



THE MENU AND NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL was

developed to assist administrators of living establishments, such as group homes, lodging homes and retirement homes, in assessing their menu and nutrition environment. Living establishments can then take steps to improve their menu to meet the recommendations from Canada's Food Guide, as per local and provincial requirements.

Use this tool:

- · when changes are made to the menu
- · when a new menu is implemented
- · before the annual inspection* by the Eastern Ontario Health Unit (EOHU)

Given that reviewing menus can be time-consuming and that the criteria listed in this tool represent the "gold standard" for menu planning, the EOHU recommends that living establishment administrators use this tool to make gradual improvements to their menu and nutrition environment. During an inspection, EOHU staff will not approve a menu but will review the results of the menu assessment to offer support, through resources, training and/or consultations.

Additional support

When dietary preferences and restrictions exclude certain types of foods, there are some nutrients that may require special attention. A registered dietitian's advice may be needed when working with residents with specific dietary requirements for their age, medical conditions, or dietary intolerances.

The EOHU has other resources to help living establishments plan menus and create supportive nutrition environments that meet Canada's Food Guide recommendations.

Tip

- *To ease the process during the inspection with the EOHU, have an available copy of the establishment's menu and the following completed assessment documents (available on pages 11 to 14):
 - · Menu Assessment Checklist
 - Nutrition Environment Checklist
 - · Menu and Nutrition Environment Improvement Plan

For menu planning resources, support with menu assessments, or to find a list of free local nutrition consultation services, visit the EOHU website at EOHU.ca, contact your EOHU Liaison, or call 613-933-1375 or 1-800-267-7120.

STEP 1: Prepare the menu for the assessment process

Identifying food choices and adding details to the menu will make it easier to review the menu and complete the assessment in **Steps 2 and 3**.

A. Get to know Canada's Food Guide

Visit Canada's Food Guide website for more information about foods that support and those that undermine healthy eating patterns: food-guide.canada.ca.

For the purpose of this tool, the word "category" will refer to types of foods and beverages, such as vegetables and fruits, protein foods, whole grain foods, beverages and highly processed foods.

B. Add details on the menu about:

- · The type of food and beverages prepared/offered:
 - · vegetables/fruits (e.g., canned pears, raw carrot sticks, cooked broccoli)
 - · whole grain foods (e.g., **brown** rice, **whole grain** pasta, bran cereal, **oatmeal** muffins)
 - · protein foods (e.g., **ground** beef, chicken **thighs**, **canned** salmon)
 - beverages offered, including water, milk, coffee, tea, juices, or drinks
- · The cooking methods used (e.g., steamed, grilled, baked, etc.)

C. Specify major ingredients [in brackets] in all mixed dishes (e.g., smoothie [frozen strawberries, silken tofu, milk])

Mixed dishes such as pasta, sandwiches, smoothies, stir-fries, pilafs, casseroles, soups and side dishes may contain foods from various food categories.

Major ingredients in a mixed dish should count towards a food and beverage choice. Ingredients used in limited amounts, such as condiments, sauces and dips, should not be considered as a food and beverage choice.

D. Identify food categories and sources of nutrients of interest on the menu using colours, abbreviations and/or symbols

Table 1 (next page) offers suggestions of abbreviations, symbols and/or colours that administrators can use to identify different items in their menu. It also offers descriptions and/or examples of the foods and nutrients of interest that will be assessed in later steps to see if the menu meets the recommendations in Canada's Food Guide. Administrators can also use the identification method of their choice.







 Table 1- Suggested abbreviations/symbols and examples of food and nutrients of interest.

