

Food Guide Digital Scavenger Hunt

(Grades 6 and up)

Overview

In January 2019, Health Canada released the new food guide, “an online suite of resources...that encourages Canadians to eat healthy whenever and wherever they go.” Since its release, the food guide Snapshot (or “healthy eating plate”) has been given a lot of attention. However, when it comes to healthy eating, Health Canada has said this picture is just the tip of the iceberg.

This activity allows students to benefit from diving below media headlines to think critically about whether those messages accurately reflect Canada’s dietary guidelines. Students will explore healthy eating habits and increase their digital health literacy.



Estimated Time: about 1 hour, plus time for review and discussion

Materials

- [Student Food Guide Scavenger Hunt](#), one copy per student
- Devices with internet access (at least one per two students) or printed pages from Canada’s food guide website.
- Discussion Guide for Teachers

Procedure

1. Group students to allow all students internet access for the scavenger hunt or provide groups of students with the printed pages as needed. See Discussion Guide for Teachers for webpage links.
2. Introduce the food guide using a copy of the [Snapshot pdf](#).
 - Unlike previous Canadian food guidance, this double-sided paper copy is not the actual food guide. The snapshot gives directions near the bottom of the page—“Discover your food guide at [Canada.ca/FoodGuide](#)”
 - This website is the food guide, and today we are going to explore our national healthy eating guidelines online.
3. Have students find the food guide by searching for “Canada’s food guide” or using the address on the Snapshot: [Canada.ca/FoodGuide](#)
4. Have students complete the scavenger hunt. Once the scavenger hunt is complete, discuss the answers together using the teacher guide. Scavenger hunts could also be completed at home, and then discussed in class.

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Discussion Guide for Teachers

Use this document to review the answers to the scavenger hunt, and to facilitate discussion about key healthy eating messages in Canada's food guide.

Access the food guide: Canada.ca/FoodGuide

1. Name the three food categories
2. For each category:
 - a. name two foods present on the plate that you like to eat,
 - b. one new food you would like to try, and
 - c. one food that is not on the plate, but you think could fit in the food category.

Answer key

Category	On the plate, 2a & b	Not on the plate, 2c (potential options)
Vegetables and Fruits Note: fresh, frozen and canned produce are all acceptable options for a healthy eating pattern.	broccoli, carrots, strawberries, blueberries, sweet bell peppers, apples, (purple) cabbage, spinach, tomatoes, squash or sweet potato, potato, peas.	Pears, oranges, bananas, raspberries, blackberries, Saskatoon berries, mangoes, etc... romaine lettuce, cucumber, beets, gai lan, bok choy, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, avocado, plantain, cauliflower, etc...
Whole Grains Note: not all grain foods in a healthy eating pattern need to be whole grain.	whole grain bread, whole grain pasta, wild rice, brown rice, quinoa.	oatmeal, barley, bulgur, buckwheat, red or black rice, millet, teff, etc... whole grain bagel, pita, tortilla, muffin, pancake, injera, roti, chapatti, naan, crackers, etc...
Protein Foods Note: meats, eggs, dairy, and plant proteins are all part of this category	beef/moose/venison, chicken, salmon, tofu, eggs, yogurt almonds, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds, kidney beans, chickpeas, lentils	pork, other fish (halibut, cod, tilapia, etc.), milk, cheese, nut butters, other nuts (hazelnuts, cashews, brazil nuts, etc.), other seeds (e.g. pumpkin seeds), other bean and lentil varieties (e.g. navy bean, black bean, green lentils, etc.)...

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Discussion: Which foods pictured on the plate would taste good eaten in combination with each other? (e.g. egg and toast, pasta and tomato (sauce), yogurt and berries, etc.) Acknowledge that everyone likes and eats different foods, and that our tastes change over time.

3. “Healthy Beverages”

Answer: Examples of healthy beverages besides plain water (students choose two):

- Flavoured water (use fruits, vegetables or herbs)
- Plain white milk
- Fortified unsweetened soy beverage and other fortified unsweetened plant beverages
- Unsweetened tea or coffee (but watch out for excess caffeine!)

Note: for optimal dental health, it is recommended to only have plain water between meals.

4. “Eat whole grain foods”

Answers: Benefits of whole grains: important sources of nutrients such as: fibre, vitamins, minerals; associated with lower risk of some diseases (stroke, colon cancer, heart disease, type 2 diabetes); support digestive (gut) health; increase variety of tastes and textures.

5. **Answers:** Health Canada recommendations for how to include whole grain foods.

