



## Nutrition Month 2010

Welcome to Nutrition Month! The annual National Nutrition Month campaign by Dietitians of Canada is one of the most important and effective marketing tools to promote the dietitian and one of the most useful to promote nutrition messages to consumers. Dietitians of Canada remains committed to this campaign, to supporting members to make it a successful program and to providing consumers and health intermediaries with evidence based nutrition information.

### Goal

The goal of the 2010 & 2011 National Nutrition Month Campaign is that during March (and beyond), Canadian families will make informed food choices to best support their health by:

- Learning how food is raised or grown, harvested, produced and processed;
- Being aware of various issues surrounding food and food production;
- Knowing the nutritional benefits of eating food according to Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide;
- Learning how to plan, purchase and prepare food to promote optimum health.

The 2010 Campaign focuses on providing key facts and dispelling popular myths about Canadian farming and agricultural practices, food processing, food labeling and how these factors can impact nutrition.

The 2011 Campaign will build on the 2010 Campaign and focus on meal planning, purchasing and preparing foods for the family.

## Objectives

The 2010 Nutrition Month Campaign is an opportunity for dietitians:

- To provide practical healthy eating information to help Canadian families discover and engage in ways to eat well and live well while learning about where food comes from.
- To promote dietitians as the most trusted source of nutrition information for Canadians.
- To provide consumers with accurate, reliable information based on current research and evidence.
- To raise public awareness of the valuable contribution that healthy eating makes to Canadians' overall health by encouraging individuals to get involved in making healthy food choices for themselves and their family.
- To promote Dietitians of Canada's website – [www.dietitians.ca/eatwell](http://www.dietitians.ca/eatwell) and encourage Canadians to use this website to find healthy eating tips, practical food solutions, find a dietitian in their area and to register on-line to receive regular nutrition updates.
- To identify Dietitians of Canada as the leader and organizer of the National Nutrition Month Campaign.

## Theme, Slogan, Target Audience

Nutrition Month 2010 will focus on celebrating food from field to table.

The slogan is:

Celebrate food... from field to table!

Célébrons nos aliments... de la terre à la table!

The target audience is Canadian families, specifically the parents or caregivers responsible for making decisions about food selection, purchasing, and preparation in the home.

## Background

We're surrounded by messages in the media encouraging Canadians to become more aware of and understand where our food comes from. Topics such as local food, organic food and the 100 Mile Diet are becoming common dinner table conversations. Canadian food personalities including Anita Stewart, Ricardo Larrivée, Michael Smith and many others have helped to bring a consciousness on these topics to the Canadian consumer unparalleled in recent years.

What an opportunity for our profession to step onto this food stage and participate! Dietitians are uniquely qualified to discuss food and nutrition issues considering their extensive training and the diverse roles in which they are employed. Dietitians are prepared and ready to guide Canadians as they look for many answers to questions about food, its origins, its nutritional merits and its place on our tables.

## Survey results

To support the Nutrition Month campaign, we polled Canadians to determine Canadians favourite local foods as well as to measure their attitudes and beliefs about key issues surrounding food.

The main findings of this survey are available at [www.dietitians.ca/eatwell](http://www.dietitians.ca/eatwell) starting March 1, 2010.

## Bottom line information and evidence to support the Nutrition Month 2010:

### On the farm...

- Canada has much to celebrate about its rich agricultural history and current prominence on the world stage.
- Farm income varies by farm size, type, region and typology. On average, high performance farms tend to have better cost control, which along with support from government policies and programs help them manage through income variability. Some farm families rely more on off-farm income to help them generate sufficient income.
- Families can learn more about our food production and how food is grown by visiting local farms.

### Organic food

- Regulations are in place to identify organic foods.
- It is a common belief that organically grown foods are superior in nutritional value, lower in pesticide residues and more flavourful than those foods grown by conventional agricultural methods.
- Some organic foods may be higher in certain nutrients, but the evidence is not consistent enough to make conclusive statements.
- Dietitians should encourage people to consume a diet high in fruits and vegetables. Learning more about how farming practices can affect nutritional quality will help dietitians and other health professionals address client concerns and make the best food choices for their families.
- Purchasing organic food is a personal choice which may depend upon its availability, price, sensory qualities and personal values, such as a preference for this food production method.

### Local food

- Being a Locavore in Canada year-round can be challenging. Dietitians can help support consumers who want to eat more local products.
- Be aware of locally-grown foods.
- There is no conclusive evidence to support the claim that locally grown foods are more nutritious than foods produced and imported from longer distances. There is limited evidence that suggests certain locally produced vegetables and fruits have greater nutritional value than the same foods imported from greater distances. For example broccoli, green beans, kale, red peppers, tomatoes, apricots, peaches are more susceptible to nutrient loss when harvested and transported from longer distances.
- One health advantage of the 100 Mile diet is that the consumer who would choose to use this diet would be more likely to prepare foods from scratch and less likely to use pre-packaged convenience foods. Homemade alternatives can be made lower in sodium and unhealthy fats and higher in whole grains making the diet more wholesome.
- There is no conclusive evidence to support the claim that locally grown food is safer.
- Evidence on the affordability of the 100 Mile Diet is limited. Due to the smaller scale and often less efficient nature of local production, prices of locally produced food may be higher than their imported equivalents creating a challenge for those on limited incomes.
- Other considerations in the desire to choose a diet that is grown closer to home include – personal opinions on factors such as sustainability, control over our own food supply, protection of the environment, economic growth locally and in the community.

#### Cost of healthy eating

- According to CCHS 2.2, 1.1 million or 9.2% of Canadian households experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2004.
- Food costs are a concern for Canadians and some report 'going without' foods as a result of high food costs.
- Dietitians are able to provide consumers with affordable healthy eating suggestions.

#### Fresh, frozen or canned

- The perception persists that fresh is best.
- Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables provide good alternatives to fresh produce in terms of nutrient content.
- Frozen and canned products can provide flavor and menu variety throughout the year, especially in remote areas of Canada and during the cold winter months.

#### Nutrition labels

- The Nutrition Facts table and Ingredient List are helpful tools for consumers to determine the nutritive value of packaged foods. The % DV (daily value) is intended to facilitate comparisons of the nutrient content of different food products.
- Several DC and HESY resources are available to help consumers decipher the label.
- More than half (57%) of all Canadians are food label readers.

#### Food regulations & food recalls

- Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), along with other federal, provincial and municipal organizations play a key role in the safety of the food supply in Canada.
- Labelling guidelines are in place for the use of the term "Product of Canada".
- Food recalls are a means to protect the health of Canadians when food products do not meet Canadian safety and quality standards.
- The CFIA provides a list of foods recalled as well as allergy alerts. When a food has been recalled, the CFIA advises consumers not to consume the product, return it for a replacement or refund and to seek medical attention if they feel ill after consuming the food in question.

Registered Dietitians are the trusted source for nutrition advice and can translate scientific evidence into messages consumers can use.

For more information about Nutrition Month, visit [www.dietitians.ca/eatwell](http://www.dietitians.ca/eatwell). Nutrition Month is brought to you by Dietitians of Canada and thousands of dietitians across the country, in collaboration with the campaign sponsors.

Participating sponsors for Nutrition 2010 include Compass Group Canada, Dairy Farmers of Canada, General Mills Canada Corporation, McCormick Gourmet Spices and Seasonings.

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