

A Guided Discovery of *Canada's Food Guide*

Cook More Often



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This lesson is designed to be completed on its own or as part of the series of lessons included in *A Guided Discovery of Canada's Food Guide*. To download the other lessons, visit [TeachNutrition.ca](https://www.teachnutrition.ca).

OVERVIEW

Canada's Food Guide (CFG), developed by Health Canada, is an online suite of resources in the form of videos, recipes, and tips that provide guidance about eating habits. Many elements of CFG can be explored with your students, including food choices and eating habits. This lesson will guide students through the CFG section "**Cook More Often.**"

The student workbook gives students the opportunity to build connections between their experiences and CFG recommendations. To complete this activity, students require internet access and a device (e.g., computer, tablet, or laptop) to access CFG online. The activity can be done individually, in pairs or small groups, or as a class, depending on the format of your class.

*Note: Throughout this workbook, language used in Canada's Food Guide is identified by **this style**.*



Key Learning Objectives

- Identify and apply CFG recommendations for planning and preparing meals and snacks.
- Identify and describe various cooking techniques and food skills.
- Demonstrate planning to prepare meals using foods from CFG.

Materials

- Student workbook (fillable PDF or printed copy)
- Computer, tablet, or laptop with internet access
- Access to the Canada's Food Guide website: Canada.ca/FoodGuide

USING THIS RESOURCE IN YOUR CLASS

You can use this resource in multiple ways depending on your class's needs and the resources available:

- **Individually:** Each student completes the resource on their own using a computer with internet access.
- **In pairs or small groups:** Divide students into pairs or small groups. Provide each group with a computer with internet access. Students can each fill in their individual workbook or the group can fill in one resource.
- **As a class or large groups:** Provide each student with an individual workbook to complete on their own. As a group, navigate the website using one computer.
- **In an online learning environment:** Provide each student with the fillable PDF to complete on their own at home. During online class meetings, review answers and discussion topics.

Suggested answers are provided in italics in this Teacher Guide.



TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

HOW TO TALK ABOUT FOOD WITH STUDENTS

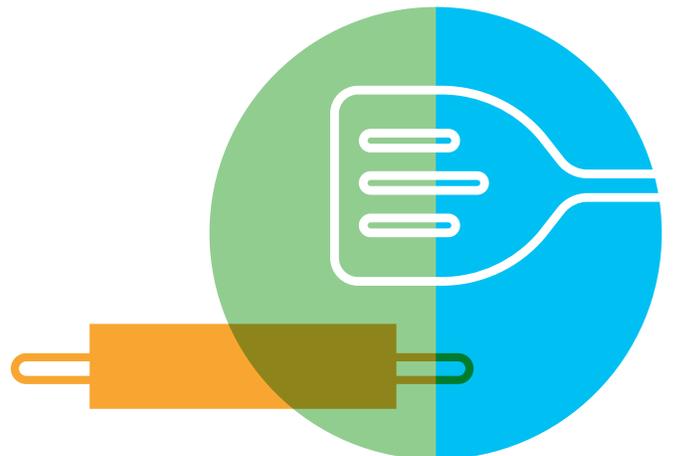
Teachers know the value of creating a safe and respectful classroom environment. Consider how this principle relates to the messages you share about food and eating. You can help students feel relaxed and supported by talking about all foods in an inclusive way rather than as “good” or “bad.” Neutral food conversations mean there is no judgement of the food or the person eating it.

Roles food plays in eating and life

Food is more than nutrients. But often, foods that do not fit neatly into the categories in CFG are considered nonessential or “junk” foods.