- Try a new whole grain each week.
- Mix different whole grain cereals in your bowl and enjoy with lower fat white milk or unsweetened plant-based beverages.
- Start your day with a bowl of oatmeal, whole grain cereal or whole grain toast.
- Keep a variety of whole grain foods in your pantry.
- Increase the amount of whole grain foods in your recipes.

6. “Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit”

Ways you can purchase vegetables and fruit at the store that are considered healthy options:

Answer: fresh, frozen, canned, and dried (Note: for prevention of dental cavities, dried fruits are recommended to be eaten as part of a meal)

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7. Snacks including vegetables or fruit that could be brought to school.

Answer: Ensure snacks include a vegetable or fruit, and are realistic plans.

Discussion: Students can share their ideas with each other in small groups and check to make sure they are giving realistic examples (i.e. Do they like that food? is this food available at their house/at the store? Do they need to set aside time to prepare in advance? What about food safety?)

8. “Eat protein foods”

Answer: Ways to include more proteins foods from plants in your menu this week:

- Add tofu to a blended soup to make it thicker and creamier.
- Try a bean salad, lentil and rice pilaf or a bowl of vegetarian chili for lunch.
- Make your own trail mix by combining your favourite whole grain cereal with a handful of nuts and seeds.
- Spread hummus on the inside of a whole grain pita and fill with vegetables such as romaine lettuce and shredded carrots.
- Each week, plan a couple of meatless meals.

Students will also suggest their own ideas.

9. “Food Sources of Calcium”

Secondary link: healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/sources-calcium-vitamin-d

Answer: Protein-rich calcium foods include: dairy products such as milk, yogurt and cheese, firm tofu, tempeh and fortified soy beverages, salmon or sardines canned with bones, and more...

Note: Dark green vegetables such as broccoli, bok choy and kale do contain some calcium, but are not sources of protein. Many plant-based beverages, such as almond beverage, may contain calcium (from fortification), but are not sources of protein.

10. “Be aware of food marketing.”

What is the last food advertisement you remember seeing or hearing? How did it influence your view of that food?

Answers could include: Seeing a store sign on the street, seeing food commercials on TV or hearing them on the radio, seeing a poster in a store or on the side of a vending machine, seeing a pop-up ad on a webpage, seeing a sponsored post on social media

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Discussion points: See if students can sing the jingles or remember what the logo looks like, who the spokespeople/characters are, or what the food's catch phrase is. These are all a part of food marketing. Companies are trying to make their products memorable, and get them 'stuck' in your head. The more we see food advertisements, the more we want the product.

Encourage students to start paying attention to the types and amounts of food advertisements they see, and how it influences their food choices.

Ask: Do you see many advertisements for vegetables and fruit? If there were, do you think people would eat more of them?

Explore media literacy further in the classroom using [Media Smarts](#)

11. "Be mindful of your eating habits."

Answer: Canada's food guide describes being mindful as taking time to eat, and also being aware of how you eat, why you eat, what you eat, when you eat, where you eat and how much you eat.

[The Center for Mindful Eating](#) definition is more comprehensive.

Mindful eating is:

- Allowing yourself to become aware of the positive and nurturing opportunities that are available through food selection and preparation by respecting your own inner wisdom.
- Using all your senses in choosing to eat food that is both satisfying to you and nourishing to your body.
- Acknowledging responses to food (likes, dislikes or neutral) without judgment.
- Becoming aware of physical hunger and satiety cues to guide your decisions to begin and end eating."

Discussion Questions: How many of you have eaten while watching TV or while looking at a cell phone or tablet? Do you think it is easy to eat mindfully when you do this? Why or why not?

Key Points: Eating while distracted with screens means we may not be paying much attention to our food and eating, and it also means we may not be paying attention to the people we are eating with. Eating mindfully is a healthy habit because it allows us to listen to how our bodies tell us we are still hungry and when we are satisfied, and it helps us to appreciate our tablemates and enjoy the meal.

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Create opportunities to explore Mindful Eating through [this lesson plan](#).

12. “Take Time to Eat.”

Answer: Benefits of taking time to eat: enjoy your food, focus on your food, prevents irregular eating (i.e. skipping meals), enjoy eating with others, make healthier food choices, be mindful of your eating habits and choices.

How to take time to eat:

- Eat thoughtfully—pay attention to how food tastes, smells, sounds and makes you feel.
- Make opportunities to eat without distractions—try to put down cell phones or tablets, turn off the TV
- Set aside time—make a plan to eat meals and snacks at regular times during the day

Discussion: Listening to our hunger and fullness cues is one way, and a benefit of taking time to eat. Have a short discussion about different signals we experience for hunger and fullness.

