

# ARE YOU FOOD WISE?



Your body requires, on average, about 50 nutrients everyday. The best way to get what you need is to choose a variety of foods and beverages - a healthy balance of Vegetables & Fruit, Grain Products, Milk & Alternatives and Meat & Alternatives. This score sheet will help you to assess variety and balance in your active lifestyle by looking at your food habits in three areas: shopping, dining out, and food choices in your home.

## Follow these easy steps:



- Read the statements in each category
  - Score 2 points if you agree with the statement most of the time.
  - Score 1 point if you agree with the statement only sometimes.
  - Score 0 points if you do not agree at all with the statement.
- Total points *across* each category and check your score:
  - 12-16 points in *each* category: You're well on your way to fit food habits!
  - 0-11 points in *any* category: Now is a great time to take action and improve.
- Check **Side 2**.
  - If you scored 12-16 points in every category: use "Handy Action Tips" for new ideas.
  - If you scored less than 12 points in any category: choose a "Handy Action Tip" or two, and make plans for healthier shopping and eating.

	Vegetables & Fruit	Points ↓	Grain Products	Points ↓	Milk & Alternatives	Points ↓	Meat & Alternatives	Points ↓	Total Your Points Here
<b>Smart Shopping</b>	I stock up on frozen and/or canned vegetables and fruit.		I usually purchase whole grain bread such as wheat, oat, bran or rye.		I buy enough milk to include in my diet daily.		I purchase beans, lentils and tofu often.		Possible 16
	I try to purchase both orange and dark green vegetables.		I buy whole grain, high fiber cereal with as little added sugar and fat as possible.		I buy a variety of lower fat milk products: milk, cheese and yogurt.		I purchase enough fish to serve it twice each week.		
<b>Eating Out Wisely</b>	I take advantage of salad bars at restaurants or order a side fruit or vegetable salad.		I frequently choose pasta or rice dishes when I eat out.		I order milk or chocolate milk at fast food places, instead of pop.		I choose baked or broiled food in restaurants more often than fried.		Possible 16
	I usually choose a baked potato instead of french fries.		When eating out, I try to order whole grain bread and rolls.		I tend to choose yogurt, frozen yogurt or ice milk/cream for dessert, instead of pastries, donuts, etc.		I usually select smaller portion sizes of meat, fish or poultry on a menu.		
<b>Good Food at Home</b>	For convenience, I keep a variety of fresh fruit on hand.		I keep pasta and frozen whole grain bread, bagels and muffins on hand.		I add milk instead of water to cream soups, puddings and hot chocolate.		I purchase lunch meats, sausages or prepackaged meats that are lower in salt and fat.		Possible 16
	I frequently enjoy eating raw vegetables and fruit.		I sometimes sprinkle bran or wheat germ on my casseroles and cereal.		I keep yogurt and a variety of cheese (e.g. cheese stix, slices and hard cheese) on hand for quick snacks or light meals.		I purchase lean meat and poultry with as little visible fat as possible and trim off extra fat and take the skin off poultry.		

\* For information on Food Guide Serving sizes or to obtain a copy of Canada's Food Guide visit [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)

# HANDY ACTION TIPS

- ☑ Check *one* food action tip in the food habit category of your choice.
- ☑ Choose a tip that you think will easily fit into your lifestyle.
- ☑ Give yourself two weeks to try the suggestion.



- ☐ **1.** Redesign your shopping list into a “4 Food Group List.” This will be a quick check for variety and will decrease decision-making time spent once you’re in the store.
- ☐ **2.** Shop the outside aisles of your grocery store first (Dairy case, Deli/Meat Counter, Produce, Bakery) for an easy reminder of the 4 food groups.
- ☐ **3.** Purchase a “never-tried-before” food.



Examples might be:

**Vegetables & Fruit**  
An unfamiliar fruit or vegetable.

**Grain Products**  
A hearty, multi-grain bread.

**Milk & Alternatives**  
A new type of cheese, such as Caraway, Gruyere or Tilsit.

**Meat & Alternatives**  
A different seafood product.

- ☐ **4.** Check the following list beforehand for the quick “convenience” items you’ll need to stock up on for superfast snacks and meals. Then stock up!