*But what would curry be without turmeric or chilis? Salad without salad dressing?
Consider how a chewy cookie or crispy chips can add flavour and texture to a meal.*

None of these ingredients or foods belongs to a Food Guide category, yet they all have value. Health Canada does not support labelling foods “healthy” or “unhealthy.”¹ Calling foods “unhealthy” or “junk” can harm a child’s relationship with food and their relationships with caregivers who provide food. Making space for a variety of foods contributes to a positive relationship with food and recognizes that factors such as taste, culture, and food traditions play a role in students’ food choices. This view is communicated in CFG and in Canada’s Dietary Guidelines through advice on enjoying food.^{2,3}





Factors that affect food choices

The aim of *A Guided Discovery of Canada's Food Guide* is to explore Health Canada's recommendations and apply them to real world experiences and to making food decisions that respect the reality of students' needs and resources.

Food choices can be based on many things, including taste, hunger, food traditions, what's available, and personal health. The ability of students and caregivers to meet these needs is tied to access to resources such as money, time, space, skills, equipment, and support. These and many other factors influence what foods students eat at school.

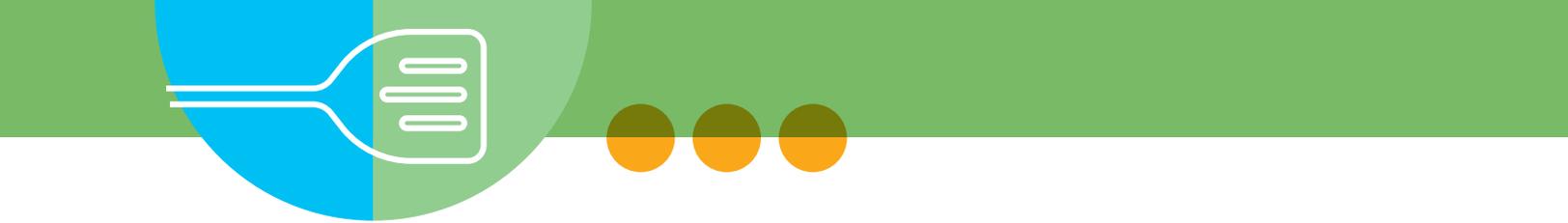
If concerns about a student's food choices come up, pause to consider what the underlying cause for the concern might be rather than commenting on the healthfulness of particular food items. For example, family stressors such as a medical condition may affect a caregiver's capacity to shop for groceries or prepare meals. Like you, caregivers are trying their best to support children. You can help families by fostering a safe food environment at school and encouraging experiential learning with nutrition in the classroom.

If you suspect a family does not have enough food, we recommend speaking to your educational counsellor to help facilitate a conversation with the fam

Reducing the risk of harm

While this resource includes discussion about nutrients and the benefits of eating a variety of foods, we encourage neutral food exposure and conversation about all foods to preserve and foster a positive relationship with food. Being mindful of how health messages are delivered and avoiding techniques such as food tracking and food monitoring are recommended to minimize the risk of disordered eating behaviour that is associated with these practices. ⁴





PART 1:

WEB EXPLORATION

- Introduce *Canada's Food Guide* (CFG) using a copy of the Food Guide Snapshot PDF (available at Canada.ca/FoodGuide or download from <https://food-guide.canada.ca/artifacts/CFG-snapshot-EN.pdf>).
- CFG is more than just pictures of food on a plate. The image of the plate and all the tabs on the left of the Snapshot webpage are part of CFG. The bottom of the Food Guide Snapshot page, “discover your food guide at Canada.ca/FoodGuide,” guides readers to the website where the complete CFG is found.
- From Canada.ca/FoodGuide, have students click the “**Eating Habits**” tab on the left, then click “**Cook More Often**.” This is the topic you will explore today.
- Have students complete the first section in their workbook using either the fillable PDF or printed workbook. We recommend completing the workbook in the order it is presented and pausing for class discussions so students can get the full benefit of learning about this topic.

