Healthy eating is more than eating foods in Canada’s Food Guide. Healthy eating goes beyond the food we eat to include the routines and practices for how we eat. This includes the pleasure and traditions associated with food, the skills to plan for, prepare and have regular meals and snacks, having a positive relationship with food, eating with other people, growing your own food, and knowing where your food comes from.

“In short, healthy eating is flexible. It varies in response to your hunger, your schedule, your proximity to food and your feelings”. Some people call this eating competence or mindful eating. To have eating competence means “getting good at eating”.

Mindful eating means to be highly aware of each bite or sip taken while eating or drinking. In the fast paced society we live in, much of our eating happens on “autopilot”. We pay little attention to how much we have eaten, how tasty the food is or whether we are even hungry at all. Instead, how much we eat can often be driven by external cues – the size of the bowl, the size of the plate, or the portion of food itself.

Try these mindful eating tips:
- Turn off the TV and sit down while eating. Avoid multi-tasking.
- Stop to think before you eat - are you eating because you are hungry, sad, angry or stressed?
- Pause and pay attention to your senses during meal and snack time. Note the smell, sound, texture, temperature, and taste of every bite.

### To be good at eating means:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>It is not:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having a good attitude toward food and eating. People with good eating competence enjoy eating and do not feel guilty about either food or their enjoyment of food.</td>
<td>Being ambivalent or anxious with food.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is no fear of trying new things and will step away from eating just their favourites. People who are not afraid of food (even “unhealthy” food) eat a good variety of food.</td>
<td>Having preconceived standards around what and how much a person should eat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to internally regulate how much is eaten. A person can feel hunger and fullness and can eat comfortably until they are truly satisfied, both physically and emotionally.</td>
<td>Feeling guilt when eating.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating structured opportunities to eat.</td>
<td>Dieting, restricting or skipping meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being flexible.</td>
<td>Using the words should and should not.</td>
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</tbody>
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### What is Healthy Eating?

In short, healthy eating is flexible. It varies in response to your hunger, your schedule, your proximity to food and your feelings. Some people call this eating competence or mindful eating. To have eating competence means “getting good at eating.”

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Ask A Nutritionist

Q I’ve heard that people are eating more processed food. Does society just need more education?

A It is assumed that people eat less healthy food because of lack of knowledge. In Regina, 85% of people are aware of the recommendations in Canada’s Food Guide, however, only 34% of people eat enough vegetables and fruit. This demonstrates that education alone does not necessarily result in behaviour change.

Time, taste, cost and convenience are the main determinants of peoples’ food choices; however, there are other factors at play. These can often be broken into 4 main categories: family, food environment, economics, and marketing.

Family: our culture, religion, and traditions, including food that was provided to us as children and the likes and dislikes of family members.

Food environment: foods that are available within our surroundings either at home, work or the places we frequent. The food environment affects our food choices by proximity, access and affordability. For example, people who live closer to grocery stores eat more vegetables and fruit whereas those who live closer to convenience stores or restaurants tend to eat less vegetables and fruit and more foods higher in sugar and salt.

Economics: the cost of food, including the cost of the transportation to access food.

Marketing: advertisements and “choice architecture” (i.e where the food is placed). For example, foods placed at eye level are purchased more often and can help determine what food is bought.

Understanding our food environment and the reasons why we choose to eat the foods we do can help us to develop strategies to overcome some of the barriers to healthy eating.

Q I’ve heard that health programs should not focus on weight loss as an outcome? Why is this?

A Weight does not determine the health of an individual. While overweight and obesity can increase risk for chronic diseases, weight is only one component of health.

An emphasis on weight can detract from eating competence or mindful eating by discouraging a healthy relationship with food.

The focus on weight and calorie counting may work for some in the short-term, but many cannot maintain the rigidity of weight loss diets in the long-term. As a result weight typically comes back and sometimes even more than before the diet began.

Another challenge with calorie counting is it does not allow a person to recognize internal and external cues and acts as a barrier from becoming a competent eater. Each of us is born with internal cues to help determine how much to eat. Over time, this ability to recognize internal cues becomes buried by “should” and “should nots”, rules, prescriptions and our food environment. A positive relationship with food will eliminate the guilt associated with food and ensure the right amount of food is eaten to maintain a body size and shape the way nature intended.

This size and shape is different for everyone.

Vision 2020 Planning Moose Jaw’s Future Together
The community of Moose Jaw has spoken! Troops are being rallied to improve the local Farmer’s Market experience!

Over 70 community members came out to support a forum on local food production. This forum was one of many during a week-long event called "Vision 2020 - Planning Moose Jaw's Future Together". Everyone from Moose Jaw’s City Councillors to the general public were invited to participate throughout the week.

