more than 5 g of fat
- no more than 2 g of saturated fat
- no trans fat
- no more than 200 mg of sodium
- 2 g of fiber or more
- no more than 12 g of sugars and no artificial sweeteners

- You can prepare whole wheat couscous in about 5 minutes.
- You can eat quinoa hot or cold. It is easy to cook.
Let’s look at a label—vegetables and fruit

Apple sauce

Step 1: One CFG serving of fruit sauce is 125 mL (½ cup).

These Nutrition Facts are for 125 mL (½ cup).

Are the serving sizes the same? Yes. This means it is easy to use the Food Rating System with this food.

Step 2: What does the Food Rating System recommend for fruit sauce?
The food should be 100% vegetables or fruit. One serving should have:
- no more than 100 mg of sodium
- no added sugar and no artificial sweeteners

Step 3: Now compare the Nutrition Facts for this apple sauce with the Food Rating System recommendations in Step 2.
One serving of this apple sauce has:
- 2 mg of sodium
- no added sugar or artificial sweeteners

Step 4: Is this apple sauce a Choose Most Often food? Yes.

INGREDIENTS: APPLES, ASCORBIC ACID.
Let's look at a label—grain products

**Crackers**

**Step 1:** One CFG serving of crackers is **20 to 25 g**.

These Nutrition Facts are for **20 g**.

Are the serving sizes about the same? **Yes.** This means it is easy to use the Food Rating System with this food.

**Step 2:** What does the Food Rating System recommend for crackers?

The food should be 100% whole grain. One serving should have:
- no more than 3 g of fat
- no more than 1 g of saturated fat
- no trans fat
- no more than 140 mg of sodium
- 2 g of fiber or more
- no more than 8 g of sugars and no artificial sweeteners

**Step 3:** Now compare the Nutrition Facts for these crackers with the Food Rating System recommendations in Step 2.

One serving of these crackers has:
- 3 g of fat
- 0.5 g of saturated fat
- no trans fat
- 120 mg of sodium
- 2 g of fibre
- no sugar or artificial sweeteners

**Step 4:** Are these crackers a **Choose Most Often** food? **Yes.**

**Nutrition Facts**

Per 10 crackers (20 g)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>% Daily Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>3 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated</td>
<td>0.5 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Trans</td>
<td>0 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol</td>
<td>0 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td>120 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrate</td>
<td>14 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibre</td>
<td>2 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars</td>
<td>0 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>2 g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vitamin A 0%  Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%  Iron 8%

**INGREDIENTS:** WHOLE GRAIN WHEAT, SOYABEAN OIL, SALT.

Whole grain wheat is the first ingredient in the list.
Use the Food Rating System—choosing milk and alternatives

Pages 20 to 22 will help you choose healthy milk and alternatives. You will practice reading a label for milk and alternatives on page 23.

Breast milk
☞ Some mothers breastfeed their babies. Breastfeeding is the best choice for babies.

Formula
☞ Some babies get iron-fortified infant formula for the first 9 to 12 months. Then they can drink whole milk from 1 to 2 years old.

Milk

How big is one CFG serving?

- 250 mL (1 cup) milk (skim, 1% or 2% milk)

Note:
☞ Babies between 1 and 2 years old should drink whole milk (3.25%) if they are not breastfeeding.
☞ After children are 2 years old, they can have skim, 1% or 2% milk.

Read the label

One serving should have:
☞ no more than 5 g of fat
☞ no more than 3 g of saturated fat
☞ no more than 0.3 g of trans fat
☞ no more than 120 mg of sodium
☞ no more than 12 g of sugars and no artificial sweeteners
☞ 8 g of protein or more

Fortified soy beverage

How big is one CFG serving?

- 250 mL (1 cup) soy beverage

Note: The soy beverage must be fortified. This means that there is added calcium and vitamin D.

