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Facilitators Guide to Exploring Canada's Food Guide

Independent Living Canada: Food for Thought Project

In Partnership with:



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Beginning the Process- Understanding the Food Groups



To be successful in assisting people to understand how to use the food guide in their everyday lives, it is important that we begin by discussing what each food group is and what foods comprise that group.

TIP:

This process can assist as an ‘ice breaker’ for your participants to be more at ease with the group dynamic.

IMPORTANT:

You may need to make sure participants realize this is not intended to judge anyone’s favorite foods, but to begin the awareness process of where the foods we eat fit into the food groups of the Food Guide. Everyone has different likes and dislikes, and as a facilitator, you may need to make sure that fellow participants don’t make others uncomfortable by joking or ‘poking fun’ at each other’s favorite foods.

Activity

Total Time: approximately 30 minutes

Materials Needed:

- A flipchart (or equivalent)
- Flipchart markers

1. Using a flipchart draw a chart of the 4 food groups by dividing your page into four sections. At the top of each section list each of the four food groups. This can be done ahead of time or by asking participants to share in the process.
2. Begin by initiating a conversation with your participant group, asking what their favourite foods are. As this discussion unfolds, compile a list of the favourite foods on the Flip Chart.
3. From the list of favourite foods you compile, ask participants to assist you with putting them into the correct food groups.

TIP:

Hopefully, some of your participants have given you favourite foods such as “spaghetti and meatballs” or “tuna casserole”. Make sure to help break these types of foods down into their multiple food groups. “Spaghetti and meatballs” for example, will break down into Grains for the spaghetti pasta; Meat and Alternatives for the meatballs; and Vegetables and Fruits for the sauce!

TIP:



Aside from the main food groups, there will most likely be responses from participants that do not readily fit conveniently into one of these groups. 'Junk Food' snacks are certainly of this type. A good conversation could ensue that helps participants understand that while Cheese Puffs and Oreos may not readily fit into any main food group, in moderation virtually any food can be enjoyed. Discussing 'portion' and 'frequency' is a good place to start when discussing how to fit in otherwise healthier snacks into our diets.

Completing this initial exercise will set the stage to discuss the possibly more challenging topic of "Recommended Daily Serving Portions". Now that participants understand what Canada's Food Guide is and how some of their favourite foods fit into the Food Guide categories, it should be easier to explain that each person requires a certain number of servings from each of the 4 food groups each day.

Understanding Recommended Daily Servings:

Once we have a good understanding of which foods go in food groups, we can then begin to apply the recommended daily servings of each food group. This will ensure that we are getting a good amount of all the important vitamins, minerals and nutrients we need to maintain the best possible nutrition we can.

There is a Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings Per Day included in Canada's Food Guide. In fact, it's the most important information that you can get from the Guide.

PARTICIPANTS NEED TO KNOW!

There are 2 main questions that a person needs to answer in regards to this topic;

- What 'serving size' (portion) makes up one serving according to Canada's Food Guide?
- How do I count these throughout the day in my meals?

Measuring by weight or volume is the most accurate way to know whether you are meeting the Recommended Daily Serving: However there are some common suggestions that are useful, for example a serving of meat is approximately the size of a deck of cards or a serving of fruits and vegetables will fit in the palm of your hand.

It is imperative to help participants understand that if they have never done this before, it can take some getting used to. However, with practice, a person may slowly not need to be so mathematical about this practice. With time, it will become easier to visualize what portions of which foods make up a Recommended Daily Serving.

Health Canada is the Best Place to Start...

Facilitator's should refer to Health Canada's "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide", which is readily available in print from nearly every nutritionist and community health unit, or as a printable download from the Health Canada website (www.hc-sc.gc.ca). The newest layout, colour coding and simplified English has made it easier than ever for Canadian's to follow the guide, and gain further understanding of the Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per Day.

Once a person is able to recognize and count the servings that are recommended, they can then apply this to their daily meal planning.

HANDOUT:

An easy way to assist participants to understand the Recommended Daily Servings is to have them use a copy of Canada's Food Guide and identify their age and gender, and then fill in the following handout (Appendix 1). They might then post this in their kitchen and check off every serving they have eaten throughout the day. This will help them to become aware of what they are eating and may even identify possible areas they need to modify.

TIP: A Great Tool:

Participant should be directed to Health Canada's website to try the many interactive features that enable an individual to personalize nutrition information.

Specifically, '**My Food Guide**' is an interactive tool that will help them to personalize the information found in Canada's Food Guide. This tool enables a person to enter personal information, select various food items from the four food groups and choose different types of physical activities. After making these selections, a personalized chart is created that is customized just for you. The participant can save this digital file or print it directly from the Health Canada website.