QUESTIONS:

Canada's Food Guide states “**cooking and preparing food can support healthy eating habits. Cooking allows you to learn new skills.**”

1 Can you think of a benefit of learning to cook?

- *Learning new skills such as stirring, mixing, cutting, chopping, slicing, grating, using a can opener, using a peeler, using an oven and microwave*
- *Having choice of ingredients, including fruits, vegetables, whole grain foods, protein foods, sauces, and seasoning*
- *Making foods you enjoy eating*
- *Saving money*

2 What are two recipes you know how to make?
(e.g., toast with peanut butter, grilled cheese, home-baked cookies)

Examples:

- *toast with peanut butter*
- *home-baked cookies*
- *grilled cheese*
- *chicken curry*

Canada's Food Guide suggests exploring different ways to cook food. Click the Canada's Food Guide logo in the top left corner to go back to the main screen. On the left side toolbar, click *Tips*. Under the heading *Meal planning, cooking and healthy choices*, scroll through to *Healthy cooking methods* to compare these methods.

- 3 In the following list, place a checkmark beside the cooking methods you have learned (if you haven't learned any yet, that's okay too). Check three cooking methods you would like to learn. If you already know all the methods, pick the three you are least familiar with or add your own at the bottom of the list.

This is an opportunity for students to reflect on what they already know and would like to learn.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Baking</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Poaching</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Steaming</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Broiling</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pressure cooking</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Stir-frying or sautéing</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Grilling</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Roasting</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No cook</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Microwaving</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Slow cooking</i> | |

Other cooking methods I know

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Other cooking methods I would like to learn

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

4 For the three skills you would like to learn, complete the following:

Define the food skill.

- **Baking** uses dry heat to cook food slowly and evenly in an oven.
- **Broiling** uses very high heat for a short amount of time to cook food quickly and evenly. You can do this in the oven by putting the food on the top rack or by using a toaster oven.
- **Grilling** is commonly done on a barbeque, but it can also be done on a griddle or grill pan.
- **Poaching** simmers food in a pan of liquid like water or stock to cook food quickly.
- **Roasting** is normally done in an oven and often requires the use of oil. Similar to baking but starts at a high temperature to create a crisp surface on the food. The temperature is then lowered until the food is cooked.
- **Microwaving** heats the food by causing the water content of the food to move around quickly. This causes the food to heat up very quickly.
- **Pressure cooking** uses steam that is sealed in an airtight pressure cooker to cook food. This cooks food very quickly.
- **Slow cooking** uses low heat to cook food over a long period of time.
- **Stir-frying or sautéing** involves cooking small or thin pieces of food quickly. It involves frying foods with small amounts of oil, vegetable stock, or water.
- **Steaming** is typically done in a steaming basket (one with holes) either on a stovetop or in a microwave. Water is heated to create steam and foods are placed over the steam with a lid to capture the steam.
- **No cook** combines different foods.

If students identify other skills they would like to learn, encourage them to research those skills using reputable sites such as [Health Canada](#), [Unlock Food](#), and [ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen](#).



Name a food you would like to make using this skill.

- *Students can use the examples provided by CFG or brainstorm new meals that use these cooking methods.*

How might you begin to learn this skill?

Examples:

- *Practise with family members or friends.*
- *Watch videos online.*
- *Take Foods classes at school.*

Click the *Canada's Food Guide* logo in the top left corner to go back to the main screen. On the left side toolbar, click *Eating habits* and then click *Plan what you eat*. Scroll to the bottom of the page. Under *Further reading* click *Meal planning*.

