



The Power of Plant-Based Meals



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Canada's Food Guide

Canada's Food Guide (2019) provides a framework to help Canadians develop and maintain healthy eating patterns. As part of the food guide, Canadians are encouraged to consume plant-based foods more regularly to help increase intake of fibre and antioxidants, and to reduce intake of saturated fats to aid in the prevention of chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and Type 2 diabetes¹.

What is a Plant Based Diet?

A plant-based diet is an eating pattern that primarily consists of foods from plant sources such as fruit and vegetables, nuts and seeds, whole grains, legumes and beans². Contrary to popular beliefs, a plant-based diet does not necessarily mean excluding all animal-based foods, but rather incorporating plant-based foods more often². Plant-based ingredients provide a variety of vitamins and minerals to contribute to a healthy diet.

- **Fruits and Vegetables** are a great source of Vitamin C, Vitamin A, Folate, Potassium, and Magnesium³
- **Nuts and Seeds** contain B Vitamins, Calcium, Iron, Zinc, Potassium, and Magnesium³
- **Whole Grains** contain B Vitamins, Iron, Zinc, Magnesium³
- **Legumes and Beans** provide B Vitamins, Calcium, Iron, Zinc, and Magnesium³

What About Protein Intake?

Canada’s Food Guide suggests that healthy Canadians can generally meet their protein requirements by consuming a balanced diet⁶. However, people are often hesitant to prepare plant-based meals because they assume that it is difficult to meet their protein needs. When creating plant-based meals, it is important to keep in mind that beans, legumes, grains, nuts, and seeds contain a higher protein content compared to fruits and vegetables. There are plenty of plant-based protein options that are high in protein, economical, and/or have a long shelf-life ⁶:

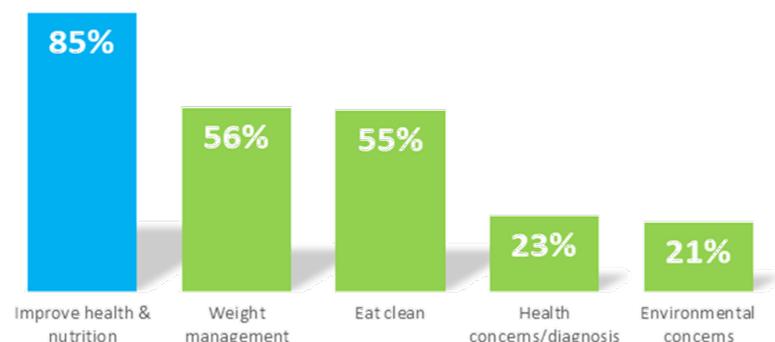
Food	Serving Size	Protein Content
Beans, Canned or Cooked	¾ cup (175 mL)	9-11g
Chickpeas, canned, cooked, hummus	¾ cup (175 mL)	9-11 g
Lentils, canned or cooked	¾ cup (175 mL)	13 g
Tofu, Firm	¾ cup (175 mL)	10-17 g
Peanut Butter	2 tbsp (30 mL)	7g
Nuts and Seeds	¼ cup (60 mL)	5-8g
Pasta (protein fortified), Cooked	½ cup (125 mL)	5-6 g
Cooked Cereal (oat bran, mixed grain, rolled oats)	¾ cup (175 mL or 150 g)	4-6 g
Bread	1 slice (35 g)	3-6 g

Alberta Health Services. *Adding protein to Your Diet*. (2018).

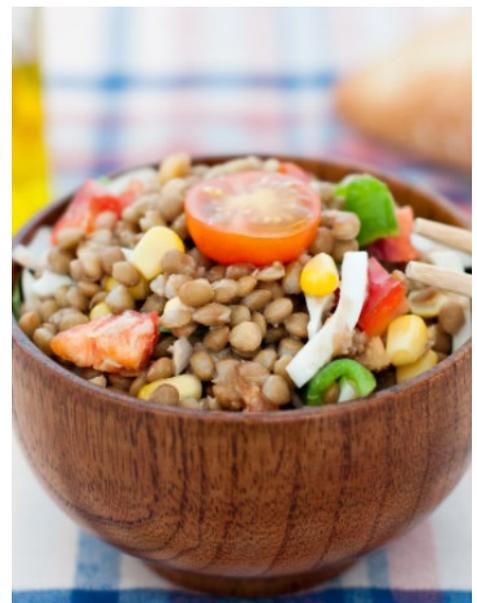
Why Choose a Plant-Based Diet?

In Canada, 10% of Gen-Z, 29% of Millennials, 23% of Gen-X, and 33% of Baby Boomers are reducing or eliminating meat from their diet⁷. The top five factors that influence Canadians to practice plant-based eating are as follows:

- To improve health and nutrition⁸
- To manage weight⁸
- Perception of “clean” eating⁸
- To manage other health concerns/diagnoses⁸
- Concern for the environment⁸



Restaurants Canada. *Understanding Plant Based Eating*. 2017



Plant-Based Diet and Sustainability

While most Canadians choose to follow a plant-based diet to support their individual health and well-being, it is also important to discuss its environmental impact and role in sustainable eating. Sustainable eating involves making food choices that are beneficial to one's health and the environment⁹. By increasing our intake of plant-based foods, we are able to conserve water, preserve natural habitats that are often destroyed to produce livestock feed, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce pollutants that contaminate our waterways, streams, and oceans¹⁰. Choosing plant-based foods more often can help future generations have access to nutritious and sustainable diets– as farming plant foods conserves natural resources and are less taxing on the environment^{9,11}.



What is sustainable diet?

A sustainable diet is a type of eating pattern that does not significantly impact the environment¹².

This diet helps support food and nutrition security and contributes to a health life for present and future generations¹².

How to Incorporate Plant-Based Foods

Incorporating plant-based ingredients into your meal does not have to be complicated or expensive. In fact, you may already be incorporating some plant-based choices into your meals already! Plant-based ingredients are versatile and can be used in a variety of dishes. For example:

- Create a fusion of plant-based and animal proteins in your favourite dishes (for example: quinoa and turkey meatballs, or a beef and lentil chili)³
- Dress up your meal with a plant-based topping or garnish (for example, top a salad with roasted chickpeas, or sprinkle a smoothie bowl with chopped almonds or walnuts)³
- Get creative and add plant-based sources where you least expect it, like in a black bean brownie!³
- Keep your favourite flavours with a new plant-based flair (for example, BBQ flavoured pulled jackfruit or cheesy eggplant parmesan give a plant-based twist on some favourite flavours!)³

If you are looking for more plant-based ingredients or products, please reach out to your Sysco Rep for more information.

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