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Suggested Abbreviations/ Symbols	Descriptions/Examples The examples provided are not an exhaustive list. For more information on foods and nutrients of interest for menu revision, visit Canada's Food Guide website.
	VEGETABLES/FRUITS
VF	Any fresh, frozen, canned, or dried vegetables and fruits
G	Dark green vegetables (e.g., kale, spinach, broccoli, bok choy, green peas, brussels sprouts)
0	Orange vegetables (e.g., carrots, pumpkin, sweet potato, red and orange peppers, butternut and hubbard squash)
	WHOLE GRAIN FOODS
WG	Whole grain foods (e.g., quinoa, whole oats, whole grain brown or wild rice, whole grain bread, whole grain pasta, foods made with whole grains)
	PROTEIN FOODS
Pro	Protein foods , including plant-based protein foods (e.g., eggs, lean meats and poultry, nuts and seeds, canned or fresh fish and shellfish, lower fat dairy products, beans, peas and lentils, fortified soy beverages, tofu, soybeans and other soy products)
NS	Nuts or seeds, including nut or seed butters
A	Tofu or lentils or legumes (e.g., chickpeas, kidney beans, etc.)
	FOOD SOURCES OF NUTRIENTS OF INTEREST
D	Vitamin D (e.g., egg yolk, fatty fish (e.g., salmon, arctic char, rainbow trout), unsweetened lower fat milk or unsweetened fortified plant-based beverages)
С	Calcium (e.g., tofu, some fish and shellfish, some dark green vegetables, lower fat unsweetened milk, yogurt and kefir, many cheeses that are lower in fat and sodium, legumes, unsweetened fortified plant-based beverages)
	HIGHLY PROCESSED FOODS
HPF	Foods that add excess sodium, sugars or saturated fat to the diet, including fast foods (e.g., french fries, burgers), pickled foods, processed cheese slices, cheese spreads, deep fried foods
	Processed meat/poultry (e.g., bologna, corned beef, beef jerky, mock chicken, bacon, chicken burgers, fish sticks, hot dogs, pepperoni, sausages, deli meats and ham)
*	Desserts higher in saturated fat/sugar/calories (e.g., cakes, pastries, ice cream, frozen desserts, chocolate and candies, sugary drinks, confectioneries)



A word about portion sizes

While Canada's Food Guide previously specified recommendations for amounts of food per day for individuals, the newest version of the food guide presents the visual representation of a plate to ensure the right proportion of a variety of food is offered daily (approximately ½ vegetables/fruits, ¼ protein foods, ¼ whole grain foods). Soups, appetizers, snacks, side dishes and desserts also count in achieving these recommended proportions.

Although this guidance accounts for diverse dietary intake needs, administrators still need standardized portions in menu planning for food cost management. purchasing, nutrition management, quality control and resident satisfaction.

Recommended standard serving sizes for these purposes are shown in Table 2.

Resident feedback and monitoring of food waste should be used to determine adequate portion sizes for individuals, all while respecting appetites by allowing smaller or larger than standard serving sizes.

Table 2 - Suggested standard serving size chart

·brown rice OR couscous OR pasta

OR quinoa OR barley

125 ml ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) = $\frac{1}{2}$ fist

30 g cold cereal = 1 fist

VEGETABLES/FRUITS BEVERAGES/SOUPS 125 ml ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) = $\frac{1}{2}$ fist 125 to 175 ml ($\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) = $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 fist ·canned, frozen, cooked or fresh ·beverages vegetables, diced or sliced ·soup ·diced fresh, frozen or canned fruit 250 ml (1 cup) = 1 fist1/2 to 1 whole fruit = 1 fist · milk or fortified soy beverage 250 ml (1 cup) = 1 fist·leafy vegetables **PROTEIN FOODS WHOLE GRAINS** Size of hand 2 eggs ·1 slice of bread 2 tbsp nut butter = 2 thumbs ·1/2 bagel OR pita OR English muffin 50 g cheese = 2 thumbs·½ hamburger bun OR ½ small tortilla 75 g (2.5 oz) = palm of hand·15 to 30 g crackers (see serving size ·cooked meat OR poultry OR pork or on package)













175 ml ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup) = 1 fist

·yogurt

· tofu

 cooked legumes such as beans or lentils

1/4 cup nuts/seeds = cupped hand

STEP 2: Review the menu patterns, as well as foods and nutrients of interest

A healthy eating pattern refers to the foods and drinks offered on a regular basis that work together to help residents feel good, maintain their health, and meet their nutritional needs. Certain foods and nutrients on the menu can have a significant impact on overall health if offered too frequently (such as highly processed foods) or irregularly (such as vegetables and fruits).