Read the label

One serving should have:
☞ no more than 5 g of fat
☞ no more than 1 g of saturated fat
☞ no trans fat
☞ no more than 120 mg of sodium
☞ no more than 9 g of sugars and no artificial sweeteners
☞ 6 g of protein or more
**Use Alberta’s Food Rating System**

**Yogurt or kefir (from milk)**

**How big is one CFG serving?**

- 175 mL
  
  (¾ cup)

**Read the label**

One serving should have:
- no more than 3 g of fat
- no more than 2 g of saturated fat
- no more than 0.3 g of trans fat
- no more than 120 mg of sodium
- no more than 12 g of sugars and no artificial sweeteners
- 6 g of protein or more

**Soygurt (like yogurt but made from soy)**

**How big is one CFG serving?**

- 175 mL
  
  (¾ cup)

**Read the label**

One serving should have:
- no more than 3 g of fat
- no more than 1 g of saturated fat
- no trans fat
- no more than 50 mg of sodium
- no more than 9 g of sugars and no artificial sweeteners
- 6 g of protein or more

**Cottage cheese**

**How big is one CFG serving?**

- 125 mL
  
  (½ cup or 115 g)

**Read the label**

One serving should have:
- no more than 5 g of fat
- no more than 3 g of saturated fat
- no more than 0.5 g of trans fat
- no more than 120 mg of sodium
- 8 g of protein or more

**Try a fruit smoothie. There is a recipe at the back of this booklet.**

**Tip:** You can use dry curd cottage cheese in perogies, lasagna and other casseroles.
Use Alberta’s Food Rating System

Hard or soft cheese (from milk)

How big is one CFG serving?

- 50 g

Read the label

One serving should have:
- no more than 10 g of fat
- no more than 6 g of saturated fat
- no more than 0.5 g of trans fat
- no more than 350 mg of sodium for hard cheese
- no more than 200 mg of sodium for soft cheese
- 8 g of protein or more

Fortified soya loaf and slices (like cheese)

How big is one CFG serving?

- 50 g

Read the label

One serving should have:
- no more than 5 g of fat
- no more than 1 g of saturated fat
- no trans fat
- no more than 350 mg of sodium
- 6 g of protein or more

Remember! The Food Rating System uses the same serving sizes as Canada’s Food Guide.
Let’s look at a label—milk and alternatives

Chocolate milk

Step 1: One CFG serving of milk is 1 cup (250 mL).

These Nutrition Facts are for 1 cup (250 mL).

Are the serving sizes the same? Yes. This means it is easy to use the Food Rating System with this food.

Step 2: What does the Food Rating System recommend for milk?

One serving should have:
- no more than 5 g of fat
- no more than 3 g of saturated fat
- no more than 0.3 g of trans fat
- no more than 120 mg of sodium
- no more than 12 g of sugars and no artificial sweeteners
- 8 g of protein or more

Step 3: Compare the Nutrition Facts for this chocolate milk with the Food Rating System recommendations in Step 2.

One serving of this milk has:
- 5 g of fat
- 3.5 g of saturated fat
- 0.2 g of trans fat
- 200 mg of sodium
- 21 g of sugars
- 9 g of protein

Step 4: Is this chocolate milk a Choose Most Often food? No. It has too much sodium and sugar. Plain milk is a healthier choice for children.
Use the Food Rating System—choosing meat and alternatives

Pages 25 and 26 will help you choose meat and alternatives.
You will practice reading a label for meat and alternatives on page 27.

Examples of meats
✓ beef
✓ pork and ham
✓ lamb
✓ bison
✓ wild game (wild meat)*
   For example: deer, elk, rabbit.

* Wild meat must be prepared at a federally inspected plant.

