



EAT WELL, SPEND LESS
How to Help Canadians Save Money while Boosting Nutrition

Dietitian Toolkit

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



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Hello Friends!

The *Eat Well, Spend Less* toolkit will make your content creation easier with:

- Helpful curated resource lists;
- Insightful how-to strategies; and
- Clever food tips you can share.

It's your value-add companion piece to the *Eat Well, Spend Less* e-recipe booklet.

This is our gift to you – we hope you use it (a lot!)

Questions? Contact us at info@sparknutritioncommunications.com

Stay curious,



Carol & Shannon
Spark Nutrition Communications

P.S. Hang out with us on Instagram! Find us at [@sparkRDs](https://www.instagram.com/sparkRDs).

TERMS OF USE

TOOLKIT

- The content of this toolkit is for your information; please use it for inspiration, but don't copy it (we worked hard on it!)

EAT WELL, SPEND LESS E-RECIPE BOOKLET

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BEFORE GETTING STARTED: MUST-KNOW INFO

Food prices have been rising, but not all Canadians are affected equally so different strategies are required.

Many Canadians are experiencing financial strain. This has only worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, with certain communities (e.g. BIPOC, people living in food-insecure households) being disproportionately impacted. More recently, inflation, which includes rising food prices, has added to this financial burden, particularly among the most vulnerable in Canada. It has been estimated that four million Canadians are living in food-insecure households.¹

Food insecurity is a money problem, not a food skills problem.

Programs aimed at increasing food literacy – like budgeting tips and how-to-cook videos – are not effective at reducing food insecurity.² As such, this resource is not intended to tackle this critical issue. However, we recognize that we all have a role to play to reverse this systemic injustice, so we have curated facts and resources you may find helpful to enhance your awareness and take action.

Many food-secure Canadians want to eat well for less and you can help.

This resource provides tips and actionable strategies for dietitians working with people who are food secure and actively looking for ways to eat well while better managing their food budgets.

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1. PROOF. (2019). Relationship between Food Banks and Food Insecurity in Canada. PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research. https://proof.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/PROOF_FACTSHEET_Foodbanks-112019.pdf
2. Ontario Dietitians in Public Health. (2020). Position Statement and Recommendations on Responses to Food Insecurity. Ontario Dietitians in Public Health. https://www.odph.ca/upload/membership/document/2021-04/ps-eng-corrected-07april21_2.pdf



FOOD AFFORDABILITY IN CANADA:

8 fast facts

1. What is the estimated cost of groceries?

In 2023, the average four-person household in Canada is expected to spend an additional \$1,065 on groceries compared to 2022, or roughly 5-7% across most food categories; this accounts for the highest food prices increase in over 40 years.¹ Actual food prices can vary from predictions. For example the predicted increase in vegetable items for 2022 was 5-7% but the actual increase was 12.7%.¹ For actual food prices in Canada, refer to the Consumer Price Index.²

2. What is contributing to rising food prices?

According to the Bank of Canada inflation for food and shelter services remains particularly high because ongoing cost pressures are boosting food prices, while falling house prices are being offset by rising mortgage interest costs.³

3. How does food insecurity impact well-being?

Food insecurity is a serious public health problem affecting 4 million Canadians.⁴ Individuals in food-insecure households are more likely to experience serious physical and mental health issues, shortening their life span by about nine years and contributing to higher costs to the healthcare system.⁵

4. What is needed to address food insecurity?

Increasing the economic resources of low-income households is needed to reduce food insecurity.⁴ Policy responses in Canada have missed the mark by focusing on strengthening the charitable food sector rather than increasing incomes.⁴ People need enough money to choose how, when, and what food to buy.

5. How are food prices impacting Canadians' habits?

Canadians are adjusting to rising grocery prices in different ways:

- 62% are eating out less often
- 46% are switching to cheaper brands
- 35% are cutting back on meat
- 25% are reducing their alcohol consumption
- 21% are cutting back on fresh fruit and vegetables.⁶



6. Which households are most vulnerable to food insecurity?

- The highest rates of food insecurity (31%) are found among households with individuals who identify as Indigenous.⁷
- In 2020, 46% of people in Nunavut lived in moderate to severe food insecure households.⁷
- In 2021, 1 in 5 Canadian children under the age of 18 were affected by household food insecurity.⁷
- 1 in 3 households led by single female parents are food-insecure.⁷
- Households reliant on social assistance (i.e., provincial welfare and disability support programs) had the highest prevalence of food insecurity at 63%.⁷