- a. What does it feel like when your body needs food?
- b. What does it feel like when you’re ready to stop eating?

Key Points: When we are hungry, our stomach may start to make noises, it may hurt a little and feel empty and we may become preoccupied with thoughts about food. We may start to feel tired, grumpy, have no energy, and not be able to focus or concentrate as well.

When we are starting to feel full, our desire to eat may start to go away, our stomachs may now feel full and will start to tell our brains to stop eating food. It is important to get curious about how our bodies signal that we have had enough food. If you eat too much, you may get a stomach ache or feel sick, you may also feel sluggish.

Note: Everyone’s experiences with hunger and fullness signals are different. It is normal to sometimes eat more than you are hungry for, and at other times to not eat enough. The most important thing is to get curious about our bodies and all the amazing things they do for us.

13. “Enjoy your food.”

Answer: Ways to enjoy your food:

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Food can be enjoyed in many different ways. We may enjoy the taste of our food by being mindful while we eat, or taking time to admire the appearance, texture and smell of our meals. We may also enjoy our food by preparing cultural dishes, or having discussions about family food traditions and cultural foods.

Discussion: Use an answer given in the scavenger hunt to expand the discussion about enjoying food, or ask students to share one family food tradition (e.g. fishing and grilling the fish over a campfire in the summer; picking berries at grandma's house when we visit; eating turkey at Christmas) or a cultural food they eat.

14. "Eat meals with others."

Answer: Benefit from enjoying meals with others: enjoy quality time together; share food traditions across generations and cultures; explore new foods that you might not normally try; good conversations; tasty food

Discussion Questions: How often do you eat meals with others (with friends at school, family at home, in the community)? How does it feel when you eat on your own, versus when you are eating with others? What is different about it?

Key Points: Answers will vary. Eating alone may be a lonely experience for some, and they might use distractions (like a cell phone or TV) when they eat alone, compared to when they eat with others. Eating together makes a meal into an important event, and also allows us to connect and converse. When people eat together, they are more mindful of what they are eating (connecting back to question 11).

For more about the benefits of eating together and tips to make it happen, check out [Better Together BC](#).

15. "Cook more often."

Answer: Benefits of cooking more often: can learn new skills; rely less on highly processed foods; the more you practice, the better you get and the tastier food will be; save money by avoiding extra money spent on eating out; bonding time with family, friends &/or community; produces less garbage (less packaging); it's fun.

Discussion Question: Who is involved in meal preparation in your home? Do you ever help out with cooking at home? If yes, how?

Key Points: Emphasize that there are lots of ways to get involved, from setting the table, making salad dressing, helping with grocery shopping, cleaning dishes, all the way up to preparing the main dish of the meal.

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16. “Recipes”

Answer: Choose any recipe

Discussion: Ask students to share their chosen recipe and why they chose it.

17. Answer: Other accurate and reliable web-based sources of information about healthy eating

- healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating
- unlockfood.ca
- dietitians.ca
- bettertogetherbc.ca

Bonus question:

Healthy eating tips for teens? food-guide.canada.ca/en/tips-for-healthy-eating/teens. To get there: click on the red Canada Food Guide logo in the top right corner to be taken back to the main screen. Then, click on the red “Tips” box on the left side panel, and scroll down until the heading “Life Stages.”

Healthy eating tips for school? food-guide.canada.ca/en/tips-for-healthy-eating/school

Discussion: Ask students to share a tip they found useful.

Extension Activity (for Foods Studies or Home Economics classes)

Food guide recipe testing: Have students make their chosen recipe (from question 16) at home, and answer the following questions: Comment on the final product’s taste, texture, appearance and aroma. What was the highlight of making this recipe? Would you make it again? What improvements would you make to the recipe (i.e. was it accurate, easy to follow, tasty)?

This scavenger hunt is based on: S. Bearman, 4th year nutrition student and C. Brown, RD. “Unlock the Potential of Food with the New Canada Food Guide - Toolkit for Educators” (2019). Saskatchewan Health Authority, Health Promotion, Regina. Retrieved from www.rqhealth.ca/department/health-promotion/nutrition-and-healthy-eating. Used with permission.

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More information for Teachers

Refer to [Kitchen Equipment for your Classroom](#) for more preparation and food safety tips.

Curriculum Links

This lesson supports the Big Ideas and Learning Standards in the Physical and Health Education BC Curriculum and can also link to other subject areas.

Want to do more nutrition education with your class?

Explore our other [lesson plans](#) or book a [free 1-hour workshop](#).