Workshop 1: Applying The Recommended Number of Daily Servings:

Total Time: approximately 45 minutes

Objective:

This workshop will introduce participants to the concept of food portions and understanding a method to recognize the 'recommended daily servings' of foods in accordance with the Canada Food Guide. By measuring servings of common foods, a deeper understanding of how to recognize the proper portion of daily servings will be explored.

While some mathematical skills will be used in this workshop, it is not intended to be the focus. The focus will be on demonstrating some common misconceptions people have about serving sizes and on what an actual serving size 'looks' like by measuring it.

Materials Needed:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ cup measuring cup• 1 cup measuring cup• 1-2 cups of frozen vegetables• Small jug of 100% juice• Single 'serving' yogurt (100g container) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4-5 whole eggs (or shape to resemble)• 1-2 cups of cooked pasta (or cold cereal)• 2-3 sizes of drinking glasses• Dinner size serving plate |
|--|---|

Prep Required:

Have all required materials prepared and ready ahead of time. Separate each of the food items into separate containers. The facilitator must have a clear understanding of what the measurement of each food is and be able to compare this to its recommended daily serving size. You can find this information in your copy of Canada's Food Guide.

Delivery:

This workshop is best delivered in a group setting, using the examples of real food items for examination, comparison and measurement. Participants should be inspired to share in the process at each step.

Method:

- Using the food items you have chosen for this demonstration; begin with a discussion about what participants 'believe' make up a serving size. This is best done with hands-on group interaction. Special care should be taken to ensure participants feel at ease with this interaction and sharing, taking precaution that no one is left out.

➤ **For each of the foods and beverages you are using to demonstrate:**

- Often, the best way to encourage participation is for the facilitator to go first...possibly being intentionally inaccurate.
- Ask participants to come up and prepare a serving of what they believe is an accurate serving size for each of the items.
- Measure and discuss how this serving size equates into the recommended daily servings for each of the food and beverages you have chosen to use.

Example:

100% Fruit Juice: Very few of us may realize that most standard drinking glasses are in fact quite a lot larger than the serving size recommended by the Canada Food Guide that makes up a single serving of 100% fruit juice. A Recommended Serving Size of 100% Fruit Juice is 125mL (½ cup). The average drinking glass is usually at least 500mL (2 cups)!

1. Have the different sizes of drinking glasses laid out along with the pitcher of juice.
2. Ask participant(s) to volunteer and have them select a drinking glass and pour a 'typical' serving of the juice
3. Reveal that the recommended serving size that accounts for 1 serving of fruits is in fact 125mL (½ cup)
4. Proceed to measure the quantity and discuss how many servings are in fact in the poured 'serving' of juice.
5. Repeat these first 4 steps for each of the food and beverages you have chosen.

Refer to the Recommended Daily Serving Sizes for each of the foods or beverages you have chosen in your copy of "Health Canada's Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide".

Learning Outcomes:

Upon the successful completion of this course, participants should:

- Better recognize a 'real portion size', according to the Recommended Daily Serving sizes as they are found in the Canada Food Guide
- Better understand how much food is recommended they consume each day
- Better recognize that the portions they see in media, advertisement and restaurants are not always in accordance with those that Canada's Food Guide recommends.
- Be able to begin the process of counting and tracking the recommended daily servings of each food group for themselves.

Workshop 2: Homemade Soup Incorporating Canada's Food Guide

Total Time: approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes

Objective:

The objective of this workshop is to demonstrate cooking a recipe using a wide variety of fresh and healthy foods in accordance with Canada's Food Guide. In addition, demonstrating how all the small parts (each participant's contribution) come together to make one great soup is a wonderfully rewarding experience for participants, which incorporates concepts of sharing, community and working together. This concept is derived from the popular "Stone Soup" story (Appendix 3). This story demonstrates a coming together and sharing of resources to mutually benefit everyone. You may wish to read the story out loud to the group in the course of preparing the meal.

Other topics for discussion may include some of the issues participants may have with meal planning or preparation (i.e. using the ingredients that are available to you on a budget or fatigue when chopping vegetables) The idea is to get the group to brainstorm ideas together and learn from each other. This may also be an opportunity to explore topics for future workshops.

This recipe was written to simply include all of the major food groups and has many ingredients, so that each person in the group can have an ingredient to add to the soup pot. While there are a large variety of ingredients, the list could be made shorter; however the soup won't be as dynamic!

