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FOOD STEPS

A GUIDE FOR MEN
WHO DON'T WANT
TO CHANGE THE
WAY THEY EAT



FOOD STEPS: A Guide To Eating Better

Authors:

Elisabeth Strachan, MPH, RD

Neil MacKenzie, MSc, RD

Paul McDonald, PhD

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**What this
guide is
about.**

We know you **don't** want to change your eating habits, and we don't expect you to. We are not trying to get you to change how you eat. We only want you to *take some time to think* about it.

What this guide will **not** do:

- give you advice about what to eat
- tell you how to change what you eat
- lecture you about your eating habits.

What this guide **will** do:

- give you facts about healthy eating
- get you to think about what you eat and why.

Remember: We're not asking you to change your eating habits. We just want you to keep an open mind as you read this guide.

IMPORTANT

This guide should **NOT** be used by:

- women
- anyone under 19 years of age
- men who must follow a diet for medical reasons.

If you need a special diet, ask your doctor to refer you to a Registered Dietitian.

Why should I read this guide? I don't want to change how I eat.

We asked some men why they didn't want to change what they eat. Do any of these answers sound familiar?

"I exercise regularly, so I don't have to worry about what I eat."

Bob Short order cook

"I'm on the road a lot! I don't have much choice about what I eat."

Lee Salesman

"I like what I eat; it tastes good. Healthy food is bland and boring."

Tony Construction worker



You're probably like Bob, Lee and Tony, and you don't want to change what you eat. That's okay. We just want to give you a few facts about healthy eating that you may not know about.

How should I use this guide?

What do some men think healthy eating means?



Other men who have read this booklet have suggested reading it like this: **First**, skim through the booklet to get an idea of what it's about. **Then**, read it slowly and see how it applies to you and your life.

We asked Bob, Lee and Tony what healthy eating meant to them. Here is what they said:

Bob: "Healthy eating means never eating fast foods or "junk" foods."

Lee: "Healthy eating means giving up my favourite foods."

Tony: "Healthy eating means having to eat a lot of new foods I probably won't like. It means changing how I eat."

Bob, Lee and Tony have similar ideas about healthy eating. Maybe you agree with them, but that's not what healthy eating is about. Read on to find out more.

What does healthy eating really mean?

What are the keys to healthy eating?



Healthy eating means:

- being able to eat *all* your favourite foods at home and in restaurants
- having *no forbidden* foods
- making *small changes* to the way you prepare your favourite foods to make them healthier
- choosing smaller portions of some of your favourite foods
- eating new foods *only if you want to*.

Healthy eating is about choice, balance and moderation. What does this mean?

- **Choice** means you enjoy many different kinds of foods to get all the energy and nutrients you need.
- **Balance** means you:
 - eat regular meals and snacks
 - enjoy *mainly* nutritious foods and a *few* “junk” foods now and again
 - neither over-eat nor under-eat.
- **Moderation** means you:
 - choose less “junk” foods and fast foods
 - choose foods with less fat to protect you against heart disease, cancer, obesity, and diabetes.

Choice, balance and moderation are the keys to healthy eating.

Now I'm confused.



The answers are in Canada's Food Guide To Healthy Eating.



You mean that I *can* eat fast foods and “junk” foods?

Yes, *all* foods can be part of a healthy diet. It's *how much* of these foods you eat and *how often* you eat them that you have to think about. Fast foods and “junk” foods are usually high in calories and can be low in nutrients. However, if you eat them now and again, and balance them with more nutritious foods, then they can be part of a healthy diet.

I don't know what to believe. There seems to be a new message about healthy eating every year.

It's true there have been a lot of messages and they can be confusing. It's just that researchers keep learning more and more about how food affects our health, so, there is always new information.

Canada's Food Guide To Healthy Eating can help you make sense of all the messages. It will help you understand healthy eating. It was developed by health experts as the one set of nutrition guidelines for everyone over the age of four. It explains how you can stay healthy and prevent illness by eating a variety of wholesome foods.

**What's in it
for me?**

**Why do I eat
the way I do?**



What would I gain from eating better?

The answer is easy. If you ate better, you would have better health and more energy. You would also be able to reach a healthy weight and stay there -- without dieting.