Examples of fish
✓ tuna
✓ salmon
✓ cod
✓ mackrel
✓ herring
✓ sardines
✓ shrimp
✓ crab
✓ squid

Examples of poultry
✓ chicken
✓ turkey
✓ duck
✓ goose

Examples of alternatives
✓ eggs
✓ legumes
✓ tofu
✓ nuts

Remember! The Food Rating System uses the same serving sizes as Canada’s Food Guide.
Meat, fish and poultry

**How big is one CFG serving?**
- 75 g (2.5 ounces) cooked or canned meat, fish or poultry
- 125 mL (½ cup) ground cooked meat or poultry

**Read the label**
One serving should have:
- no more than 10 g of fat
- no more than 3 g of saturated fat
- no more than 0.5 g trans fat
- no more than 200 mg of sodium
- 14 g of protein or more

**Tip:** Choose lean meats. Cut off extra fat before you cook the meat. Drain off fat after you cook the meat.

Deli meats (luncheon meats)

Here are some examples of deli meats:
- sliced sandwich meat
- sausage

**How big is one CFG serving?**
- 75 g (2.5 ounces) or 125 mL (½ cup) cooked

**Read the label**
One serving should have:
- no more than 5 g of fat
- no more than 3 g of saturated fat
- no more than 0.5 g trans fat
- no more than 350 mg of sodium
- 10 g of protein or more

**Tip:** Watch out for salt and fat in deli meats. Too much salt and fat are not healthy.
## Alternatives

### How big is one CFG serving?

- 2 eggs
- 175 mL (¾ cup) legumes (soaked, cooked or canned)
- 175 mL (¾ cup or 150 g) tofu

### Read the label

One serving should have:
- no more than 10 g of fat
- no more than 3 g of saturated fat
- no more than 0.5 g of trans fat
- no more than 200 mg of sodium
- no added sugar and no artificial sweeteners
- 6 g of protein or more

### Nuts and peanuts

Nuts, peanuts and nut/seed butters are in the **Meat and alternatives** food group. They are alternatives. Some children are allergic to nuts and peanuts. Do not serve these foods at childcare centres.

For more information, read the *Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth*.

### Examples of legumes

- red beans
- black beans
- chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
- lentils
- soybeans

### How to use legumes

- Add legumes to soups, chilis, dahls, curries and salads.
- Add tofu to stir fries.
Let’s look at a label—meat and alternatives

Black beans

Step 1: One CFG serving of beans (legumes) is ¾ cup (175 mL).

Nutrition Facts for ½ cup (125 mL)

Are the serving sizes the same? No. This means you have to do some math.

\[ \frac{175}{125} = 1.4 \]

One CFG serving of beans is 1.4 times the serving size for these Nutrition Facts.

Step 2: What does the Food Rating System recommend for beans? One serving should have:
- no more than 10 g of fat
- no more than 3 g of saturated fat
- no more than 0.5 g of trans fat
- no more than 200 mg of sodium
- no added sugar or artificial sweeteners
- 6 g of protein or more

Step 3: Compare the Nutrition Facts for these beans with the Food Rating System recommendations in Step 2. Multiply the numbers on the Nutrition Facts table by 1.4.

One CFG serving of these beans has:
- no fat, no saturated fat, no trans fat
- 195 mg sodium (130 mg x \(1.4\) = 182 mg)
- no added sugar or artificial sweeteners
- 12 g of protein (8 g x \(1.4\) = 11 g)

Step 4: Are these beans a Choose Most Often food? Yes.

INGREDIENTS: BLACK BEANS, WATER, SALT.
What does a day of healthy food look like? Here is an example for a child age 2 to 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Meal Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>At home: 60 mL (¼ cup) strawberries, 125 mL (½ cup) dry cereal, 125 mL (½ cup) milk, ½ egg, hard boiled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At childcare centre: 60 mL (¼ cup) blueberries, 125 mL (½ cup) milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning snack</td>
<td>Lunch: 60 mL (¼ cup) mango, 60 mL (¼ cup) cucumber, 1 slice whole wheat bread, 125 mL (½ cup) milk, 38 g (¼ cup) tuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Afternoon snack: 10 g whole wheat crackers, 60 mL (¼ cup) grapes, cut in half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>At home: 125 mL (½ cup) fruit salad, 125 mL (½ cup) whole wheat pasta, 125 mL (½ cup) milk, 90 mL (⅛ cup) pasta sauce with vegetables and meat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total CFG servings for the day:
- 4 servings of vegetables and fruit
- 3 servings of grain products
- 2 servings of milk and alternatives
- 1.25 servings of meat and alternatives
Serve healthy drinks

Water first
- Children need to drink water every day. Water should always be available.
- Offer water when children say, “I’m thirsty.”

