

Media Release, Toronto (January 22, 2019)

Eating more plant-based foods, drinking more water, and cooking more often is IN! Ontario Public Health Association applauds the new Canada's Food Guide...

The Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) and its Nutrition Resource Centre (NRC) welcome the release of Canada's Food Guide and healthy eating recommendations. With diet being the number one risk factor in Canada contributing to chronic conditions such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, these guidelines will play a critical role in helping Canadians make healthy food choices.

We congratulate Canada's Minister of Health, Ginette Petitpas Taylor, for the release of this new, relevant and evidence-based [Canada's Food Guide](#). "Canadians are being bombarded with confusing information about food and nutrition and consume too many highly processed foods with limited nutritional value. Having a guide that is easy to use is critical to help Canadians navigate their food selection in today's complex food environment", said NRC's senior registered dietitian, Lynn Roblin.

OPHA is pleased to see that the food guide makes it easy to see what a "healthy plate" can look like and tells consumers how to limit those foods high in sodium, sugars or saturated fat that can be a detriment to their health. The guide acknowledges that how we eat, for example, enjoying our food and eating meals with other, is just as important as what we eat. The food guide also tackles the tough task of helping us eat foods that are better for us and for our planet by encouraging more vegetables and fruit, whole grain foods and plant-based foods.

We are especially encouraged to see the inclusion of recommendations related to food literacy in the food guide such as "cook more often", "plan what you eat", "use food labels" and "be aware that food marketing can influence your food choices". With fewer young people having received nutrition education and home economics, having guidelines that help increase food knowledge and skills is more important than ever before. As such, NRC's work going forward is focused on food literacy with our partner [The Helderleigh Foundation](#).

OPHA recognizes that this guide is an important foundational tool for dietitians, health promoters, educators and others to educate the population about healthy eating. Its evidence-based approach gives health professionals the tools needed to discuss important messages around healthy eating with consumers, as well as to inform the development of policies and interventions to support healthy eating at home, in child care, schools, worksites, and in the community at large.

As the food guide alone cannot be expected to deliver all, OPHA calls on Health Canada to continue its work on a comprehensive approach as outlined in [Canada's Healthy Eating Strategy](#). Front of pack labelling, restricting marketing to kids, reducing sodium levels in the food supply and increasing access to nutritious foods are all needed to ensure the availability of healthier food choices in the broader food environment to support healthy eating and the health of Canadians.

OPHA and NRC welcome the opportunity to work with Health Canada and our partners to help promote food literacy and healthy eating to ensure that the needed policies, tools and programs are in place to help people achieve optimal eating for their health.



For more information contact:

Sylvia Black, Nutrition Resource Centre - 416 367 3313x256 sblack@opha.on.ca

Pegeen Walsh, Executive Director, Ontario Public Health Association pwalsh@opha.on.ca

OPHA's mission is to provide leadership on issues affecting the public's health and to strengthen the impact of people who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario. For more information visit our website: <http://opha.on.ca>