**Vegetables & Fruit**  
Fresh in season, frozen, canned, 100% juices.

**Grain Products**  
Crackers, cereals, rice, pasta, breads, pitas, soft taco shells, pizza crusts.

**Milk & Alternatives**  
Fluid milk, UHT milk, skim milk powder, canned evaporated milk, yogurt, ice cream, cheese.

**Meat & Alternatives**  
Canned and dried beans, peas, and lentils, canned fish, peanut butter, eggs, nuts,

- ☐ **5.** Rediscover food labels. They can tell you a lot about what’s in a food. Initially, shopping may take a little more time, but in the long run, you’ll be purchasing more nutritious foods automatically. In each Food Group Check the following:

**Vegetables & Fruit**  
Purchase fruit *juices*, instead of *drinks*.  
**Note:** Canada Standard brands are just as wholesome as Canada Choice or Canada “Fancy Brands”, which are more expensive.

**Grain Products**  
Choose bread, cereals and rolls which list a whole grain flour *first* on the label, such as whole wheat, oat or rye flour. Purchase cereals more often that contain little sugar, or where sugar is listed near the bottom of the ingredient list. (Words ending in “ose” are usually sugars e.g. glucose, sucrose).

**Milk & Alternatives**  
The letters BF (Butter Fat) or MF (Milk Fat) on labels of milk, yogurt and cheese indicate fat content.

For example:  
Whole milk is 3.25% Butter Fat.  
2% milk is 2.0% Butter Fat.  
1% milk and buttermilk are 1% Butter Fat.  
Skim milk is 0.1% Butter Fat.  
For lower fat diets choose either 2%, 1% or skim milk and milk products made from partly skimmed or skim milk.

**Meat & Alternatives**  
Buy fish canned in water or broth, instead of oil. Check dates of packaging on meat and poultry and choose the freshest.

- ☐ **6.** Buy these “less nutritious” items less often:

Candies	Salty snack foods
Soft drinks	Chocolate bars
Sugar	Pastry and cake
Jams or jellies	Potato chips



- ☐ **1.** Order milk, chocolate milk, juice or water instead of pop, tea or coffee.
- ☐ **2.** Ask for the whole grain rolls and buns instead of the white variety.
- ☐ **3.** If a restaurant has an extensive salad bar, consider it for the main course. Be sure to include a protein source (i.e. cottage cheese, cheese, legume/bean salad). Choose fruit as a dessert. Put your salad dressing on the side and use it sparingly.
- ☐ **4.** If you order a burger, whenever possible, choose a smaller one, and go for a salad instead of French fries.
- ☐ **5.** Ask for substitutions on “specials,” such as milk instead of a soft drink for the beverage, or fruit or yogurt instead of a gelatin dessert.
- ☐ **6.** Try a vegetarian pasta plate or a veggie pizza.
- ☐ **7.** Ask for a cheese plate, yogurt, milk pudding or fresh fruit for dessert instead of “the usual” cake or pastry.
- ☐ **8.** If you have an alcoholic dinner drink, order ½ soda and ½ wine, or ½ liquor and double the ice.



- ☐ **1.** With leftovers from dinner - take a few minutes to place them into re-heatable containers and freeze. You’ll have the convenience of TV dinners, with ½ the cost, salt and fat!
- ☐ **2.** If you don’t feel like cooking dinner - put together a quick “salad bar” with carrot and celery sticks, cheese cubes, cooked eggs, cottage cheese, whole wheat crackers, chick peas, and so on.
- ☐ **3.** When you have macaroni or rice for dinner, cook twice the usual amount. Refrigerate and use the leftovers as the base for a cold salad, fried rice or rice pudding.
- ☐ **4.** Want a quick breakfast: Combine 3 Food Groups in a shake (i.e. milk, fruit and bran), or grab 3 Food Groups on the run (i.e. fruit, cheese and crackers).
- ☐ **5.** When you plan dessert, choose Food Group foods more often, (i.e. fruit salad, fruit with cheese, yogurt, oatmeal raisin cookies).
- ☐ **6.** Next time you reach for your usual coffee, tea or soft drink - try substituting milk, juice, or water.
- ☐ **7.** When you prepare a mixed dish (i.e. meat loaf, shepherd’s pie, cheese or bean dishes) - add a few tablespoons of milk powder and/or wheat germ to boost its nutritional value.
- ☐ **8.** When you use the frying pan to cook, reduce the oil or fat you use by ½, or purchase a good non-stick frying pan, which allows you to reduce added fat even further.