Milk with meals
- Serve one portion (125 mL or ½ cup) of milk or soy beverage with each meal.

Not too much juice
- Children should not drink more than 125 mL (½ cup) of juice per day.
- Eating fruit is better than drinking fruit juice.

Avoid sugary drinks
Many drinks have lots of sugar and few nutrients. For example: fruit drinks, fruit punches, sports drinks and pop. These drinks are not healthy for children. They are not Choose Most Often foods.

How much sugar do drinks have?

Choose Most Often
½ cup (125 mL) of 1% milk has 6 g of natural sugar

Choose Sometimes
½ cup (125 mL) of chocolate milk (1%) has 13 g of sugar

Choose Least Often
½ cup (125 mL) of fruit punch has 14 g of sugar
½ cup (125 mL) of cola has 20 g of sugar

Note: Numbers are examples. Amount of sugar in different products will vary.
Serve healthy snacks

Childcare centres must follow Canada’s Food Guide. You must choose from at least 2 food groups for snacks. Here are some ideas for healthy snacks.

- homemade salsa and homemade whole wheat pita chips
- raw vegetables and milk
- salad and grated cheese
- whole grain crackers and cheese (low fat)
- berries and plain yogurt
- unsweetened apple sauce and whole wheat bagel
- hard-boiled egg and whole grain rye cracker

Choking

Young children sometimes choke on food. Make sure snacks are cut into pieces that aren’t too big or too small.

Did you know?

These snacks are not in the Choose Most Often group.

- potato chips
- pop
- donuts
- sugary cereal
- fruit drinks
- cookies
- ice cream

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Children love to celebrate special days and holidays. For example:

- birthdays
- Eid-al Fitr
- Halloween
- Lunar New Year
- National Aboriginal Day
- Valentine’s Day

Many children eat a lot of unhealthy treats on special days. For example, on Halloween, children may get treats:

- from parents
- from other relatives
- at childcare centres
- when they go trick or treating

Here are some ideas.

1. Serve healthy treats to celebrate special days. For example, cut vegetables and fruit into fun shapes.

2. If you serve sugary treats, serve them in small amounts.

3. Focus on special holiday games and crafts.

4. Have an open house to celebrate some holidays. Serve mostly healthy snacks and drinks.

5. Make a policy for special days. For example, you can celebrate all January birthdays on one day in January. Do the same thing for other months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>January 2</td>
<td>Celebrate Jan. 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashvir</td>
<td>January 14</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paulo</td>
<td>January 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>February 5</td>
<td>Celebrate Feb. 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meena</td>
<td>February 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>February 17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6. Make a policy about homemade foods for special days. For example, parents can only bring store-bought treats that have labels. Treats must have no nuts.

You can send a note home with parents. Tell them about the policy.
Help children enjoy healthy food

How can you help children eat and enjoy healthy food?

1 Variety
Serve a variety of food for meals and snacks. For example, choose different food colours, shapes, flavours, textures and temperatures.

2 New foods
It is good for children to try new foods. How can you help them?
☞ Be excited about the new food!
☞ Serve the new food in small amounts. Serve it a few times.
☞ Serve the new food with familiar foods. For example, you can introduce a new vegetable in a soup or a salad.

3 Every child is different
Remember that every child is different. Some days, children eat less than other days.
☞ Help teach children to listen to their bodies. Help children eat when they are hungry, and stop when they are full.
☞ Bodies come in different shapes and sizes. Help children feel good about their bodies.

4 Be a good role model
You are a role model for children. They watch you and learn from you. Eat healthy food. Children are watching.

