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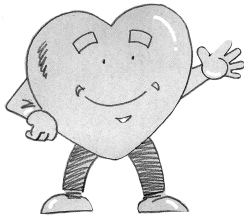
## ***INTRODUCTION***



# Introduction

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## Foreword



*FOOD STEPS: A Guide To Eating Better* is a unique, research-based, self-help, correspondence program for healthy eating with an emphasis on the reduction of dietary fat. The program is based on the Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change and consists of four, gender-specific, stage-based booklets. As a stage-based program, *FOOD STEPS* targets individuals at all levels of readiness-to-change. As a self-help, correspondence program, *FOOD STEPS* provides an efficient means of communicating with large populations. It is inexpensive to administer and can overcome a number of barriers to accessibility such as, transportation costs, child care and need to attend meetings, which hamper the effectiveness of many traditional programs.

*FOOD STEPS* was developed at the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit through a grant provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health, Health Promotion Branch. Its development was supported by a provincial Advisory Committee with representatives from the Ontario Ministry of Health, Health Promotion Branch, and Public Health Branch, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, the Canadian Cancer Society of Ontario, and the Universities of Guelph and Ottawa. *FOOD STEPS* has undergone extensive formative evaluation including focus testing, expert review, and assessment for literacy by a clear language consultant. The program has been translated into French and reviewed by Francophone dietitians and an expert in the Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change to ensure accuracy and consistency of the theory in translation.

The program has been evaluated in an outcome study in the Windsor area. It has also been pilot-tested at the Huron County Health Unit, the Porcupine Health Unit, the Central West Region of the Canadian Cancer Society of Ontario and the Cornwall site of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. The purpose of the pilot study was to determine the opportunities and barriers to implementing the program through various types of health promotion agencies. The knowledge gained from both the outcome and the pilot studies has been used to revise the *FOOD STEPS* booklets and has been incorporated into this Leader's Guide. We hope that you will find the Leader's Guide helpful in implementing the *FOOD STEPS* program in your area.

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## Objectives of this guide

The purpose of the Leader's Guide is to assist health agencies in the implementation of the program. The program can be delivered by a single agency or in partnership with others and in a single setting (e.g. worksite) or in multiple settings (e.g., community, worksites and the health sector).

The Leader's Guide is divided into five sections:

1. Introduction
2. *FOOD STEPS* program -rationale, theory and evaluation
3. How to implement the program under the action headings of: Get Ready, Get Set, Go, Finish, and Relaunch
4. Pilot Site Experiences
5. Appendices.

The first two parts describe the program, the rationale and the theory behind its development and the evaluation to-date. The third part provides information on how to promote, recruit, implement, monitor and evaluate the program in your community and includes Action checklists to guide you through the process. The fourth part provides you with the recruitment challenges and successes of the pilot sites and the final part includes the appendices which provide the sample materials used by the pilot sites in the implementation and evaluation of the program.

## To use the Guide:

- First, review the information in parts 1, 2, and 4 of the Guide. These sections will provide you with useful background information on the development, evaluation and pilot-testing of the *FOOD STEPS* program.
- Then, when you're ready to implement the program, read all the sections in part three carefully.
- Next, adapt the sample promotional materials in the Appendices and launch the program.
- Finally, evaluate the program in your area and share your findings with the Provincial *FOOD STEPS* Coordinator and other health professionals interested in this program.

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**FOOD STEPS: A Guide To Eating Better** is an unique, self-help, correspondence program for healthy eating with an emphasis on the reduction of dietary fat. The program is based on the Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change (TMC), generally known as the stages of change theory.

## Program goals

### Disclaimer

FOOD STEPS was developed for a healthy, non-pregnant, adult population. It does not address the needs of youth, pregnant women or individuals with a medical condition requiring nutrition intervention.

