

The theme for Nutrition Month 2020 is “**More Than Food**”.

This means that healthy eating is not just what you eat but also how you eat. Canada’s Food Guide messages that address how people eat include: be mindful of eating habits, cook more often, enjoy your food and eat meals with others. The complete food guide can be found at [www.canada.ca/foodguide](http://www.canada.ca/foodguide).



1. **Be mindful of how you eat.** This helps you make healthier choices more often.
  - Create a healthy eating environment. Stock the fridge and pantry with healthy items.
  - Use your senses when you eat. Take in the smells, feel the textures, enjoy the tastes of your food. Pay attention to your likes and dislikes. Invite children to do the same and discuss what each you are experiencing. You might be surprised at what you were not noticing before.
  - Consider how, why, what, when, where and how much you ate. Were you distracted? Did you eat with others? Were you hungry? Did you stop when you were full? When did you eat? Was it in a space meant for eating? Being able to answer these questions means you were likely being mindful. This will help you think about appropriate eating environments and behaviors and how to promote them to your children.

2. **Cook more often.** Cooking allows you to choose your own ingredients and change recipes to make them healthier. Relying less on highly processed foods can help save time and money as well. Try ‘Cook once and eat twice’. In other words, cook twice as much lean ground meat and use the extra for another meal like tacos or spaghetti sauce. Let your kids help in the kitchen. This won’t save you any time but it can sure make things interesting and teach them important skills.



3. **Enjoy your food.** You will likely enjoy your food more when you use your senses to pay attention to what you are eating. Your enjoyment may also come from growing, shopping and preparing your own food. Most kids like to help in the garden or do simple food prep tasks. Make your eating environment pleasant by eating in a calm and quiet place. Kids of any age as well as the older ‘kids at heart’ generally eat better and enjoy eating more when eating with other people.

4. **Eat meals with others.** It is a great way to embrace your own food culture and share cultures with each other. Eating with others may help kids try new healthy foods they may not normally try. Put away cell phones, turn off electronics. Take the time to connect with others while you eat.



Hopefully you feel inspired to think about meals as more than just food. Make a goal based on one of the four messages above to help you improve “how you eat”. One example my friend gave me was, “Our family will turn off phones and electronics at supper time so we can all eat together”. Or maybe your family or childcare can try at least one new fruit or vegetable each week?

For more information about Nutrition Month go to <http://www.nutritionmonth2020.ca/>.