**Maybe healthy eating isn't as bad as I thought,
but I still don't want to change my eating habits!**

That's okay. But do you know *why* you choose to eat in ways that may not be good for you? We asked Bob, Lee and Tony their reasons. Their answers to this question are listed on the next few pages. Which ones apply to you?

**Bob: I exercise regularly, so I don't
have to worry about what I eat!**

Exercise is very important for a healthy weight and a healthy heart. However, exercise *alone* is not enough. It can't undo the effects of poor eating; you need to eat well *and* be active to have a healthy heart. In addition, healthy eating gives you more energy to fuel your active lifestyle.



Lee: My job keeps me on the road a lot. I couldn't get healthy meals even if I wanted to!

Travelling and eating out a lot can make healthy eating difficult, but not impossible. Restaurants and even fast food chain operators know that many people want to eat healthier meals. Many of them offer healthy food choices and are willing to prepare some foods the way you want them.

Tony: I like food that tastes good. Healthy food is bland and boring.

Not any more! Healthy eating doesn't mean giving up taste! Lots of healthy foods taste great. Besides, healthy eating is about making *small changes* to your favourite meals.



Bob: I can't cook so how can I eat a healthy diet?

It helps, but you don't have to know how to cook to eat well. If you eat out at restaurants and fast food chains, there are healthy choices available. If you rely on frozen dinners, there are plenty of healthy frozen meals to choose from in the supermarkets. If you rely on family, friends or your partner to prepare your meals, they can learn to prepare healthy meals for you. And you can get help if you want to learn how to cook healthy meals for yourself.



**Some men
feel they will
eat better
when they
need to.**

Tony: Wouldn't I have to eat a lot of new foods to eat better?

You don't need to try new foods. You can easily make changes to your favourite meals to make them healthier.

Bob: I can't afford a healthy diet!

Eating healthy foods can actually save you money! You don't have to buy special products and many of the most nutritious foods are among the cheapest - vegetables, fruits, breads, cereals, lean meats, and dairy products. The ready-to-eat and packaged foods are the ones that usually cost more money.

Lee: When I eat out, I eat what I like!

Eating well doesn't mean that you can't eat your favourite foods when you eat out. It's how *often* you eat out, what you *choose*, and *how much* of it you eat that makes the difference to your weight and health.

Bob, Lee and Tony have given some of the reasons why they eat the way they do. And maybe you could relate to some of them. Some men though, feel that what they eat doesn't affect their health, or, they will eat better when it does. Do any of the comments on the next few pages sound like you?



Tony: My weight is okay. Why should I worry about what I eat?

Your weight is important, but so is your health. By eating well, you can maintain your weight, increase your energy and your sense of well being. You can even reduce your risk of heart disease and cancer.



Bob: I'll eat better when my cholesterol goes up.

Eating better after you have high cholesterol may prevent further damage to your heart. But it's much better to *prevent* the damage in the first place. After all, you wouldn't wait until the motor has seized up before changing the oil in your car's engine. Eating well is just good preventive medicine for your heart.



Lee: I have been eating what I like for years and I'm still healthy.

There are many factors involved in staying healthy. For instance, family history, smoking, inactivity, and nutrition can all affect your health. Your eating habits are just one factor, but they're one you can control.

If you eat well, you can lower your risk of getting these diseases:

- heart disease
- some cancers

- high blood pressure
- obesity
- diabetes.

Even if you are in good health now, it makes sense to eat well so you can stay that way.



Bob: Why should I worry about getting heart disease?

Just being male puts you at risk for heart disease. But this doesn't mean you're doomed from the start! Men can reduce their risk of heart disease by eating well, being active and not smoking. Making small changes in the way you eat can make a big difference.



Lee: What can you do? It seems that everything you eat causes cancer.

Not true! The good news is that eating well can *protect* you from getting some cancers. Cancers of the prostate, colon, pancreas, and kidney are linked to eating a high-fat diet. But fresh fruits and vegetables, and foods with more fibre and less fat, have been found to actually *lower* your risk of these and other cancers!

Ready or not?



You have given me some good information, but I'm still not ready to change my eating habits.

That's okay. Lots of men aren't ready to change their eating habits. It's just not the "right" time for them to start eating better. Still, you never know when the right time might come along, so it never hurts to keep an open mind.

In the meantime...you have heard Bob, Lee and Tony's reasons why they don't want to change the way they eat; what are yours?