Our goals in developing the program were:

- 1 to produce a cost-effective, accessible, efficacious healthy eating program which would appeal to a wide range of people
- 2 to increase the proportion of healthy, adult men and women who reduce their dietary fat intake within the context of a healthy diet based on *Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating*
- 3 to assist healthy, adult men and women with various levels of readiness to change, to move through the stages and to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to reduce dietary fat intake and adopt and maintain healthier eating behaviours
4. to provide a healthy eating program that is designed for those people not reached by traditional face-to-face healthy eating programs
5. to provide a program that overcomes some of the common barriers that prevent people from participating in traditional healthy eating programs (e.g., time, transportation costs, child care, etc.), and
6. to provide a program that can be delivered inexpensively through a number of channels serviced by mail or telephone.

*FOOD STEPS* is ideally suited to comprehensive programs such as, Heart Health projects and mandatory programs in nutrition. It can be delivered through a variety of channels including worksites, the community and the health sector (e.g., physicians, Registered Dietitians, and Occupational Health nurses). This Leader's Guide provides an example of how the program can be delivered in the community with multiple community partners in multiple settings.

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## Program Overview



The *FOOD STEPS* program consists of four booklets, one each for the Precontemplation, Contemplation, Action, and the Maintenance stages of change. The Preparation and Action stage use the same processes of change and require almost the same nutrition information, therefore to reduce costs, these two stages were combined into one Action booklet. Further, because men and women engage in healthy eating for different reasons<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,7</sup> and have different health concerns,<sup>8,9,10</sup> the booklets are gender-specific.

Each booklet includes information, and self-administered exercises to build skills and motivation, and to encourage participants to move to the next stage of change. The skill-building exercises are designed to appeal to a broad range of educational, social, and cultural backgrounds. To help ensure that participants complete the exercises, and thus progress to the next stage of change, exercises are structured to make them fun.

As recommended by the Ontario Literacy Coalition,<sup>11</sup> the text is written at approximately a grade five to seven reading level, with plenty of white space and basic illustrations. Anecdotes, brief case histories, and examples are incorporated into the text in order to provide concrete examples of abstract concepts and convey information in a less didactic manner.<sup>12</sup> Also, given that individuals may cycle through the stages more than once, all program materials encourage the participant to keep trying to improve their eating habits, and are durable enough for the participant to keep them for later use.

The program focuses on dietary fat reduction as the principal behaviour for change because of the magnitude of its role in preventing chronic disease. Also, because individuals can be at different stages for different behaviours, it was impractical in a stage-based, correspondence program to address all the components of healthy eating. However, strategies for reducing dietary fat are presented in the context of a healthy diet based on *Canada's Food Guide To Healthy Eating*.

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The name *FOOD STEPS* was chosen for the program as it conveys the stepped or staged approach to healthy eating that separates this program from more traditional programs for healthy eating. A four-colour cover page was designed depicting a jester juggling a variety of foods. In the Precontemplation stage, the jester juggles primarily higher-fat food choices. As the booklets progress through the stages, the content of the booklets and each stage is reflected in the graphics the jester is juggling, for example, knowledge, skill acquisition, and an increasing number of lower-fat food choices. The overall effect of the cover is an inviting and positive approach to healthy eating.

The *FOOD STEPS* logo consists of a pair of running shoes made up of a variety of foods with a rainbow in the background to depict the rainbow in *Canada's Food Guide To Healthy Eating*.

*FOOD STEPS* was written for a healthy, non-pregnant adult population. The program does not address the needs of pregnant women or individuals requiring dietary modification or counselling for chronic diseases. However, since the program may generate nutrition questions, it is recommended that a registered dietitian be available for consultation.

In addition to the stage-based booklets, the program is supplemented with sample promotional materials, for example: flyers, news releases, stage-based newspaper ads, as well as program support materials such as registration and order forms. These materials, which are included with this Guide, assist with the promotion and implementation of the program. The materials can be adapted and personalized with your logo, address, etc. To assist with this, the materials and graphics used in the *FOOD STEPS* booklets are enclosed on the CD-disk included with this guide.