Materials Needed:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stove or burner to cook soup on• 16 - 20 Litre Pot• Large serving spoon for stirring• Large Ladle for serving• Crackers or plain popped popcorn | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• See-thru cups• Enough bowls for all participants• Enough spoons for all participants• Napkins• Refer to recipe for food ingredient list |
|---|--|

Prep Required:

- Purchase all food items ahead of time
- Peel vegetables and dice as needed, to save time
- Drain and rinse canned beans and vegetables (if using) to save time
- Have all the ingredients measured and separated into individual cups (see-thru cups)

Delivery:



This workshop is best delivered in a group setting. Participants should be inspired to share in the process at each step and share the meal together at the end.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon the successful completion of this course, participants should:

- Demonstrate how many small ingredients can comprise a recipe.
- Demonstrate coming together and sharing resources to nourish our body and mind.
- Participants may be surprised that the soup may have individual items they may not like to eat, but when all the items come together it is REALLY GOOD!

Food Group Soup: Recipe

Ingredient List:

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

½ Cup each

- Diced carrots
- Green peas
- Cut green beans
- Cut yellow beans
- Diced yams or Sweet potato
- Diced onion
- 3 cups chopped greens
- Diced tomato (fruit!)
- Red pepper (fruit!)
- Zucchini (fruit!)

FLAVOURING / SEASONING

- 2 tablespoons of mixed dry herbs (sage, parsley, rosemary, thyme, or other favorites, etc.)
- Salt and Pepper to taste

GRAINS

½ Cup each

- Frozen corn
- Brown basmati rice
- Pearl barley
- Small whole wheat soup pasta

MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES

- 4 Litres of Chicken Stock
- 2 Cups cubed, pre-cooked chicken
- 1 8 oz. can drained white beans
- 1 8 oz. can drained red beans

MILK AND ALTERNATIVES

- ½ Cup grated parmesan cheese
- 2 Cups skim milk

METHOD:

- Have each participant choose an ingredient at random.
- As you prepare the soup, have each participant add his or her ingredient to the soup pot and say what food group it is from.

Appendix 2

Resources in the Community

Want To Find a Dietitian In Your Area?

The following is used with permission from the Dietitians of Canada Website. This hugely valuable resource can be viewed online at www.dietitians.ca

How Do I Find a Dietitian?

Whether you're looking for a consultant to advise on a wellness program at your work place or you need individual counseling, a dietitian is the professional of choice.

SEARCH online for a consulting registered dietitian in your area:

http://www.dietitians.ca/ASP/find_dietitian/findadietitian.asp

If you have general questions on nutrition, contact a dietitian in a hospital, government department (such as department of health), in industry or in private practice. Or you can ask your local health unit or doctor for a referral to a community health centre, hospital based or private practice ("consulting") dietitian.

In Ontario and British Columbia there is a publicly funded service for residents of that province that offers free telephone access to Registered Dietitians (RD) Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

- In Ontario call toll free 1-877-510-5102
- In Greater Vancouver call 604-732-9191
- In British Columbia call toll free 1-800-667-3438

RDs at these call centre services will provide an answer to your nutrition and healthy eating questions. This service is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a Registered Dietitian.

Consult a local Registered Dietitian on a variety of topics, ranging from general lifestyle and nutrition counseling to nutrition advice for special medical needs. Whether you follow a special diet or have a desire to improve your eating habits, your local Registered Dietitian will help you translate scientifically-sound nutrition advice into practical strategies that suit your lifestyle.

Appendix 3

Stone Soup Story

A kindly, old stranger was walking through the land when he came upon a village. As he entered, the villagers moved towards their homes locking doors and windows. The stranger smiled and asked "Why are you all so frightened?" I am a simple traveler, looking for a soft place to stay for the night and a warm place for a meal.

"There's not a bite to eat in the whole province," he was told. "We are weak and our children are starving. Better keep moving on."

"Oh, I have everything I need," he said. "In fact, I was thinking of making some stone soup to share with all of you." He pulled an iron cauldron from his cloak, filled it with water, and began to build a fire under it.

Then, with great ceremony, he drew an ordinary-looking stone from a silken bag and dropped it into the water.

By now, hearing the rumor of food, most of the villagers had come out of their homes or watched from their windows. As the stranger sniffed the "broth" and licked his lips in anticipation, hunger began to overcome their fear.

"Ahh," the stranger said to himself rather loudly, "I do like a tasty stone soup. Of course, stone soup with cabbage -- that's hard to beat."

Soon a villager approached hesitantly, holding a small cabbage he'd retrieved from its hiding place, and added it to the pot.

"Wonderful!!" cried the stranger. "You know, I once had stone soup with cabbage and a bit of salt beef as well, and it was fit for a king."

The village butcher managed to find some salt beef . . . and so it went, through potatoes, onions, carrots, mushrooms, and so on, until there was indeed a delicious meal for everyone in the village to share.

The village elder offered the stranger a great deal of money for the "magic" stone, but he refused to sell it and traveled on the next day.

As he left, the stranger came upon a group of village children standing near the road. He gave the silken bag containing the stone to the youngest child, whispering to the group, "It was not the stone, but the villagers that had performed the magic."

Moral: By working together, with everyone contributing what they can, a greater good is achieved.