5 What are the four steps of meal planning that *Canada's Food Guide* suggests?

1 *Decide what to eat.*

3 *Go shopping.*

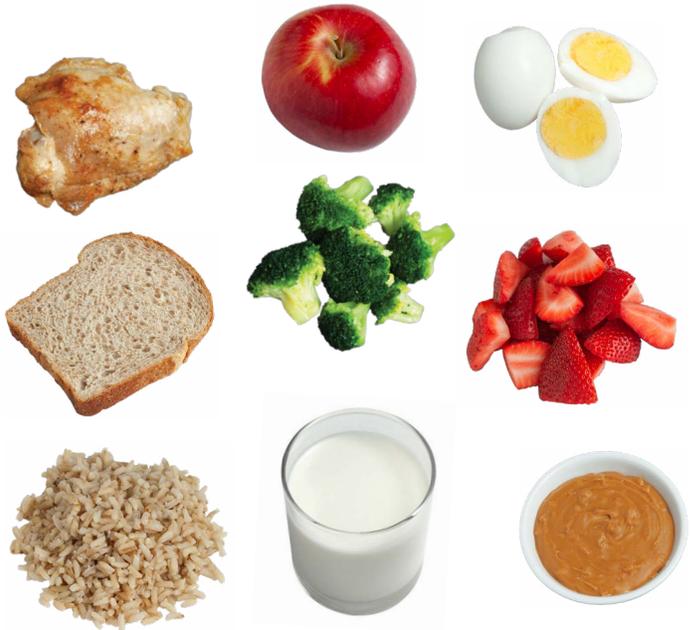
2 *Make your grocery list.*

4 *Start cooking.*

6

You have been asked to pack your lunch and snack for school tomorrow. No one in your family is going to the grocery store until later in the week, so you need to use items that are available. You see that you have the following items available:

- **Fridge:** apples, cheese, cooked chicken, hard boiled eggs, leftover noodles, lettuce, mayonnaise, milk, salad dressing, yogurt
- **Freezer:** broccoli, mixed berries, peas, sliced bread
- **Cupboards:** canned chickpeas, canned pears, canned tuna, cereal, cinnamon, crackers, cumin, nut butter, pepper, rice, tomato sauce



a) **What lunch and snack could you create using these foods?** Aim to include at least one food from each *Canada's Food Guide* category in your lunch and at least two *Canada's Food Guide* categories in your snack.

Lunch examples:

- *Yogurt parfait (yogurt, mixed berries, and cereal)*
- *Sandwich with mashed chickpeas and lettuce*
- *Tuna salad sandwich (tuna, mayonnaise, bread)*
- *Leftover noodles with tomato sauce, broccoli, and cheese*
- *Nut butter sandwich and an apple*

Snack examples:

- *Smoothie with frozen fruit and milk*
- *Slice of bread with nut butter and cinnamon*
- *Canned pears and yogurt*
- *Apple and cheese*

b) **Is there anything you would add to your family's grocery list to make this lunch and snack taste even better?**

Students can add another ingredient from a CFG category or a food from beyond CFG (e.g., sauce, dessert, drink).

Click the *Canada's Food Guide* logo in the top left corner to go back to the main screen. On the left side toolbar, click *Eating habits* and then click *Involve others in planning and preparing meals*.

7 *Canada's Food Guide* highlights the benefits of involving others in cooking and preparing meals. What are three benefits?

Examples:

- *Share food and cooking traditions*
- *Spend quality time with loved ones*
- *Learn and share important food skills*
- *Make preparing meals and snacks more fun and less work*
- *Feel more connected to those around you, including different generations of family*
- *others with a common interest*
- *Divide the tasks associated with cooking and preparing meals (e.g., cooking, doing dishes, chopping)*
- *Explore new recipes*

8 *Canada's Food Guide* highlights food-related activities that are not just about cooking. What is one example of a food-related activity?

Examples:

- *Start a community garden in your neighbourhood where everyone can grow vegetables.*
- *Plan to go grocery shopping with a friend or neighbour.*
- *Participate in a recipe exchange with your friends.*
- *Share your skills with your community. Many communities have food organizations looking for volunteers who love to prepare food and share their knowledge with others.*
- *Help prepare the grocery list for whoever is doing the shopping.*
- *Explore cookbooks and websites for recipes you would like to try.*

CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE IN ACTION

Watch the video [“Canada’s Food Guide in Action.”](#)

This video explores how students can use their food skills to create a meal using the CFG Plate. The video asks, “What foods do you like to eat together?”

