

Canada's Food Guide

The following activities use **Canada's Food Guide**. If you are the organized type, you will have already ordered multiple copies from the Health Canada web site. If you are like most of us, you won't have done that in time. Not to worry—you can print copies from the printer-friendly file in the Materials folder. There is also a Food Guide for First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Hand out copies of Canada's Food Guide to all participants. Start on the front cover. Point out that there are four paths, representing the four food groups. Each group is colour-coded. Open the guide and point out that the same colour coding is used here to help the reader find information. Read the names of the four food groups on the left flap. Give everyone time to browse the middle page—*What is One Food Guide Serving?* Draw their attention to the chart on the left flap and if necessary explain how to use the columns and rows. (e.g. Find the *Children* column, find the 4-8 column, read straight down to see how much a child age 4-8 should eat each day in all food groups. Look for the *Grain Products* row. Read straight across to compare how many servings are needed by people of different ages.)

Canada's Food Guide Questions

When the group has had time to browse the cover and inside pages of the Food Guide, use the first eight items from the **Canada's Food Guide Questions** to check their understanding and to encourage them to look for specific details. Then ask them to browse the other pages for information about:

- children
- women of childbearing age
- men and women over 50

If necessary, remind the group that 'browsing' means scanning the text for specific words rather than reading every word. When they have located the correct page (page 4), give them time to read the sections in more depth—either independently or with the help of a partner—then present the other discussion questions.

As an alternative, you can use the discussion questions to create a written quiz or a take-home assignment.

Create Your Own Food Guide

Ask if there are any foods on the guide they won't eat, either because they don't like them or because they are unavailable. Also, if the group is multicultural, give people a chance to talk about foods they eat or don't eat because of customs or religion. Does anyone have a child who is a picky eater? This is a good opportunity for parents to exchange ideas about dealing with this. Stress that there's no point in forcing a child to eat as this will just create a power struggle and make meal time an unpleasant experience for everyone. This next activity allows participants to design a food guide to suit their own tastes and those of their children. Give out the sheet **Create Your Own Food Guide**. Some people may need help to navigate the web site. If it is possible and affordable, let them print their guides in colour, on card stock.

Recommended Daily Servings

Give out the chart **Recommended Daily Servings** and have everyone fill it in for themselves and for a child. Start with grains, and fruit and vegetables. Use the blank chart for other food groups or for other family members if there's interest. Parents may be pleasantly surprised to find that their children **are** in fact getting the food they require.

No Mystery about Metric!

Although the metric system has been official in Canada since 1971, many people still do not 'think metric.' To help participants become more familiar with metric quantities, bring in a variety of food packages or food flyers with quantities shown in litres (L), millilitres (mL), kilograms (kg) and grams (g). Give out the sheet **No Mystery about Metric!** You could also ask participants to take the sheet and complete it at home or while out shopping.

Food Puzzles

Direct participants to this site <http://uppextras.blogspot.com/> and tell them to scroll down to the section **Food Puzzles**. There they will find links to three activities that test their knowledge of Canada's Food Guide. You may wish to create your own puzzles at this site <http://www.quia.com/web>, where you can sign up for a free 30-day trial.

**Food for Thought
&
Food at Work**

You will find the booklet *Food for Thought* at the web site of The Centre for Expertise in Family Literacy ([make link](#)). Feel free to print the entire booklet or to order print copies from the web site. Participants could then have their own copies to keep. Or, you may decide to print only the pages used in the next two activities.

Have participants read pages 8-11 from the booklet *Food for Thought*. Then give out the worksheet **Food at Work**, which is a fill-in-the-blanks exercise. Most, but not all, of the blanks can be filled with words from the reading, which they can refer to if needed. Any word that makes sense and preserves the meaning of the text is acceptable. Remind learners that they may have to read ahead to know which word fits in the blank.

