

## **“Have Your Broccoli and Eat it Too!”**

Recently the Federal Government updated the Canada Food Guide. The popular rainbow of healthy eating hasn't been updated in 15 years and with the rising obesity rates and the resulting complications such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease, this revision is well overdue.

Eating healthily everyday can be a daunting task. With so many choices out there and our fast-paced life style, consuming foods that are high in fat and calories and low in nutritional value is often easier than eating what is good for us.

The new rainbow looks slightly different than the previous one. Grain products previously held the outer band position, but vegetables and fruits have taken the lead in the new rainbow. It is now recommended that adult females consume 7 to 8 servings of fruits and vegetables daily, 6 to 7 servings of grain products, 2 servings of low fat milk or other dairy products and 2 servings of lean meat or alternatives. As always, limit butter, lard, and shortening as well as desserts and sweets. A small amount of fat is needed however, which could include 2 to 3 tablespoons of unsaturated fats found in cooking oils such as canola, olive and soybean.

One of the best features of the new guide is that it is gender and age specific. Dietary advice is tailored to children, teens and adults with suggestions for pregnant women. For the first time the guide discusses portion size with an entire page of examples. Serving portions have changed somewhat, and the revised guide provides more accurate examples of foods.

When making your daily food choices, a few simple rules will help you and your family to eat a nutritionally balanced diet.

### ***Fruits and Vegetables***

- Have at least one dark green (broccoli, romaine lettuce or spinach) **and** one orange vegetable daily (carrots, sweet potatoes or winter squash) daily.
- Prepare fruits and vegetables with little or no added fat, sugar or salt by steaming, baking or stir-frying.
- Eat the whole fruit or vegetables rather than juice if possible

### ***Grains***

- At least half of your grain products should be whole grains. Whole grain bread, oatmeal and whole wheat pasta are tasty and healthy options.
- Try barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa and wild rice.

### ***Dairy and alternatives***

- Two cups of milk daily will provide sufficient Vitamin D for most people
- Choose lower fat yogurts and cheeses as well as skim, 1% or 2% milk
- Drink soy products if you cannot drink milk

### ***Meat and Alternatives***

- Fish such as char, herring, mackerel, salmon, sardines and trout should be consumed twice weekly. (Be careful of fish sources for mercury content).
- Eat meat alternatives often such as beans, lentils and tofu often.
- When choosing meats, be sure to use leaner cuts of poultry, beef or pork, trim visible fat and prepare by roasting, baking or poaching.

When shopping, remember to read the labels, choosing foods with less fat (saturated and Trans fat) sugar and sodium. Don't forget to check the serving size as well; it's often less than what we think.

Try to enjoy a variety of foods from all four food groups to help you meet your vitamin, mineral and nutrient needs. Drink plenty of water throughout the day; it's calorie free! Remembering to increase your intake when you are active or in hot weather.

And speaking of being active, the benefits of exercise cannot be emphasized enough. 30 to 60 minutes of moderate daily physical activity for adults and 90 minutes for children are recommended in combination with a balanced diet for an overall healthy life.

For more information visit [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide), or drop into Stuart Ellis IDA Pharmacy for a printed copy.