7. Why do policy experts say food banks are not a long-term solution?

The root causes of food insecurity are low income and inadequate public policy. Although food banks can provide temporary relief for some individuals, data show that accessing food banks is not a common strategy for those most severely impacted by food insecurity. Strategies are needed to provide income supports to low income Canadians.⁴

8. Are Canadians eating less food to manage rising food prices?

In a national poll conducted by Food Banks Canada (June, 2022), 23% of Canadians surveyed reported eating less than they think they should as a result of rising food prices.⁸

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2. Statistics Canada. (2022). Consumer Price Index Portal. Statistics Canada. https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects-start/prices_and_price_indexes/consumer_price_indexes
3. Bank of Canada. (2023). Monetary Policy Report, January 2023. Bank of Canada. <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/mpr-2023-01-25.pdf>
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6. Angus Reid Institute. (2022). Canada Food Grocery Inflation Supply Management Report 2022. Angus Reid Institute. <https://angusreid.org/canada-food-grocery-inflation-supply-management>
7. PROOF. (2021). Household Food Insecurity in Canada. PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Household-Food-Insecurity-in-Canada-2021-PROOF.pdf>
8. Food Banks Canada. (2022). More families than ever are facing hunger. <https://web.foodbankscanada.ca/cn/avlfe/renewal-eng-1/?apl=DMRENEWAL2023&pck=googlesearchdirect>



FOOD INSECURITY:



ways you can make a difference!

1. Know the facts.

Budgeting, food skills, food banks and growing your own food do not address the root cause of food insecurity in Canada, which is low household income and inadequate public policy.³

TRY THIS: Build your understanding of household food insecurity in Canada. Start with PROOF, an interdisciplinary **research team** investigating household food insecurity in Canada. View their animated video: **How to tackle food insecurity in Canada**.

2. Spread the word.

Leverage your influence to raise awareness.

TRY THIS: In presentations, staff meetings, blogs, media interviews, or social media posts, raise awareness of the prevalence and impact of food insecurity in Canada. Check out **this infographic** for inspiration.



3. Encourage action.

Canada has committed to achieving zero hunger and food security for all Canadians, and to achieving food security related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.² Advocate for food justice through income-based interventions to help make this goal a reality.

TRY THIS: Look for the **Cent\$less letter template** at the bottom of the web page for a pre-filled letter you can use or adapt. Then fire it off to your provincial Member of Parliament.

Adapted with permission from: Ontario Dietitians in Public Health: <https://www.odph.ca/what-can-you-do>

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1. PROOF. (2021). Household Food Insecurity in Canada. PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research.

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FOOD INSECURITY:

Learn more with these resources

1. PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research identifies effective policy approaches to reduce household food insecurity and publishes annual reports on household food insecurity in Canada, along with factsheets, webinars and an animated video you can share.

2. Food Banks Canada shares how to advocate for long-term solutions to food insecurity through public policy changes.

3. Ontario Dietitians in Public Health – 2020 Position Statement and Recommendations on Responses to Food Insecurity: Includes recommendations for action from various levels of government along with informative stats and facts, such as the health impact of food insecurity across an individual's lifespan.

4. Household food insecurity in Canada: Overview. Health Canada. Includes Statistics Canada's latest publications on food insecurity.

5. Canada's Food Price Report 2023: Provides food price forecasts broken down by province and food category, while addressing the various factors impacting food prices.

6. Dietitians of Canada Food Insecurity Background Paper. This report highlights published literature and expert comment on the prevalence, severity, and impact of household food insecurity in Canada.



BOOSTING NUTRITION:



ways dietitians can help clients (while saving them money!)

Canadians want wallet-friendly ways to eat healthfully.

Meet your clients where they are by helping them access nutritious and culturally appropriate food on a budget.

From offering meal planning tips, highlighting healthier food swaps, and teaching how to read unit cost prices, there are tons of ways dietitians can help clients. Here are three top tips for boosting nutrition in the kitchen:

1. Dial up your culinary and food literacy know-how.

PRO TIP: Expand your cultural culinary competency! Follow people on social media who share authentic recipes and learn from your clients. Remember to put your audience first: green smoothies aren't for everyone! And, avoid sharing "healthier versions" of your clients' favourite traditional foods.

2. Share budget-friendly, easy, and nutritious recipes. Check out the *Eat Well, Spend Less* e-recipe booklet!

PRO TIP: Give some love to lower priced, nutrient-rich ingredients that often get overlooked by sharing recipes in which they're featured. Think foods such as Napa cabbage, tofu, sweet potatoes, frozen peas, barley, canned tomatoes, pulses, and canned fish.

