

Note to facilitators:

- It is recommended that you partner with a Registered Dietitian to deliver this module as it includes specialized nutrition information.
- This module is not meant to be read to participants word for word, but rather to help guide discussion and nutrition topics and to serve as a good source of background information.
- Each group of participants will have unique needs. It is suggested that this information be tailored to suit the needs of your group.
- It is suggested that visuals be included where possible (e.g. food models, food packages, pictures of foods or recipes, etc.)

Practical healthy eating tips and tricks for older adults

Time: 5 minutes

1. Who can help me find out more about healthy eating?

- A Registered Dietitian (RD) is a food and nutrition expert who can provide information about healthy eating for individuals or groups.
- Registered Dietitians consider the unique needs of individuals and offer specialized nutrition information.
- It is easy to connect with a Registered Dietitian in your community using the websites or phone numbers of organizations such as EatRightOntario, Dietitians of Canada and/or The College of Dietitians of Ontario. Some dietitian services in Ontario are offered at no cost. Contact EatRightOntario or the Association of Community Health Centres to find a community dietitian near you.

Related Resources for Facilitators:

- College of Dietitians of Ontario – What You Should Know About Registered Dietitians: <http://www.cdo.on.ca/en/public/default.asp>
- Association of Community Health Centres website: http://www.aohc.org/index.php?ci_id=3175&la_id=1
- Dietitians of Canada - Find a Dietitian: <http://www.dietitians.ca/Find-A-Dietitian.aspx>
- EatRightOntario website: www.eatrightontario.ca or 1-877-510-5102

Related Resources for Participants:

- EatRightOntario website: www.eatrightontario.ca or 1-877-510-5102
- Dietitians of Canada - Find a Dietitian: <http://www.dietitians.ca/Find-A-Dietitian.aspx>

Time: 15 minutes

2. Why should I choose healthy foods?

- A healthy diet can help you to feel good and have more energy.
- Healthy eating is very important for prevention, treatment, and recovery of many medical conditions.
- Getting the right amount of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients can help to reduce the risk of medical conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer, osteoporosis, and can even help to prevent falls.
- Good nutrition is important in the treatment of addictions and mental illnesses. People with addiction may have low levels of nutrients such as folate, vitamins A, D, and B6, calcium, magnesium, potassium and selenium.
- The kind of food you eat can affect your mood. People with mental illness may benefit from eating omega-3 rich foods (such as fatty fish, walnuts, canola oil, and flax seed) in addition to a well balanced, healthy diet.
- Everyone has unique nutritional needs. As people get older, they may need more or less of certain nutrients. For example, older adults generally need more of vitamins B6 and B12, calcium and vitamin D. Women over the age of 50 need less iron than women who are younger. Vitamin D, which is important for proper muscle, nerve and immune system function, can be difficult to get from food alone. People who are 50 years or older should consider taking a vitamin D supplement. Talk to your doctor, dietitian or pharmacist for more information.
- People who smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or use drugs may need more or less of certain nutrients. This is because the metabolism of drugs and alcohol affects how the body absorbs nutrients. For example, people who smoke cigarettes have higher vitamin C needs.
- People on certain medications may experience side effects such as weight gain or loss, high cholesterol or triglycerides, and increased risk of developing diabetes and/or cardiovascular disease. All of these side effects can be helped by eating a healthy diet.
- Drastic changes to eating habits, irregular meal patterns, limited access to healthy foods, and poor appetite can cause deficiencies of certain nutrients or even malnutrition, making you feel tired or unwell.
- Diarrhea, constipation, heartburn, difficulty concentrating and poor memory, fatigue, headaches and physical weakness are all conditions that can be treated by making changes to the food that you eat.
- Therapeutic or specialized diets play a role in the management of diseases like heart disease, hypertension (high blood pressure), high cholesterol, diabetes, and hepatitis C. Sometimes, making changes to your eating can help your body as much or more than medication.
- Good nutrition can mean an increase in energy levels, better sleep and an improved mood.
- Are you eating enough healthy food?