To find out more about why you eat the way you do, try the "Food For Thought" Activity on the next page.

It's fun to do, and you may learn something about yourself!



FOOD STEPS 1 ACTIVITY

Food For Thought

Below are some statements about your eating habits. Read each statement, then circle the number that matches your answer. These numbers are scores for each answer.

1 = strongly disagree

2 = somewhat disagree

3 = somewhat agree

4 = strongly agree

- Example:** I like spotted dogs. 1 2 3 ④
- A. Eating fried foods will not harm my health. 1 2 3 4
- B. I love the taste of fried foods. 1 2 3 4
- C. I am more likely to eat “junk”
foods than other foods when
I am hungry. 1 2 3 4
- D. I’m not overweight, so I don’t have to
worry about what I eat. 1 2 3 4
- E. I don’t know enough about the products at
the supermarket to buy healthy foods. 1 2 3 4
- F. I would eat better if my partner would cook
healthy foods. 1 2 3 4
- G. It takes too much time to prepare healthy
meals and snacks. 1 2 3 4

FOOD STEPS 1 ACTIVITY

1 = strongly disagree
2 = somewhat disagree

3 = somewhat agree
4 = strongly agree

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|
| H. | As long as I exercise, I don't have to worry about what I eat. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I. | If someone in my family wanted me to eat a healthy diet to keep me healthy, I would be more likely to do it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| J. | No matter what I eat, if I am going to get heart disease I will get heart disease. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| K. | I am more likely to eat "junk" foods when I am in a hurry and need to eat quickly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| L. | Most foods just don't taste right unless they have butter, gravy or mayonnaise on them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| M. | If I eat too many "junk" foods, or am getting too fat, I just skip meals to control my weight. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| N. | I don't know how to prepare healthy meals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

FOOD STEPS 1 ACTIVITY

1 = strongly disagree

2 = somewhat disagree

3 = somewhat agree

4 = strongly agree

- O. I would eat healthy foods if I thought they tasted good. 1 2 3 4
- P. If I had the support and encouragement of my friends to change my eating habits, I would. 1 2 3 4
- Q. I don't know how to choose a healthy meal from a restaurant menu. 1 2 3 4
- R. Eating healthy food just wouldn't give me the energy I need to work hard and play hard. 1 2 3 4

Scoring. Add up your scores like this:

- A ___ + J ___ + R = ___ → Category 1
- B ___ + L ___ + O = ___ → Category 2
- C ___ + G ___ + K = ___ → Category 3
- D ___ + H ___ + M = ___ → Category 4
- E ___ + N ___ + Q = ___ → Category 5
- F ___ + I ___ + P = ___ → Category 6

(You're right; we scrambled the questions so you couldn't guess the answers!)

Circle those categories that have scores *higher* than 8. If you have any, read the description on the next page for that category.

FOOD STEPS 1 ACTIVITY

If your score is lower than 8 then that category may not apply to you.

Category 1 You eat high-fat foods because you don't believe they affect your health. You believe that disease is caused by outside things -- not by what you eat. You conclude that there's nothing you can do about it.

Category 2 You eat high-fat foods because you enjoy them. You like the crisp, spicy flavour of fried foods and the sensation of rich, creamy, smooth textures in your mouth. These tastes and textures appeal to you.

Category 3 You eat on the run. Your busy lifestyle doesn't let you plan for meals. So, when you're hungry or in a hurry, you grab whatever is handiest. That's usually fast food and "junk" foods.

Category 4 You are more concerned with managing your weight than your health. You think that if you exercise and keep your weight down, it will make up for whatever unhealthy foods you eat.

Category 5 You might eat healthier foods if you knew what foods contained lots of fat and if you knew how to prepare low fat meals. You probably eat out a lot, and you probably feel you don't have much control over what you eat.

Category 6 You feel that you can't make changes in your eating habits without the support of your partner, family or friends. Maybe you lack confidence or maybe you aren't interested in eating healthier for yourself.

Now what?



**Changing
the way you
eat may not
be easy.**

The “Food For Thought” quiz has helped you identify some reasons why you eat the way you do. Whatever the reason you *choose* to eat the way you do, one day you may consider trying to eat better.