If time allows, consider pausing the video and facilitating a class discussion. These questions can help guide the conversation:

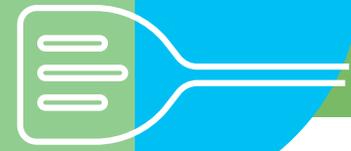
- *Have you ever eaten these foods together?*
- *If so, did you enjoy it?*
- *Are there other foods you would like to eat with this meal?*
- *Are there any foods you would remove from this meal to make it more enjoyable?*
- *Is there a particular time of day you would like to eat this meal?*
- *What other foods do you like to eat together at that time of day?*

You will be using this meal example to explore Canada’s Food Guide’s recommendations.

9 What cooking methods do you think are used to make this meal?

Students can determine which food skills they would need to make Vegetarian Chili with pita bread, yogurt, and berries. Examples are provided below. Some students will identify different skills needed or not include all the examples; that’s okay.

- *Wash vegetables and fruit*
- *Use a knife to cut vegetables and fruit*
- *Use a can opener for canned beans*
- *Soak/cook dried beans*
- *Use a grater to grate cheese*
- *Use a knife to slice pita bread*
- *Use the stove (or slow cooker) to cook chili*
- *Measure or estimate amounts of ingredients*
- *Follow a recipe*



- 10 One step that *Canada's Food Guide* suggests for meal planning is to check your fridge, freezer, and cupboards for foods that you have before grocery shopping to reduce waste. What would you need to check for, and possibly add to your grocery list, before preparing this meal?

Students can determine ingredients they would need to look for in the fridge, freezer, and cupboards. Some students may look for ingredients in a different place than suggested below (e.g., berries may be in the fridge or the freezer, whole grain pita may be in the fridge, freezer, or cupboards); that's okay.

- **Fridge:** bell peppers, carrot, celery, cheese, cilantro, plain yogurt
- **Freezer:** berries, corn
- **Cupboards:** kidney beans, onion, tomato, whole grain pita bread

- 11 How might you incorporate a food-related activity as part of planning or preparing this meal?

Students can explore any food-related activities that can be incorporated as part of this meal

Examples:

- *Grow fruits, vegetables, and herbs in a garden to use in the recipe.*
- *Help family members to create a grocery list with the recipe ingredients.*
- *Look at cookbooks or online to find a recipe to follow to make the meal.*
- *Make a large quantity of the meal to share with friends.*



- 12 *Canada's Food Guide* highlights the importance of adjusting recipes to meet your needs. How might you adjust this meal:

To make it taste better?

Examples:

- Use Cheddar cheese instead of Mozzarella cheese
- Replace berries with bananas
- Eat it with a bun instead of a pita

For a larger group?

Students can explore how to increase the amount made to accommodate a larger group. They may also explore other ways to feed a large group, such as adding more side dishes, appetizers, or desserts.

- 13 How might you incorporate a food-related activity as part of planning or preparing this meal?

Students can share a meal or snack idea that uses ingredients from the original meal to create a new meal.

Examples:

- Use leftover berries and yogurt in a smoothie
- Have leftover bell peppers, carrots, and celery with dip as a snack
- Make pita pizzas with leftover pita bread

- 14 A complete meal may include foods in addition to those included on the *Canada's Food Guide* plate (for example, drinks, an appetizer, dessert). Is there anything you would add to complete your meal?

This is an opportunity for students to get creative to add foods to match their own preferences.

Examples:

- Greek salad to start
- Glass of milk
- Tomato soup on the side
- Fruit salad with ice cream for dessert

REFERENCES

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3. Health Canada. 2020. Canada's Dietary Guidelines. www.food-guide.canada.ca/en/guidelines/. Accessed Jan. 18, 2021.
4. Pinhas et al. Trading health for a healthy weight: the uncharted side of healthy weights initiatives. *Eat Disord* 2013;21:109-116.