3. Show and tell! Get on camera and show how to put your tips into practice.

PRO TIP: Start simple. Create a video (with or without you on camera) showing a basic no-cook recipe featuring budget-wise, nourishing ingredients. Be sure to highlight what makes it so delicious.





Key Nutrition Facts

FACT: Cooking at home is associated with improved nutrition and lower spending on food than eating out or buying prepared foods.¹

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FACT: Nutrient-poor ultra-processed products now account for 46% of the calories consumed in Canada, across all socio-economic groups. Poor dietary patterns are a significant contributing factor to chronic disease in the country.²

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FACT: Adults in food-insecure households have similar cooking skills to those in food-secure households and they are just as likely to adapt recipes to make them healthier.³



Get social with us! Wondering how to create a video, get comfortable on camera, or create nutrient-rich, drool-worthy recipes? That's exactly what we share on Instagram.

Join our community on Instagram

@SparkRds

REFERENCES

1. Mills, S. et al. (2017). Frequency of eating home cooked meals and potential benefits for diet and health: cross-sectional analysis of a population-based cohort study. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 14, 109. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-017-0567-y>.
2. Moubarac JC. (2017). Ultra-processed foods in Canada: consumption, impact on diet quality and policy implications. *TRANSNUT*, University of Montréal. <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/-/media/pdf-files/canada/media-centre/hs-report-upp-moubarac-dec-5-2017.ashx>
3. Huisken, A., et al. (2017). Adults' food skills and use of gardens are not associated with household food insecurity in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 107(6), e526–e532.



BOOSTING NUTRITION:



good books on food, culinary, and communication skills

Yes, these books are amazing, but you don't need all of them. Check for copies at your local library before you buy.

1. **The Science of Good Cooking: Master 50 Simple Concepts to Enjoy a Lifetime of Success in the Kitchen**, by Cook's Illustrated, 2012.
2. **The Flavor Bible: The Essential Guide to Culinary Creativity**, by Karen Page and Andrew Dornenburg, 2008.
3. **Communicating Nutrition: The Authoritative Guide**, by Barbara J. Mayfield, 2020.
4. **Will Write for Food**, 4th edition, by Dianne Jacob, 2021.
5. **The Food Lab: Better Home Cooking Through Science**, by J. Kenji López-Alt, 2015.
6. **Techniques of Healthy Cooking: 4th edition**, The Culinary Institute of America, 2013.
7. **Cooking Light Mad Delicious: The Science of Making Healthy Food Taste Amazing!** by Keith Schroeder, 2014.
8. **Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat: Mastering the Elements of Good Cooking**, by Samin Nosrat, 2017.
9. **Ratio: The Simple Codes Behind the Craft of Everyday Cooking**, by Michael Ruhlman, 2009.



BOOSTING NUTRITION:



Money-Saving Strategies Worth Sharing

1. Be budget-friendly by focusing on frozen and canned produce.

Eating more vegetables and fruit is a priority. But, compared to other grocery categories, fresh veggies and fruit have seen a big spike in prices (13% and 11%, respectively, in 2022).¹ Frozen and canned produce are more convenient and usually less costly — and are just as nutritious.

CONSIDER THIS: Share more recipes and swap ideas for using **frozen** and canned veggies and fruit, such as in soups, stews, curries, casseroles and smoothies.

GOOD TO KNOW! Produce has the highest percentage of waste in all of the food categories, with vegetables at 30% and fruit at 15%. Lettuce, tomatoes, potatoes, apples and bananas top the list of items wasted the most. Leftovers are next, at 13%.²



2. Promote lower-cost, longer-lasting produce options.

Show how these fruits and vegetables are great in a variety of nutritious (and delicious!) weekly meals. For example, cabbage can be roasted and sautéed, and also used for cabbage rolls, slaw and spring rolls and in fried rice, curries and stir-fries.

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3. Share tasty ways to include nutritious legumes and intact whole grains in everyday meals and snacks.

Together, these foods are a complete protein, and many Canadians could benefit from eating them more often. Bonus? They're always among the best healthy buys in the grocery store.

CONSIDER THIS: A great recipe demo can be a powerful nutrition education tool. Help clients put your knowledge into action by offering a culinary demo on ways to add **legumes** and intact **whole grains** to meals they already enjoy.



4. Help reduce your clients' dependence on highly processed foods.

Ultra-processed, nutrient-poor foods offer little nutritional value per dollar. Explaining unit pricing and best-before dates and maximizing the use of marked-down items are key strategies for building healthy, economical food skills.

