

BALANCED EATING BASICS

Food is made of a variety of nutrients that give us the energy we need to survive. "Calorie" is the scientific word for the energy in our food. **It is more important to focus on WHAT our food is made of, rather than focusing on the number of Calories.** The food we eat can be sorted into three main groups:

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Sources:

- fruits & vegetables (fresh, canned, frozen)



PROTEIN

Sources:

- animal based protein (fish, poultry, beef, dairy & alternatives*, cheese)
- plant based protein (beans and legumes*, soy, nuts & seeds)

WHOLE GRAINS & STARCHES

Sources:

- whole grains (oatmeal, barley, psyllium, flax seed, whole wheat, rice, beans & legumes*)
- starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn, squash)
- dairy & alternatives* (yogurt, animal & plant milks)

Eating a **variety** of foods will help us meet our nutrition needs.

Meals: aim for half a plate of vegetables, a quarter grains/starches and a quarter protein.

Snacks: aim for eating food from 2 of these groups.

*foods with stars fit into more than one food group

HEALTHY FATS (UNSATURATED FAT)

Healthy fats are found throughout the other three groups and are used in small amounts in cooking. There are three different types of fats: saturated, unsaturated and trans fats. Unsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature and have many health benefits.

Sources:

- nuts & seeds, plant oils, fatty fish (salmon and mackerel)



FOOD GROUP BUDGET TIPS

PROTEIN

Budget friendly protein options:

- *Pulses (beans, lentils, peas)*: swap out meat for pulses
 - Add into pasta sauce or rice, salads, soups or stews
 - Try pasta sauce with 1/2 lentils and 1/2 ground meat
- *Eggs*: use in omelettes or quiches; hard boiled or egg salad
- *Peanut butter*: use in sandwiches or on crackers or celery
- *Tofu*: use firm tofu in stir-fries or add to salads
 - Add soft tofu to smoothies
- *Chopped unsalted peanuts, sunflower seeds, or sesame seeds*: add to baked goods, stir-fries or salads
- *Cheaper cuts of meat (bottom roasts, round steaks, rib chops, whole chicken, chicken thighs)*: cut meat yourself and use in stews, stir-fry, soup or on sandwiches;
 - Make homemade soup stock with chicken bones
 - Remove chicken skin yourself
 - Great to use with a slow cooker; will help to soften the meat
- *Canned tuna or salmon*: use in sandwiches and casseroles
- *Plain frozen fish*: flavour with lemon, salt and pepper
- *Milk, cheese, yogurts*: buy largest size you have room for
 - Freeze milk bags & hard cheese; place in fridge to thaw a day before needed
- *Skim milk powder*: add to soups, gravies, casseroles, sauces, puddings or baked goods

WHOLE GRAINS & STARCHES

- Cook rice, pasta and whole grains from scratch
 - Avoid packaged mixes which can be more expensive and higher in salt and lower in fibre
- Buy on sale grain products like bread, bagels and buns
 - Freeze leftovers
 - Thaw, toast or use in grilled sandwiches or french toast
- Bake your own muffins and loaves
 - Cut loaves into slices and freeze leftovers; thaw individual portions when needed
- Buy plain oatmeal and flavour with cinnamon or cocoa powder and fruit

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

- Buy extra produce in season or when on sale or try "just past peak", "imperfect" or 50% off quick-sale produce
 - Chop and freeze extras
 - Example: use frozen, ripened bananas for baking or smoothies
 - Tip: write the date on the food you freeze
- Buy largest bag of plain frozen vegetables and fruit that you have freezer space for
- Buy fruits and vegetables canned in water with no added sugar or salt
- Cut and wash raw veggies or fruit to save on pre-cut produce
- Compare prices of pre-bagged and individual items, like apples, to find the better deal
- Make your own salad dressings

MEAL PLANNING

- Plan ahead;
 - Try writing out meal ideas for the week
 - Choose simple recipes
 - Avoid recipes with “one time only” ingredients. Instead look for ingredients you can use in variety of ways like oatmeal, ground meats, onions and legumes
- Cook from scratch; it is cheaper than pre-made meals
 - Example: block cheese vs shredded, homemade salad vs salad kits
- Use dried herbs in homemade meals; these are cheap and last a long time
- Cook big batches & freeze left overs in small portions to reheat later
 - Example: use ground meat for spaghetti sauce & reheat for lasagna another night
- Use leftover veggies for soups
- Use slow cooker (stews, casseroles, curries, soups)
 - Cooking meat slowly will help to soften it