Here are some common reasons why men begin to think about changing their eating habits:

- they develop a health problem like diabetes
- they want to lose weight
- they want to become more active and have more energy
- they are told by their doctors that they have high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- someone they know dies of heart disease
- their family or friends are afraid of them dying of cancer
- they worry they won’t be around to enjoy their grandchildren and their retirement.

Changing your eating habits can be a slow process. A psychologist, Dr. James Prochaska, found that men go through several stages before they finally change a behaviour. He found that men go through a similar set of stages whether they’re trying to stop drinking or smoking, or whether they’re trying to change how they eat.



**Helping
people
change.**

Here are the stages you will probably go through if you decide to improve the way you eat:

Stage 1: You're not even thinking of changing how you eat. *You are likely at this stage.*

Stage 2: You begin to think about reasons for changing your eating habits. *This is the stage we hope you will move to next.*

Stage 3: You actually start eating better.

Stage 4: You make healthy eating a permanent part of your life.

We developed four guides based on these stages. We followed Dr. Prochaska's advice, and we have only provided the information for one stage at a time. That's why this book doesn't give you advice on what you should or shouldn't be eating. It also doesn't tell you how to prepare the food you like so it is healthier. It would take us several pages to do this, and at this stage, you likely wouldn't read any more!

Change takes time!



It is important to know that it often takes more than one attempt to change a habit. And you may not go through the stages smoothly. You may go through all the stages quickly, or you may go back and forth. This happens to many people. This does not mean that you're *failing* or that you shouldn't keep trying. Every time you go through the stages, you improve your chances of eating better for life. The more often you try, the more likely you are to succeed!

A few last thoughts.



We hope this guide has helped you to think about your eating habits. We hope it made you more aware of why you eat the way you do. We hope that now you can see some of the benefits of healthy eating, and see that changing isn't as hard as you may have thought.

Looking ahead.



When you started reading this guide you weren't thinking of changing your eating habits. Perhaps now you could at least *imagine* eating better in the future.

The next booklet in the series is called:

***FOOD STEPS 2: A Guide For Men
Who Are Thinking About Changing
The Way They Eat***

It helps you think about the amount of fat you eat. It provides more information on healthy eating, and spells out the pros and cons of eating better.

If you think you are **ready** to move to this step, order the next booklet. We tell you how below.

If you are **not ready** to think about changing your eating habits, you can still order the next booklet anyway. What have you got to lose? It's free, and it may answer questions that this booklet didn't.

In the end, it's **your** decision. It's all up to you.

You can order your ***FOOD STEPS 2*** **Guide** by telephone or mail. The enclosed ORDER FORM has our address and phone number.

GOOD LUCK!



For More Information

About the *FOOD STEPS* Program:

- Call the organization stamped on the back cover of this guide and ask for the *FOOD STEPS* Program.

For reliable information on Nutrition and Your Health:

- Call a Public Health Dietitian or Public Health Nutritionist at your local Public Health Unit.
- Call a Registered Dietitian at your local hospital or community health centre.
- Visit the web site of the Dietitians of Canada at www.dietitians.ca
- Visit the web site of Publications, Health Canada at www.hc-sc.gc.ca
- Call the Heart Health Resource Centre 1-800-267-6817 for information and a Heart Health Contact in your area.

For more information about:

- A private practice dietitian in your area, call your local Public Health Unit.
- Nutrition and heart disease, call your local chapter of the Heart And Stroke Foundation of Ontario.
- Nutrition and cancer, call your local chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society of Ontario.

FOOD STEPS: A Guide To Eating Better

FOOD STEPS 1:

A Guide For Men Who Don't Want To Change The Way They Eat

This guide invites you to think about why you eat the way you do.

FOOD STEPS 2:

A Guide For Men Who Are Thinking About Changing The Way They Eat

This guide helps you look at the pros and cons of eating better and asks you to decide if you're ready to change your eating habits.

FOOD STEPS 3:

A Guide For Men Who Are Ready To Reduce The Amount Of Fat They Eat

This guide helps you eat less fat. It gives you a 10 week, step-by-step Action Plan to reduce your fat intake, and helps you identify and deal with things that tempt you to eat a lot of high-fat foods.

FOOD STEPS 4:

A Guide For Men Who Want To Keep A Low-Fat Way of Eating

This guide shows you how to keep your low-fat way of eating for good.



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