CONSIDER THIS: Create a video on how to make favourite convenient, delicious and budget-friendly foods using nutrient-rich ingredients. Include it on your hospital, clinic or community centre's website and social media accounts, and via your e-newsletter.



5. Share tips on how to be flexible with ingredients.

Help your clients and communities with money-saving strategies for buying nutrient-rich foods: use up what's already on hand, sub in what's on sale and swap in less-costly ingredients. Remember to align your tips with client goals and needs.

CONSIDER THIS: Always offer nutritious, affordable ingredient swaps when sharing recipes, including using seeds for pricier nuts, water or homemade broth instead of store bought broth, canned tomatoes instead of fresh, barley instead of white rice and canned salmon for fresh salmon.

GOOD TO KNOW! Use less-costly — but still nutritious — milk powder instead of fresh milk when cooking and baking. Visit [this article](#) for details on buying, storing and using milk powder.

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FOOD WASTE:

3 ways to help clients

1. Help people avoid buying food they don't need.

TRY THIS: Help people get into a “shop at home first” mindset as they make their grocery list. People often have more food on hand than they realize. Show clients how to use ingredients on hand, only adding ingredients to balance meals, while searching for items on sale or marked down.

2. Talk more about proper food storage (especially for veggies and fruit!).

TRY THIS: Don't assume people know apples get stored in the fridge and tomatoes on the counter. When sharing recipes, include information about how to store and use up leftovers. For example, can soup be frozen? Do you share what to do with that half can of tomato paste? People *love* tips. Check out this [Food Handlers Storage Guide](#) or this [Food Storage A to Z](#) for storage ideas and this resource to share what to store where in the fridge.

3. Share “use it up” tips and recipes.

TRY THIS: Address the main reason why food gets wasted – it's left too long. Show how to be flexible with ingredients in recipes so they can be used up. Share recipes that incorporate a variety of leftover ingredients (some go-to ideas: pita pizza, fried rice, pasta sauce, frittatas, soups, stews, and curries).

SHAREABLE TIPS:

- Create a “use it up bin” (or sticker) so everyone knows what needs to be eaten first to help reduce waste.
- FIFO! *First in, First out!* Move items that were purchased previously and need to be eaten first to the front of the cupboard, fridge or freezer, and move newly purchased items to the back.
- Wilted greens? No problem! Chop and add wilted greens to dishes where the droop won't matter, like smoothies, soups, stir fries, or frittatas.



FOOD WASTE:

The Canadian Perspective

Dietitians can share strategies to reduce food waste, helping clients save money while also benefiting our planet! Win-win!

WASTED FOOD IS WASTED MONEY!

The average Canadian household wastes up to **140 kilograms** of food per year, which adds up to **\$1,300 dollars** per year!¹

CANADIANS KNOW THIS IS A PROBLEM:

94% are motivated to reduce food waste and **24%** are wasting less food than before. It's a good start, but there's still lots of room for improvement.²

*Here are some handy stats and insights to help you focus your messaging:²

- About half (46%) of Canadians shop “at home” first.
- Only 33% are making a shopping list more often.
- Only 42% think creatively about how to use leftovers more often.
- Only 33% make a meal plan for the upcoming week more often.
- Fresh vegetables, fruit, and leftovers are the top wasted food categories.
- Top three reasons food is wasted: left too long (not appetizing/unsafe), past best before/expiry date, meals not finished.

**based on changes in Canadians' habits between 2020 to 2021.*

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2.Love Food Hate Waste Canada. (2021). Food Waste in the Home. Love Food Hate Waste Canada. <https://lovefoodhatewaste.ca/get-inspired/food-waste-in-2020/>



FOOD WASTE:



resources for learning more

- 1. Love Food Hate Waste Canada:** Stats on what kind of food is wasted, recipes for using up leftovers, practical tips you can share with clients, and more.
- 2. Zero Waste Cooking For Dummies (2022):**
Written by dietitian Rosanne Rust, this book shows you how to manage your kitchen and save money while considering your carbon footprint.
- 3. Food loss and waste and the right to adequate food: Making the connection.**
Food and Agriculture Organization 2018: A discussion paper that explores the relationship between food loss, food waste, and the right to adequate food with a human rights-based approach.
- 4. Waste Reduction Week Canada:** This website shares facts and ideas for a year-round program focused on the circular economy, resource efficiency, and waste reduction, including Food Waste Friday.



SAVE THE DATE!

Canada's Waste Reduction Week is the third week of October every year.

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