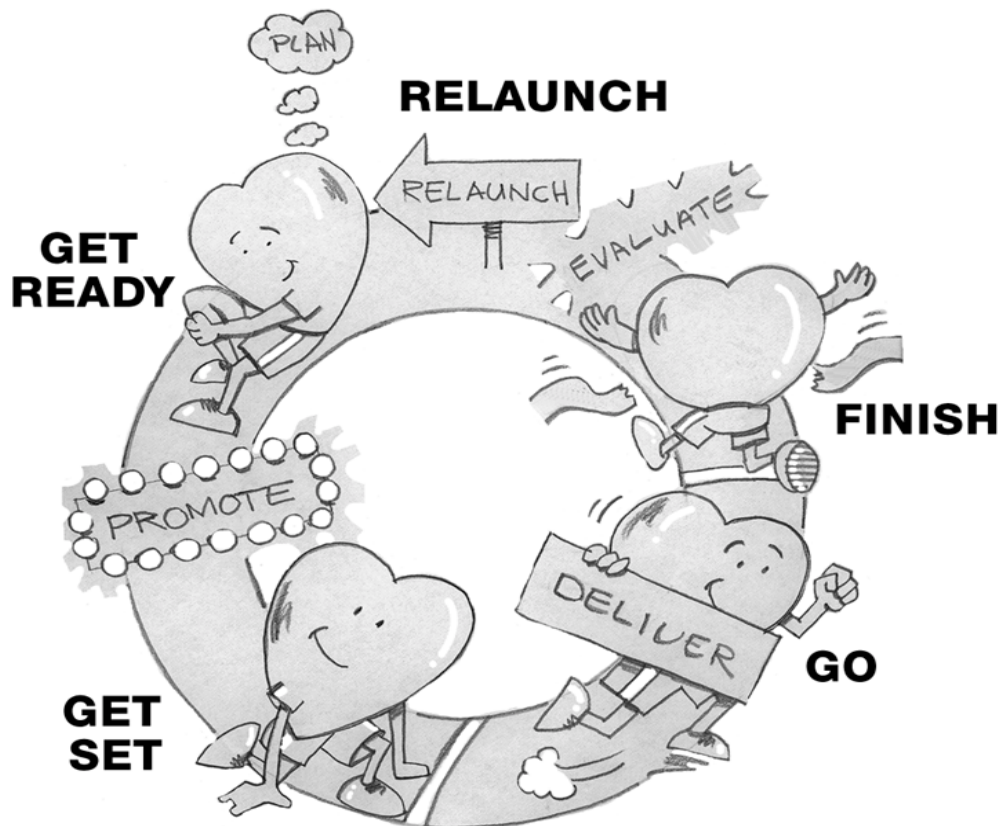
On the next page is an example of how the program works “at a glance.”

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## At a glance: how the program works

Below is a pictorial representation of how to implement the program under the action steps: **Get Ready, Get Set, Go, Finish, and Relaunch**. The process is the same whether you are delivering the program as a single agency or an agency working with several partners. The components of the program are depicted in a cyclical fashion to indicate that recruitment for the program can be ongoing. In **Get Ready**, you will plan the implementation of the program, including selecting the recruitment, registration and the evaluation methods. In **Get Set**, you will develop your marketing and evaluation plans, adapt the promotional and program materials, train the staff/volunteers and promote the program. In **Go**, you will recruit and register clients, and deliver and monitor the program. In **Finish**, you will complete the evaluation of the program, and finally in **Relaunch**, you will review the past year and determine if you will run the program again in the same or different venues. Time lines for implementing the program are flexible and should be adapted to suit your needs and resources.





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## Summary

This section has provided you with a brief overview of the *FOOD STEPS* program goals and components and how the program can be implemented. The next section provides a more in-depth look at the program, the rationale and theory behind its development and evaluation results to-date. If you are very familiar with the program, skim through this section and proceed on to the section starting with “Get Ready” which deals with planning the implementation of the program. If not, read the next section carefully to obtain the necessary background information on the program.