5 Time and space to eat
Children need a quiet place to eat. They need to sit down. They need to be relaxed and comfortable.

Children need 20 to 30 minutes for meals. They need 10 to 15 minutes for snacks. Children under 3 years old may need more time.
Alberta has rules about food safety. It is very important for you to understand the rules. For more information, see page 35.

What can you do to keep children safe?

**Choking**
Any food can cause choking in young children. An adult should always be near children when they eat.

Here are some tips:
- Cut carrots and other hard vegetables into narrow strips.
- Take out seeds from fruit. Cut the fruit into pieces.
- Don’t serve popcorn.
- If serving hotdogs, slice lengthwise and then cut into pieces.
- Don’t serve whole grapes. Cut them in half.
- Don’t serve raisins.

**Washing hands**
Children must wash their hands before and after they eat. Teach children to:
- use soap
- lather their hands well
- rinse their hands under running water for 20 seconds
- dry their hands with a clean towel.

**Food allergies**
Some young children have food allergies. These allergies can be very serious. All childcare centres must have a food allergy plan to keep children safe.

**Watch out for nuts**
Children with food allergies are often allergic to peanuts and tree nuts (walnuts, almonds, cashews and pecans).

Childcare workers, parents and caregivers can all help protect children with nut allergies.

**Work together with parents**
Does your childcare centre allow parents to bring lunches and snacks?
- If your childcare centre has allergy concerns/restrictions ask parents not to send food with nuts. Make sure the food is not cooked in peanut or nut oil.
- If parents bring food for special days, make sure it is store bought. Check the labels. Is the food nut free?
Costs

You can serve healthy food without spending a lot of money. Here are some tips to help you.

Plan ahead
Make a menu for a week or two. Include all the meals and snacks.

Do one big shop
Make a list before you go shopping. Do all the shopping at one time.

Look for deals
Look for food on sale. Check supermarket flyers for specials.

Buy in bulk
Some foods like pasta and rice are cheaper to buy in bulk.
Buy produce in bags. Oranges, apples and potatoes are usually cheaper this way.

Compare prices
Compare prices between stores. The price for the same food can be different in different stores.

Use legumes at meals
Legumes are a good source of protein. Lentils, beans, peas and tofu are all healthy choices.

Serve healthy food on a budget:
4 fruits can be 10 Canada’s Food Guide servings of fruit salad.

1 apple + 1 banana + 1 orange + 1 pear = 10 servings (½ cup or 125 mL each)

4 fruits cost about $2.50. Each serving costs about 25¢.
Resources

Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide
You can get *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide* in English or French. You can also get the guide in 10 different languages. There are also food guides for First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

There are 3 ways to get the guide.
1. You can view it on your computer screen.
2. You can print a PDF copy of the guide.
3. You can order a copy of the guide.


Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth
The *Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth* has information to help childcare centres serve healthy food.

Food safety
The Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education has a website with food safety tips. You can view and print a PDF of the tips.

Go to: [www.canfightbac.org/en](http://www.canfightbac.org/en)
Our favourite Choose Most Often foods

Keep a list of favourite foods from the **Choose Most Often** food group.

What other foods can you try? Where can you get other ideas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetables and fruit</th>
<th>Milk and alternatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favourite foods</strong></td>
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Simple steps to take now

Changes to talk about and to plan

Favourite foods
Here is a simple recipe to try. It is made with **Choose Most Often** foods.

---

**fruit smoothie**

### Ingredients

- 1 cup (250 mL) plain yogurt
- 2 cups (500 mL) 100% fruit (frozen, fresh or canned)
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk
- ¼ cup (60 mL) 100% frozen juice concentrate
- 1 tsp. (5 mL) vanilla (optional)

### Directions

Put ingredients in a blender.

Blend until smooth.

Serves 7 to 8 children

---

Child’s portion size: ½ cup (125 mL)

Each portion has:

- ½ CFG serving vegetables and fruit
- ¼ CFG serving milk and alternatives