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Related Resources for Facilitators:

- Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>
- EatRightOntario – Seniors Nutrition: <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Seniors>
- Smart Snacking: Snacks to grab and go. <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/using-utiliser/snacks-collations-eng.php>
- Healthy Eating for Healthy Aging: http://www.nutritionrc.ca/resources/pdfs/nrc_heha-booklet-eng.pdf
- Nutrition, Diet and Mental Health/ Drug Use: Selected Resources List from CAMH Library. http://www.camh.net/About_Addiction_Mental_Health/CAMH_Library/Nutrition2010.pdf
- Nutrition and Recovery: A Professional Resource for Healthy Eating During Recovery From Substance Abuse by Trish Dekker. <http://store.camh.net/product.php?productid=272&cat=107&page=1>
- The Healthy Eating Manual: <http://www.healthyeatingmanual.ca/>

Related Resources for Participants:

- Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>
- EatRightOntario – Seniors Nutrition: <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Seniors>
- Smart Snacking: Snacks to grab and go. <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/using-utiliser/snacks-collations-eng.php>

Time: 15 minutes

3. How do I read a nutrition label?

Click on this link to learn <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/nutrition/cons/dv-vq/interact-eng.php>

This is an example of a Nutrition Facts Table.

Nutrition Facts

Per 3/4 cup (175g) of yogurt

<u>Amount</u>		<u>% Daily Value</u>	
Calories 160			
Fat 2.5 g		4 %	
<u>Saturated</u> 1.5 g <u>+ Trans</u> 0 g		8 %	
Cholesterol 10 mg			
Sodium 75 mg		3 %	
Carbohydrate 25 g		8 %	
<u>Fibre</u> 0 g		0 %	
<u>Sugars</u> 24 g			
Protein 8 g			
<u>Vitamin A</u>		2 %	
<u>Calcium</u>		20 %	
<u>Vitamin C</u>		0 %	
<u>Iron</u>		0 %	

- Look at the amount of food referenced at the top of the label under the title “Nutrition Facts”. Compare this to the amount of food that you actually eat.
- Read the % DV (% Daily Value). This helps to tell you if a food has a little or a lot of a specific nutrient. 5% DV or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot.
- Aim for less fat, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium (salt), and choose more fibre, vitamin A, iron, and calcium. Use the %DV to help you with this.
- When you eat fat, choose unsaturated sources of fat more often (examples are fish, nuts and seeds, canola, olive oil, or fats that come from plants) than saturated fat

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(examples are butter, lard, shortening and fats that come from animals). Unsaturated fat may help to reduce symptoms of depression, and are good for your heart.

- Avoid eating trans fat. These are not good for your body.
- Eating too much fat or sugar can make you feel tired. It can also make you gain unwanted weight.
- Eating too much sodium can cause your blood pressure to increase. Uncontrolled high blood pressure is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

What else should I consider when choosing healthy foods?

- Eating nutritious foods with lots of vitamins and minerals and enough but not too many macronutrients (these are carbohydrate, protein and fat), help to keep your energy levels up higher, longer.
- Calcium and vitamin D are vitamins that help to keep bones and teeth strong.
- Iron and protein are nutrients that help to keep muscles and blood healthy.
- Vitamins A and C are important for eye and skin health (they help to heal wounds, cuts and bruises) and immune function. Vitamin C helps your body to absorb iron from plant foods. Vitamin C also helps to keep your gums healthy.
- When in doubt, choose “real” foods. For example, choose to make mashed potatoes from a real potato instead of potato flakes from a box. Or, choose to eat a piece of whole fruit instead of drinking a sugary fruit-flavoured drink.
- “Real” foods have more vitamins, minerals and nutrients like fibre in them. The human body needs over 50 different nutrients every day. Most Canadians do not get enough fibre every day.
- Fibre is plant material that cannot be digested (and is found in things like vegetables and fruit, whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds). It helps your digestive tract to work, helps to regulate blood sugar and can lower blood cholesterol. It can also help you to feel fuller, longer.
- “Real” foods are often a better price than more processed or convenience items.
- Drink water when you are thirsty. Being dehydrated can make you feel confused, dizzy, light headed, restless, or irritated. Don’t rely on pop or coffee to keep you hydrated.
- Limit your caffeine intake to 3-4 small cups of coffee per day. Too much caffeine can make you anxious or shaky, and can increase your blood pressure, or make it difficult to sleep at night. There is caffeine in pop, tea, and in chocolate.
- Limit your alcohol intake. Alcohol is a toxin that is deactivated by the liver, a process that requires the body to use thiamine, zinc and other nutrients. People who drink a lot of alcohol may have depleted nutrient stores because of this process. Having depleted nutrients may cause people to have a low mood, irritability and/or aggressive behaviour. Eating healthy foods and limiting alcohol will help to replenish nutrient stores.