The South Central Food Security Network hosted the forum on local food production. After a free screening of the documentary "Growing Cities", a panel discussion took place with local food experts. After the panel discussion participants shared their top priority for supporting local food production. The top priority identified was the improvement of the Farmers’ Market; specifically to establish a permanent site and add an indoor component to become a year-round and more diverse operation. After a successful follow-up presentation to City Council and the Economic Development Commission, a representative working group is being formed to complete a formal assessment of local food producer’s and consumer’s needs. For more information, email southcentralfsn@gmail.com or visit https://www.southcentralric.ca/south-central-food-security-network.html
The Ellyn Satter Institute

- Do you feel good about eating and about food?
- Do you like a variety of food and enjoy learning to like new food?
- Do you trust yourself to eat enough food for you?
- Do you take time to eat? To have regular meals (and snacks) and pay attention to the food you eat?

According to the Ellyn Satter Institute, if you answered yes to all four questions, you are a competent eater!

Ellyn Satter founded the not-for-profit Ellyn Satter Institute (ESI). She is a Registered Dietitian, Family Therapist, and internationally recognized as an expert in eating and feeding through the lifespan.

People are healthier in all ways when they eat with practicality and enjoyment. The ESI has two evidence-based models that support this theory called the Satter Feeding Dynamics Model and the Satter Eating Competence Model. Ellyn Satter is also the founder of the Division of Responsibility, a principle that is encouraged when feeding children; it defines the role of the parent/caregiver versus the role of the child. The ESI has a variety of free resources available to the public, including a monthly Family Meals Focus Newsletter, articles, handouts, and webinars. Click here for more information.

Incredible Edible: Project, TED Talk and Website

In 2007 Pam Warhurst and other concerned community members in Todmorden, England, sat around a kitchen table discussing ways to improve their community and came up with the idea of Incredible Edible; a local food movement. Since 2007 their project has grown in leaps and bounds and has been replicated in towns across England and the world; all volunteer based and achieved by taking small steps.

Their concept focuses on three plates, the community plate; how we live our every day lives, the learning plate; what we teach our kids at school and new skills we share amongst ourselves and the business plate; how we spend the money in our pockets and who we choose to support in the community. Once you have all three plates involved in the project, the impact on local foods is real and powerful.

The Incredible Edible project is featured in a very motivating TED Talk available here. In this short video Pam speaks about the project involving all community members, “if you eat, you’re in”. The video gives several examples of what they have been able to achieve in Todmorden and ways to start a similar movement in your community. Some of their first suggestions are stop putting prickly plants in front of public buildings and plant food there instead, create edible landscapes so that children see and walk by their foods every day, encourage city planners to put food sites in the heart of the community and encourage our schools to create a sense of purpose around the importance of the environment, local food and soil. This is how we will inspire the next generation of farmers.

“We are all part of the local food jigsaw – we are all part of the solution”

More information about Incredible Edible can be found at their network website here.
In the News

Poverty Costs

Poverty costs Saskatchewan roughly $3.8 billion in increased use of services and missed opportunities according to the Poverty Costs campaign. The poverty costs campaign was a tool used by many partners to increase awareness of poverty issues and to advocate for the development of a provincial strategy. On October 22, 2014 the Government of Saskatchewan publicly announced their commitment to the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). A PRS is an action plan which aims to reduce poverty in a province or country.

The Poverty Costs Challenge, led by the South Central Poverty Reduction Partnership, is one example of an initiative that supports the poverty costs campaign. The Challenge invited leaders throughout the region to experience challenges individuals living in poverty might face. The week long challenge included options such as eating from a food basket, not being able to use private transportation, or living homeless. Members from the Moose Jaw Police Service, City Council, Prairie South School Division, Moose Jaw Times Herald, and Five Hills Health Region chose one, two or all three challenges, and documented their experiences throughout the week. The hope was to raise awareness about the harmful effects of poverty on individuals who experience these conditions every day.

For documentation of this Challenge, visit: https://www.southcentralric.ca/poverty-costs-challenge.html

For information on the Poverty Costs Campaign, visit: www.povertycosts.ca

Canada’s Food Guide: Assessment Results

Health Canada recently released two reports from an assessment of Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide and Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide — First Nations, Inuit and Métis. The goals of the assessment were to review who is using the guides, how they are being used, and how well they are accepted in Canada.

Findings showed the guides were widely integrated into policies, programs, tools and resources. Overall awareness and acceptance was high, and no stakeholders rejected or avoided any part of the documents. Out of respondents working directly for First Nation organizations, 94% reported that guides are made available. Potential areas for improvement were also outlined in the reports.

These findings provide baseline data that can be used to inform program evaluations and future policy and programming related to healthy eating and nutrition.

For copies of the reports, contact your local Public Health Nutritionist, or Health Canada at: nutrition@hc-sc.gc.ca

Watch for Nutrition Month activities taking place in your region!

The campaign theme this year is: Eating 9 to 5

Click here for the official website.

Contributors and References

Contributors for this issue include members of the Adult Nutrition Committee of the Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan Working Group:

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This newsletter is distributed three times annually to health professionals, educators, community leaders and others. It is designed to provide up-to-date nutrition information and highlight important initiatives and resources.

References:
2. Ibid

For more information, contact your local Public Health Nutritionist in the Five Hills Health Region:
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melanie.warken@fhhr.ca