SMART SHOPPING

- Use a shopping list & check what items you have at home already
- Shop on full stomach to avoid impulse buys when you're hungry
- Bring own reusable bags or bins
- Shop at discount grocery stores
 - Example: No Frills, Food Basics, Freshco, Walmart, Giant tiger
 - Avoid convenient stores & mini marts
- Try value brands
 - Example: No Name, Great Value
- Check fliers for fruit & veggie deals. These can be found in the newspaper, flyers & online
- Stock up on staples. Buy foods on sale that can be stored or that you regularly use
 - Example: frozen foods, canned goods, dry pasta/rice, spices, bottled sauces
- Ask grocery store staff when fresh produce goes on sale & use before date or freeze
- Ask if the store sends coupons by email/mail, price matches or has loyalty programs
- Shop for produce when in season & use frozen when not in season
- Look for products at the bottom and top of the shelf; eye level products are typically more expensive.
- Remember that deal is only a deal if it isn't wasted!
- Avoid buying bottled pop or water: drink tap water if it's safe & add lemon or lime
- Avoid pre-made meals and foods
- **phone Apps to try:** Flipp, Caddle, Checkout 51, Zweet, PC Optimum

UNIT PRICING

Unit pricing lists the cost of products per 100 grams and makes comparing prices for similar products very easy. Larger amounts of products are usually cheaper.



$$\begin{aligned} \$3.47/227g &= \$0.0153 \times 100g \\ &= \mathbf{\$1.53/100g} \end{aligned}$$



$$\begin{aligned} \$3.47/283g &= \$0.023/g \times 100g \\ &= \mathbf{\$1.23/100g} \end{aligned}$$

CHEAPER OPTION :)

REFERENCES

- British Dietetic Association (2015). Eat Well, Spend Less Handout. *Food Fact Sheet*.
- Dietitians of Canada (2017). *Healthy Eating While Spending Less Handout. Practice Evidence Based Nutrition*.
- Government of Canada (2020). Canada's Food Guide. Accessed by: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/?wbdisable=true>

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Aurum Medicine & Wellness Clinic | +1-416-531-0008 | www.aurummedicine.ca

LAZY LIFE HACKS & RECIPES



Grilled Cheese

1. Sliced cheese + wrap + mustard
2. Microwave for 30 seconds
3. Serve with veggies + dip or hummus



Chickpea Wrap

1. Spread 1 Tbsp hummus on wrap
2. Mix drained can of chick peas + 1 Tbsp Honey Garlic Stir-fry sauce
3. Serve on wrap with mixed greens



PB&B Wrap

1. Spread 1 Tbsp natural peanut butter on wrap
2. Roll up wrap with sliced or whole banana



Chickpea Salad

1. Mix canned chickpeas + cooked sweet potato + 1 Tbsp stir-fry sauce
2. Serve on mixed greens



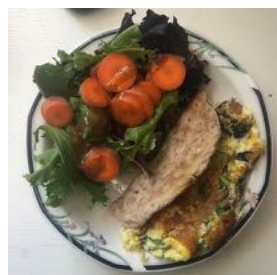
Morning Oats

1. Mix 1/2 cup quick oats + 1 tsp cocoa powder or cinnamon + 3/4 cup water + 1 tbsp peanut butter
2. Microwave for 90 seconds
3. Serve with sliced banana



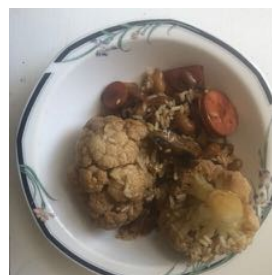
Tuna Sweet Potato

1. Pierce washed sweet potato with fork
2. Microwave for 5 minutes until soft
3. Mix canned tuna + 1 Tbsp mayo + 1/2 cup coleslaw mix
4. Serve on lettuce and/or sweet potato



Easy Omelet

1. Whisk 2 eggs + 1 Tbsp milk + pepper + 1/2 cup chopped greens
2. Pour into frying pan on medium; flip when bubbling
3. serve with bun + salad



Stir-Fry

1. Cook 1 1/2 cups of rice as directed
2. Sautee 1/2 onion + oil in frying pan
3. Add 1 can of drained legumes + 4 cups frozen veggies + 1/2 cup stir fry sauce + 1/2 cup water
4. Simmer on low until veggies are cooked
5. Serve on rice