Use the Menu Worksheets on pages 7 to 10 to review the meal and snack patterns, as well as foods and nutrients of interest, for a four-week menu cycle.

Tip

Consider involving staff who develop menus, prepare food and/or establish and work in the nutrition environment to answer questions and provide input (e.g., supervisors, cooks, chefs, aids, personal support workers).

STEP 3: Assess the menu

With the help of the completed Menu Worksheets in Step 2, use the Menu Assessment Checklist on pages 11 and 12 to assess the menu's meal and snack patterns, as well as the food and beverage choices offered.

STEP 4: Assess the nutrition environment

It is important that residents are provided with a pleasurable and supportive dining environment for all meals, snacks, and beverages so they consume and enjoy the foods and fluids they are offered.

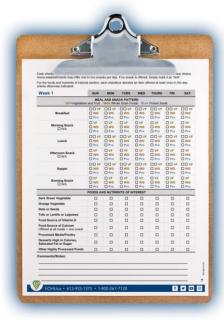
A supportive nutrition environment encompasses the physical structures such as furniture, utensils, and dining room atmosphere, but also supports safety, comfort, and independence in eating and drinking, as well as residents' social and emotional needs by encouraging interactions with other residents and staff members.

Use the Nutrition Environment Checklist on page 13 to assess the establishment's nutrition environment.

STEP 5: Create a plan to improve the menu and nutrition environment

Making a few changes at a time, instead of addressing all issues at once, will help make lasting improvements to the establishment's menu and nutrition environment.

- · With the involvement of staff and/or residents (if possible), choose one to three items with missing checkmarks from **Steps 3 and 4**.
- · Using these items, create goals to improve the menu and/or nutrition environment.
- Complete the table on page 14 to set a Menu and Nutrition Environment Improvement Plan. Note specific actions needed to reach each goal (e.g., what, who, when).







MENU WORKSHEETS

Each checkbox in the Meal and Snack Pattern tables is equivalent to approximately 1/4 of the meal, or one choice. Some establishments may offer one to two snacks per day. If no snack is offered, simply mark it as "N/A".

For the foods and nutrients of interest section, each checkbox denotes an item offered at least once in the day, unless otherwise indicated.

Week 1	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	
MEAL AND SNACK PATTERN VF=Vegetables and Fruit WG= Whole Grain Foods Pro= Protein foods								
Breakfast	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro							
Morning Snack □ N/A	□ VF □ WG □ Pro	□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Lunch	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro	
Afternoon Snack □ N/A	□ VF □ WG □ Pro							
Supper	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro							
Evening Snack	□ VF □ WG □ Pro							
	FOODS AN	ID NUTRIE	NTS OF IN	TEREST				
Dark Green Vegetable								
Orange Vegetable								
Nuts or Seeds								
Tofu or Lentils or Legumes								
Food Source of Vitamin D								
Food Source of Calcium Offered at all meals + one snack								
Processed Meats/Poultry								
Desserts High in Calories, Saturated Fat or Sugar								
Other Highly Processed Foods								

Comments/Notes:



Week 2	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
MEAL AND SNACK PATTERN VF=Vegetables and Fruit WG= Whole Grain Foods Pro= Protein Foods							
Breakfast	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro	UVF WG Pro	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro	UVF WG Pro	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro
Morning Snack □N/A	□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Lunch	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Afternoon Snack □N/A	□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Supper	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Evening Snack □N/A	□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
	FOODS AN	ID NUTRIE	NTS OF IN	TEREST			
Dark Green Vegetable							
Orange Vegetable							
Nuts or Seeds							
Tofu or Lentils or Legumes							
Food Source of Vitamin D							
Food Source of Calcium Offered at all meals + one snack							
Processed Meats/Poultry							
Desserts High in Calories, Saturated Fat or Sugar							
Other Highly Processed Foods							

Comments/Notes:

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Week 3	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
MEAL AND SNACK PATTERN VF=Vegetables and Fruit WG= Whole Grain Foods Pro= Protein Foods							
Breakfast	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Morning Snack □N/A	□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Lunch	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Afternoon Snack □N/A	□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Supper	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Evening Snack □N/A	□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
	FOODS AN	ID NUTRIE	NTS OF IN	TEREST			
Dark Green Vegetable							
Orange Vegetable							
Nuts or Seeds							
Tofu or Lentils or Legumes							
Food Source of Vitamin D							
Food Source of Calcium Offered at all meals + one snack							
Processed Meats/Poultry							
Desserts High in Calories, Saturated Fat or Sugar							
Other Highly Processed Foods							

Comments/Notes:





Week 4	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
MEAL AND SNACK PATTERN VF=Vegetables and Fruit WG= Whole Grain Foods Pro= Protein Foods							
Breakfast	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro	UVF WG Pro	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro			
Morning Snack □N/A	□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Lunch	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Afternoon Snack □N/A	□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Supper	□□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
Evening Snack	□ VF □ WG □ Pro						
	FOODS AN	ID NUTRIE	NTS OF IN	TEREST			
Dark Green Vegetable							
Orange Vegetable							
Nuts or Seeds							
Tofu or Lentils or Legumes							
Food Source of Vitamin D							
Food Source of Calcium Offered at all meals + one snack							
Processed Meats/Poultry							
Desserts High in Calories, Saturated Fat or Sugar							
Other Highly Processed Foods							

Comments/Notes:

MENU ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Esta	ıbli	shment:	
Rea	d e	each statement carefully and add a checkmark in the box for each item met:	
		MEAL PATTERNS	
	1.	Vegetables/fruits make up the largest part of the meal (e.g., two checkmarks at mealtimes).	
	2.	Whole grain foods are offered at every meal.	
	3.	Protein foods are offered at every meal.	
		SNACK PATTERNS	
	4.	Vegetables/fruits are offered at all snacks.	
	5.	Whole grain foods are offered at least once per day at snacks.	
	6.	Protein foods are offered at least once per day at snacks.	
		VEGETABLES/FRUITS	
	7.	A variety of fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables/fruits are offered, limiting repetition within the week as much as possible.	
	8.	Orange vegetables (e.g., carrots, pumpkin, red or orange bell peppers, butternut squash or sweet potato) are offered at least four times per week.	
	9.	Dark green vegetables (e.g., kale, spinach, broccoli, bok choy, green peas, brussels sprouts) are offered at least once per day.	
		WHOLE GRAIN FOODS	
	10.	A variety of whole grains and whole grain foods (e.g., barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, and whole grain couscous, pasta, tortilla, pitas, crackers, bread) are offered, limiting repetition within the week as much as possible.	
	11.	Pre-packaged grain foods include whole grains as the first ingredient listed on the food's label.	
		PROTEIN FOODS	
	12.	A variety of protein foods (e.g., eggs, lean meats and poultry, nuts and seeds, fish and shellfish, lower fat dairy products, beans, peas and lentils, fortified soy beverages, tofu, soybeans and other soy products) are offered, limiting repetition within the week as much as possible.	
	13.	Nuts or seeds (including nut or seed butters) are offered at least once per day.	
	14.	Legumes, lentils or tofu are offered at least once per day.	
	15.	When offered, dairy products are low in fat (e.g., lower fat cheeses, unsweetened lower fat yogurt, unsweetened lower fat milk).	
		NUTRIENT SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS	
	16.	A <u>food source of vitamin D</u> (e.g., egg yolk, fatty fish (e.g., salmon, arctic char, rainbow trout), unsweetened lower fat milk or unsweetened fortified plant-based beverages) is offered daily.	
	17.	A <u>food source of calcium</u> (e.g., tofu, some fish and shellfish, some dark green vegetables, lower fat unsweetened milk, yogurt and kefir, many cheeses that are lower in fat and sodium, legumes, unsweetened fortified plant-based beverages) is offered at all meals and at least one snack per day.	