**Food for Thought
&
Parents' Help
Line**

Chapter Three in *Food for Thought* (pages 20 to 24) is all about feeding children, modelling good eating habits and creating a relaxing environment for family meal times. The following activity asks participants to absorb the information, then use it to give advice to parents and caregivers who are having difficulty around some issue with children and food. Have participants read the information, either independently or as a group. Give time for discussion and questions.

Decide if you will make this a writing activity—like a newspaper advice column—or an oral role-play activity with one participant taking the part of the parent seeking advice and the other being the more experienced person giving advice. The scenarios are on the handout **Parents' Help Line**.

**UPP with Bread!
&
UPP with Metric
Bread**

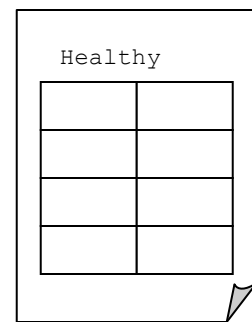
If the participants have never made their own bread from scratch they may be surprised at how easy it is to do. **UPP with Bread!** is a good basic recipe, which can be adapted if anyone wants to experiment with different flours. It makes four loaves, so people can work in pairs and make two loaves each.

Start the process at the beginning of class and while the dough is rising, continue with your other planned activities. By the end of the morning, it should be just about time to punch down the dough, divide it up and take it home for the second rising and baking. At the next class, give out the **UPP with Metric Bread** worksheet and have them fill in the cup and spoon equivalents to the metric amounts.



Healthy Snacks

Bring in a few popular packaged snack foods and give everyone time to look closely at the ingredients labels. Ask them to identify the healthy ingredients and the unhealthy additives. Remind parents that snacks are an important part of their children's diet and that junk food should not be eaten regularly, but it's OK to have as a treat occasionally. Give out the sheet **Healthy Snacks**. Ask the group to identify the two food groups in each snack. Then ask them to think of more snack ideas. They might like to discuss these first, or browse through magazines or cookbooks. The Internet is also a never-ending source. After they have jotted down some ideas, they could word process and format them to look jazzy, then add a clip art picture or two. Give any help or instruction necessary. Finally, ask everyone to save their work and leave it where you can easily find it, probably on the computer desktop. Later when you have time, copy and paste all the ideas into one file and format it, either as a poster or as individual cards that can be cut apart and posted on fridge doors. Give out copies in the next class.



Early Literacy and Nutrition Activity Cards

On the Centre for Expertise in Family Literacy web site you can find a series of 12 **Early Literacy and Nutrition Activity Cards**. Print the cards and laminate them. If necessary, duplicate them so you have enough to go around the group. Give these cards for homework. Each parent takes a card home and introduces the rhymes, recipes and crafts to their child. Next time they return the card and can take a new one if they choose.

Bisphenol A: Is it safe?**&****Other Research Projects**

To challenge the participants in your group who have strong reading skills, you could give small research projects. Each person uses the Internet to research their assigned topic, then they report the main points to the whole group. They could give a simple oral presentation, or a more elaborate one, with visual aids. Some participants prepare written reports. First, discuss which types of web sites give good, unbiased information. Help learners to recognize those that are sensational or strictly commercial.

Topics and sources:

- **Bisphenol A: Is it safe?**
- <http://www.cbc.ca/health/> Direct learners to specific nutrition-related videos. Good practice in taking notes from oral presentations.
- <http://www.kflapublichealth.ca/> Click on Health Information Sheets at the bottom of the page.
- Stomach Flu
- Vegetarian Children
- Healthy Teeth
- Trans Fats
- Organic Food
- Vitamin Pills

Community Food Advisor

Is there a **Community Food Advisor** in your area? You can find out at this site:

www.nutritionrc.ca/programs/cfa-program.html

If this program exists in your area, you could invite a speaker to visit your class and present a topic of interest to all.

Wrap-up

Plan a potluck lunch or snack time together. Ask everyone to bring a small quantity of a healthy snack to share. Decide if this should take place during class or at some more convenient time.