

Know who to turn to



Helpful Hints for Consumers using *Beyond the Basics: Meal Planning for Healthy Eating, Diabetes Prevention and Management*

Beyond the Basics is the meal planning guide that replaces the *Good Health Eating Guide*. The guide reflects current thinking on heart health, glycemic index (GI) and carbohydrate counting. Where possible, portions are similar to those in *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* and to the Quebec and US meal planning systems

Beyond the Basics makes it easier for consumers to include a variety of foods at mealtimes while keeping carbohydrate fairly constant. *Beyond the Basics* can be used as the next step after *Just the Basics* or on its own. While *Beyond the Basics* was created for the adult with type 2 diabetes, anyone with diabetes can use this tool.

Some points to note:

- 1) All food groups containing carbohydrate have been revised to provide approximately 15 g of available carbohydrate per serving. Available carbohydrate is carbohydrate that remains after the dietary fibre has been subtracted.
- 2) Multicultural foods have been added to more accurately reflect Canada's multicultural population and Canadians' love of diverse cuisines.
- 3) Although consumers are able to select portions of carbohydrate according to their own preferences and cultural background, they are encouraged to follow healthy eating habits and choose a variety of foods from all food groups.
- 4) Names of food groups have been changed to better reflect the foods included in each group. Foods which do not clearly belong in one food group have been placed according to their most common usage (e.g. potatoes and yams in Grains & Starches, soy beverages in Milk & Alternatives, legumes in Meats & Alternatives). Corn remains in the Grains & Starches group. Legumes (peas, beans, and lentils) are a good source of protein but also contain about 15 g of available carbohydrate per serving, so they also must be counted as a Grains & Starches serving.
- 5) Foods in green boxes should be chosen more often because they are lower in fat, higher in fibre, and/or have a lower Glycemic Index (GI) value. Foods to choose less often have been placed in amber boxes, in general due to their higher fat, higher sugar or higher GI values.
- 6) All vegetables are now classed as "free" to encourage consumers to eat vegetables, which are high in nutrients.

- 7) Canned fruit is in a green box because although it has less fibre than fresh fruit, it is a good choice for an emergency shelf or in communities with less access to fresh produce. For ease of use, all fruit juices have been listed as a 125 mL (1/2 cup) serving, but are placed in an amber box because of the lack of fibre.
- 8) The Sugars group has been re-named “Other Choices” and includes a variety of sweet and snack foods. The 2003 CDA Clinical Practice Guidelines state that up to 10% of daily calories may be eaten as sugar or sweet foods without harming blood glucose or fat levels.
- 9) It is important to limit saturated and trans fat because these fats can increase the risk of heart disease.
- 10) Items such as coffee, tea, diet soda, spices, vinegar, mustard and other condiments contain few calories and carbohydrates. These foods are called “Extras”.
- 11) The beige section of the meal planning chart shows the carbohydrate foods. These may be counted as carbohydrate “choices” or as 15 g of carbohydrate (the equivalent of 3 tsp/packets of sugar). For example, you may have 3 Carbohydrate choices or 45 g carbohydrate for breakfast (eg 2 slices toast and 175 ml of oatmeal).
- 12) The food label is the most accurate source of information. Food labels can be used to estimate the size of one carbohydrate choice. Fibre and half the sugar alcohols are subtracted to give available carbohydrate. For more information, see the Nutrition Facts table on the back page of *Beyond the Basics* or visit www.healthyeatinginstore.ca.
- 13) *Beyond the Basics* uses common household measures (e.g. ½ cup, 125 mL), so carbohydrate count is approximate. Read food labels, or use resource books to count exact grams of carbohydrate. Occasionally measuring foods can be helpful.
- 14) Eating meals with low Glycemic Index foods can help to control blood glucose. Choosing a high GI cereal like corn flakes will produce a greater rise in blood glucose than a low GI cereal like oatmeal.