Related Resources for Facilitators:

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- Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>
- Health Canada Interactive Tools Nutrition Labelling: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/nutrition/cons/dv-vq/interact-eng.php>

Related Resources for Participants:

- Health Canada Interactive Tools Nutrition Labelling: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/nutrition/cons/dv-vq/interact-eng.php>
- Rethink Your Drink: <http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca/Images/Top%20Menu/Re-Think%20Your%20Drink%20-%20Aug09.pdf>

Pick this, not that:

- Oats for breakfast instead of sugary cereal



- Fruit instead of sugary drinks



- Mashed potatoes instead of those made from flakes



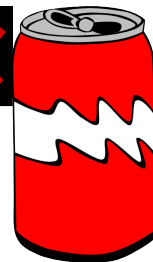
- Baked potato instead of chips or French fries



- A handful of nuts instead of chocolate bars



- Milk, water or 100% juice instead of pop or other sugary drinks



Time: 15 minutes

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4. How do I know if I have a “balanced diet”?

Compare your intake to the recommended amount in Canada’s Food Guide:

- There are four Food Groups: Vegetables and Fruit; Grain Products; Milk and Alternatives; and Meat and Alternatives.
- Look at Canada’s Food Guide. Compare the number of servings you usually eat in a day to the recommended number. Be sure to look in the column that is for your age and gender.
- Do you eat too much or too little from a certain food group?

Or, Look at your plate:

- Aim to have at least three of the four food groups on your plate at mealtimes.
- Aim to have at least two of the four food groups represented when/if eating a snack.

Overall:

- Try to space meals 4-6 hours apart, and have 3 meals each day. Eating at regular times helps to keep your energy levels up, and can prevent mood swings and overeating.
- Set aside time in your day or week to plan meal ideas, choose recipes, and get groceries. What kinds of foods would you like to eat? What do you need to get in order to make them? Can you use leftovers to make a new dish? What foods do you have to eat first so that they don’t spoil?
- Eat a variety of foods from each food group. If you have pasta at one meal, have another grain product like oats, brown rice, or whole grain bread at other meals. Eating a variety of foods means that you are giving your body a variety of nutrients.

Do you make healthy food choices? Ask yourself – *do I*:

- Have regular meal times?
- Choose to eat vegetables and fruit, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and lean meats and fish, beans or nuts?
- Include a different source of protein (examples are meat, fish, nuts, seeds, beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, eggs, milk, yogurt, or soy) at each meal?
- Eat a variety of foods?
- Have a healthy body weight?
- Drink water when thirsty?
- Aim to eat more fibre and less sugar, salt and fat?

Are you in need of nutrition counselling?

- Do you have a decreased appetite; problems chewing or swallowing; tooth loss or pain; are you experiencing weight changes or unable to grocery shop? Do you live on your own; take lots of medication; eat tea and toast for many of your meals? Do you smoke cigarettes or often have coffee and a cigarette instead of a meal? Do you have limited

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or no access to a refrigerator or stove; or not have enough money to buy food? Do you drink alcohol or use drugs?

- If you answered yes to any of these questions, you could benefit from speaking with a registered dietitian for specialized healthy eating advice.

