

Eating for Health & Wellbeing for children and adults living with (or without) epilepsy

The human body is a complex biochemical “factory” and it requires a regular supply of a many different nutrients to ensure that the body runs effectively. Our choice of food, how much we eat and how often we eat, can have an enormous impact on the health and wellbeing of us all. An improvement in the quality and the timing of our meals can have a positive impact on energy levels, stabilize body weight and generally help us to feel more able to cope with the challenges of life. It is worth a try for a few months, just to see if you feel better.

Where do I start?

- Become more aware of your choice of foods and the pattern of your meals and snacks through a normal day.
- Try keeping a diary of **what and when** you eat for a typical week (it is really worth making the effort to do this – it can produce some surprises!).
- Try also keeping a diary of **how much** you are eating of each food and beverage

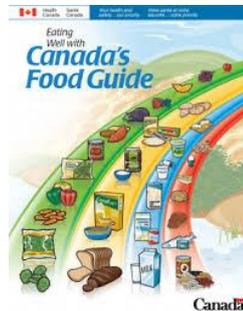
CHECK 1 = REGULARITY - Are you eating regularly?

- Your body works more efficiently and effectively if it is presented with fuel and nutrients in moderate quantities and on a regular basis. Most adults will do well on 3 moderate meals (starting with breakfast) and perhaps the odd small snack. For children strive for 3 meals and 1-3 snacks each day.
- If your answer to this question is NO – just try to put regularly spaced meals / snacks in the day and get used to this first (don't worry too much about the types of foods). Once you are happy with your regularity of eating you can move on to the next step.

CHECK 2 = VARIETY - Are you eating a mix of four basic nutrient rich food types at most meals?

Different foods provide us with different nutrients so this is why we need to eat a variety of foods from the different food groups each day. If you have a whole food group missing from your regular eating – try to find foods in that group that you enjoy and eat them more often.

Canada's Food Guide suggests that we should eat a variety from all the following food groups:



- **FRUITS AND VEGETABLES** - Cooked or raw – fresh, frozen or canned - think rainbow colours and generous veggie portions! Have fruit and vegetables more often than juice.
- **GRAIN PRODUCTS** - Fibre rich and/or whole grain choices of; bread, pasta, rice, cereals. Most of us are a bit too generous with these!
- **MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS** – milk, yogurts, cheese, milk substitutes (example: fortified soy milk, rice milk)
- **MEAT AND MEAT ALTERNATIVES** - beef, chicken, pork, fish, legumes, eggs, nut butters.
- **FATS AND OILS** - include foods such as avocado, oily fish, nuts & seeds, olive oil, coconut oil & butter. We all need to eat **some** good quality fats & oils – they are essential for health
- **FLUIDS** – try to satisfy thirst with water as much as possible

HELPFUL TIP

It can be hard to try new foods. Taste buds change over time and we often label our dislikes based on past experiences. A new food can be explored by touching, smelling, using dips, or varying the way it is prepared to improve acceptance over time.

Try any new foods in very small portions along with foods your prefer. Some people may need to be offered or exposed to a new food up to 20 times before they try it.

CHECK 3 = STABILITY – Are you helping your body to keep blood sugar levels stable?

Many foods we eat contain carbohydrates that digested breakdown into sugar.

- a) The sugar in our foods can raise our blood sugar levels.
- b) Foods choices as well as proper food combinations help slow the rise in blood sugar

Learn the difference between “**Added Sugar**” and ‘**Naturally Occurring Sugar**’. Look at the Nutrition Facts Table on packaged product. The Sugar Amount is the combined amount of added sugar and naturally occurring sugar.

Added Sugar

In Canada ‘**Added Sugar**’ means that sugar has been added to the food during food processing.

Sugar will be also listed on the ingredient list.

If there is 6 grams or less of sugar per serving and sugar is listed in the ingredient list, the product is *lower in added sugar*.

These foods are considered to be a healthier choice.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving size: ¼ cup (175g)	
Amount	% Daily value
Calories 130	
Fat 2g	2%
Saturated 1g	5%
+ Trans 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	
Sodium 195mg	4%
Carbohydrate 26g	9%
Fibre 1g	4%
Sugar 11g	
Protein 2g	

Naturally Occurring Sugar

Sugar naturally occurs in some foods (eg fruit, dairy products).

If sugar is not listed on the ingredient list, then any sugar amount on the Nutrition Facts label is considered to be naturally occurring sugar.

This sugar does not need to be limited.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving size: 1 cup (250)	
Amount	% Daily value
Calories 110	
Fat 2.5	4%
Saturated 1.5g	8%
+ Trans 0g	
Cholesterol 10mg	
Sodium 120mg	5%
Carbohydrate 12g	4%
Fibre 0g	0%
Sugar 12 g	
Protein 9g	



Choose meals / snack food combinations that will release sugar more slowly into your bloodstream. Proper portions of food are also helpful. This **may** provide us with better blood sugar and weight control, improved blood lipid profiles and more sustained energy levels.

Try to choose foods from the 3-4 food groups in Canada's Food Guide at each meal AND 2-3 food groups at each snack. Plan for 3 meals and 1-3 small snacks each day.

Examples of Meal Ideas

- Scrambled Eggs, whole wheat toast, fruit and milk
- Fruit smoothie made with milk, yogurt and frozen fruit
- Chicken, Vegetables, Whole wheat bread and milk
- Stir-fries (fresh or frozen vegetables with meat or tofu with nuts, soy sauce) on brown rice or noodles with milk.
- Flatbread pizza – with tomato sauce, vegetables, mozzarella cheese baked on a pita or tortilla or naan

SUGGESTION WHEN MAKING CHANGE

Deal with one set of changes before going on to the next. Focus on the positive - think about the types of foods you **want** to eat more of rather than what foods to avoid. By approaching change in a series of manageable steps, you are more likely to achieve change that means something to YOU.

For more nutrition information visit www.dietitians.ca
Get a copy of the Canada's Food Guide by calling 1-800 O-Canada (1 800 622 6232) or by visiting www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

If you have any questions please connect with your ketogenic diet team or Matthew's Friends Canada. Other publications are available to support you. Feel free to contact us:

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