HIGHLY PROCESSED FOODS	
18. Processed meats/poultry are offered no more than twice per week (e.g., bologna, mock chicker bacon, chicken burgers, fish sticks, hot dogs, pepperoni, sausages, deli meats and ham).	en, 🔲
19. Desserts or snacks high in calories, fat and sugar are offered no more than three times per we (e.g., cakes, pastries, ice cream, frozen desserts), including special occasions (e.g., birthdays	
20. Other highly processed foods, or foods containing saturated fats are offered no more than twice per week (e.g., processed cheese slices, cheese spreads, deep fried foods, cream, canned coconut milk).	ce 🗆
BEVERAGES	
21. Water is the drink of choice and available throughout the day.	
 Unsweetened, healthy drink options other than water are offered with meals and snacks (e.g., lower fat milk, fortified plant-based beverages (e.g., soy or almond beverage), coffee and teas 	
23. Sugary drinks (e.g., soft drinks, iced tea, sports drinks, energy drinks, hot chocolate and chocolate milk, specialty coffee and teas, flavoured waters with added sugars, 100% fruit juice fruit-flavoured drinks like fruit punch, sweetened plant-based beverages) are replaced with wa or healthy drink options.	
PREPARATION AND COOKING METHODS	
24. Foods are flavoured with herbs, spices, citrus, onion, garlic, etc. instead of using pre-seasone foods, salt, gravy, or sauces.	d 🗆
 Foods are prepared using cooking methods (e.g., baking, broiling, steaming, roasting, stir-frying which require little or no added saturated fats, sodium and sugars. 	ng) 🗆
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which require little or no added saturated fats, sodium and sugars. 26. When offered, lean cuts of meat and poultry (without the skin) are used, visible fat is trimmed	off
 which require little or no added saturated fats, sodium and sugars. 26. When offered, lean cuts of meat and poultry (without the skin) are used, visible fat is trimmed as much as possible, and fat is drained from cooked ground meat. 27. Unsaturated fats (e.g., canola, soybean and olive oils, soft margarines) are used most often in 	off
 which require little or no added saturated fats, sodium and sugars. 26. When offered, lean cuts of meat and poultry (without the skin) are used, visible fat is trimmed as much as possible, and fat is drained from cooked ground meat. 27. Unsaturated fats (e.g., canola, soybean and olive oils, soft margarines) are used most often ir cooking or baking (as opposed to butter, coconut oil, hard margarine, lard and shortening). 	off





NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT CHECKLIST

Establish	ment:								
Read eac	Read each statement carefully and add a checkmark in the box for each item met:								
1.	Dining rooms are clean, including tables, chairs, walls, floors, tablecloths/placemats, window coverings and ledges.								
2.	Dining rooms are peaceful and cheerful with appropriately set table and seasonal décor to enhance the home-like atmosphere, while respecting infection control measures.								
3.	Dining rooms have adequate equipment to provide effective meal service, including adequate supply of dishware, glassware and cutlery, assistive eating/drinking devices, adjustable height dining room tables, comfortable dining room chairs and appropriate seating for staff members assisting residents.								
4.	A mix of table sizes is provided for optimal socialization and to create more walking space in the dining room for residents and for staff.								
5.	Residents have the opportunity to eat with others.								
6.	Residents have opportunities to engage in menu planning and to choose preferred foods and beverages at meals and snacks.								
7.	Culture/ethnicity of the resident population is considered in menu planning and these cultural foods are included in the menu.								
8.	Therapeutic diets are respected.								
9.	When offering meals and snacks, residents' appetites are respected by allowing smaller or larger than standard serving sizes.								
A 00000m 0m	t completed by:								





MENU AND NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

MISSED ITEM NUMBER(S)	GOAL	ACTION · How will this item be met? · What changes will be made? · Who will make this change? (If applicable)	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION	DATE COMPLETED
18	Example Processed meats are offered no more than twice per week, on week 1 of menu cycle.	 On week 1 of menu cycle, replace ham sandwiches with chicken salad sandwiches Keep sausages on Sunday at lunch only. 	Oct 1 2022	
	GOAL 1			
	GOAL 2			
	GOAL 3			

Improvement Plan completed by: ______ Date: _____