Related Resources for Facilitators:

- Nutri-eSCREEN: eating habits survey for older adults: <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/escreen/default.aspx>
- Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>
- The Healthy Eating Manual: <http://www.healthyeatingmanual.ca/>

Related Resources for Facilitators:

- Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>

Time: 15 minutes

5. What if I am eating at a shelter or food bank?

It is possible to eat well on a budget. Here are some tips for choosing foods:

- Choose fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no sodium or sugar. You can always rinse canned food (such as vegetables, fruit, tuna, and beans, etc.) with water to get some of the salt or sugar off.
- Dark green vegetables and orange vegetables and fruit are especially healthy choices. The more colourful your plate, the greater the variety of vitamins and minerals in your diet. Try to eat one green vegetable and one orange vegetable or fruit every day.
- Choose whole fruit and vegetables more often than juice. Look for “100% juice” on the juice you do drink.
- Choose whole grains like whole grain whole wheat bread, cereal, rice, bulgur, quinoa, barley, oats, etc. When choosing cereal, try to pick one that doesn't list sugar as one of the first three ingredients. Substitute dried beans, peas or lentils, soy, eggs, nuts or seeds, or canned fish in recipes that call for meat. These are healthy choices that are lower in price.
- Use skim milk powder for drinking, cooking or baking. Use low fat plain yogurt instead of sour cream, or low fat cottage cheese instead of plain cheese.

When choosing foods at the food bank, grocery store, convenience store, soup kitchen or elsewhere, look for nutrient dense foods that are easy to carry, prepare and eat. Here are some suggestions:

- Single serving hard cooked eggs.
- Healthy canned meals that contain at least three of the four food groups such as Campbell's Nourish brand of canned foods.
- Consider putting soup in a mug or thermos to take with you and eat later on.
- Add vegetables to soup, rice or pasta for extra vitamins and fibre. Add beans (like lentils or black beans, etc.) to rice for extra protein and fibre.
- Fruits and vegetables like apples, oranges, carrots, cucumbers, and peppers are easy to carry and can be eaten with the peel, either raw or cooked.
- Packaged drinks like milk and 100% juice. Milk that is UHT pasteurized does not need to be refrigerated until after it has been opened.
- Canned tuna or salmon, chickpeas, black beans or lentils, a small container or low fat cottage cheese or low fat Greek yogurt, or even a small package of nuts can be added to meals and snacks for a boost of protein.
- Whole wheat couscous, oats and quinoa are easy to prepare even if you don't have a stove. Cooked in one pot (or bowl) by simply combining the grain with a boiling liquid (water, broth, juice, etc.). Put a lid (or use a plate instead of a lid) on the pot and in a couple minutes the grain will be ready.

Sometimes retail food establishments (grocery stores, coffee shops, farmers markets, etc.) will sell food for a reduced price just before they close for the day.

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- Talk with your friends and share ideas about where to go in your neighbourhood for good deals.

Remember that even though nutritional supplements can be helpful, a varied and balanced diet full of healthy foods is best.

- For more information and specialized eating plans, contact a registered dietitian today!

Related Resources for Facilitators:

- EatRightOntario - Healthy Eating on a Budget: <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Budget.aspx>
- The Basic Shelf Cookbook: <http://www.healthunit.com/article.aspx?ID=13513>
- EatRightOntario - Budget Friendly Recipe Cards: <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Articles/Budget/Budget-friendly-recipes-cards.aspx>
- BC Minister of Planning - Healthy Eating Cheap and Easy: <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2002/HealthyEatingdoc.pdf>
- Porcupine Health Unit - Cook Well Eat Well (good recipes, but old Canada's Food Guide): <http://www.porcupinehu.on.ca/Nutrition/documents/Cookbook.pdf>

Related Resources for Participants:

- EatRightOntario - Healthy Eating on a Budget: <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Budget.aspx>
- EatRightOntario - Budget Friendly Recipe Cards: <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Articles/Budget/Budget-friendly-recipes-cards.aspx>
- BC Minister of Planning - Healthy Eating Cheap and Easy: <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2002/HealthyEatingdoc.pdf>

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