

# BEYOND THE BASICS BACKGROUND

*Beyond the Basics: Meal Planning for Healthy Eating, Diabetes Prevention and Management* is a colourful, consumer-friendly poster that replaces the Canadian Diabetes Association's *Health Eating Guide*. A manual similar to the *Good Health Eating Guide Resource* will follow in 2006.

## Background

Because of changes in food labelling, as well as new medications and methods of managing diabetes which prompted changes in diabetes education, it was appropriate to review the Canadian Diabetes Association meal planning system (the *Good Health Eating Guide* or GHEG). Consumers, health professionals and food manufacturers were surveyed about the use and utility of the GHEG. They indicated a need for a meal planning guide similar to those used in Quebec and the United States, which are based on 15 g of carbohydrate per serving in each of the carbohydrate containing groups (Grains & Starches, Fruits, Milk & Alternatives, Other Choices.)

For more than two years, a dedicated group of health professionals representing a wide variety of expertise and geographic locations have been revising the meal planning guide and kept diabetes educators apprised of their progress.

## Guiding Principles

1. To base the meal planning guide on current scientific evidence. The guide reflects present-day thinking on heart health and the glycemic index.
2. To develop a flexible meal planning guide to assist health professionals in educating their clients on how to improve eating habits and better manage metabolic parameters.
3. To include more ethnic foods to reflect the multicultural nature of the Canadian population and the increasing popularity of diverse cuisines.
4. To employ common usage to guide placement in a food group (i.e. potatoes in the Grains & Starches group, soy beverages with Milk and Alternatives, legumes in Meat & Alternatives).
5. To use a comprehensive and accurate nutritional database for the nutrient information.
6. To base servings of carbohydrate-rich foods on approximately 15 g of available carbohydrate per listed portion (ie total carbohydrate minus fibre.)

# Know who to turn to



## Beyond the Basics Backgrounder 2/

**Some of the groups have been renamed** to better reflect the foods within the group and to better align with *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*.

- Starch Foods → *Grains & Starches*
- Fruits & Vegetables become separate groups → *Fruits and Vegetables*
- Milk → *Milk & Alternatives*
- Sugars → *Other Choices*
- Protein Foods → *Meat & Alternatives*
- Fats & Oils → *Fats*
- Extras remains *Extras*

**Portion/serving sizes** may be changed from those in the GHEG. Portions are based on a serving that will provide 15 g of available carbohydrate (total carbohydrate minus fibre).

- Foods with similar portion sizes are grouped together.
- Foods are listed alphabetically to make it easier for people to quickly find an item on the list.
- Foods to choose more often are placed in green boxes. Foods in amber boxes are to be chosen less often.

**Many multicultural foods** have been included, from a variety of sources including First Nations. Some of the multicultural foods listed are based on the work of the Canadian Ethno-cultural Council (CEC). In a wide consultation with stakeholders all across Canada over a two-year period, CEC collected, revised, and refined the lists of foods common to 10 cultural groups (Barbadian, Chinese, Filipino, Hispanic, Jamaican, Japanese, Somalian, Vietnamese, Trinidadian and Tobagonian).

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