

Menu Planning in Long Term Care and Canada's Food Guide 2019

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Canada's Food Guide (CFG) 2019 was released by Health Canada in January 2019 and recommends a variety of healthy foods that people should eat every day however no longer focuses on number of servings for each food group or on portion sizes. CFG is referenced in many provincial standards and regulations as a way to meet the nutritional requirements of residents in Long Term Care (LTC) when planning menus.

With the changes to CFG 2019, Dietitians of Canada along with the Canadian Malnutrition Task Force & Ordre professionnel des diététistes du Québec, noted a gap for menu planners in LTC. As a result, they worked together to develop a guidance document "*Menu Planning in LTC and Canada's Food Guide (2019)*" (note: to view a copy of the document [click here](#)). The purpose of the guidance document is to assist menu planners in meeting the residents' overall nutritional requirements, and as a tool to guide them in the menu planning process. It is important to remember that it is the role of the provincial/territorial governing bodies to set the regulations and standards and therefore determine if a menu meets the requirements. Appendix 1 (pg. 30-31) of the guidance document outlines the regulations and standards by province.

How Can The Guidance Document Help You In Your Menu Planning?

The guidance document addresses the three guidelines found in CFG 2019. With considerations of the population residing in LTC homes, modifications to these guidelines have been suggested to help address nutritional challenges and to promote nutritional well-being. The modifications also take into account important factors such as resident satisfaction, resident preferences, and staffing limitations. For example Guideline 1 in CFG states that water should be the beverage of choice. A suggested modification for LTC is offering a variety of beverages to residents such as milk or soy beverages, or vegetable and/or fruit juice which can lead to increased energy and nutrient intake for this population. There are also other suggested modifications for LTC homes which can be reviewed in detail in the guidance document (see pages 7 - 9).

As included in the guidance document, a menu meeting Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) will provide most residents with the necessary nutrient requirements. However, it is important to note that it may be necessary for a Registered Dietitian to implement individualized nutritional interventions. Additionally, Suggested Daily Menu Targets in reference to energy, protein, fat, fiber, fluid, sodium and micronutrients are outlined in Figure 1. Please refer to the guidance document for more details on the Suggested Facility Menu Targets for Nutrients of Concern (pages 12 - 13) and for references used to determine the suggested daily menu targets (pages 27 - 28).

How Can Your Home Ensure That Your Menu Is Meeting The Nutritional Requirements of Your Residents?

The guidance document addresses the need for a nutritional analysis of the menu to ensure that it meets DRI values for vitamins, minerals and macronutrients. It is determined to be a best practice to meet the nutrient requirements of the resident population. If a full analysis is not feasible, the focus should be placed on the nutrients of concern (energy, protein, dietary fiber, fluid, sodium, and calcium).

How Can Complete Purchasing Services (CPS) Assist Your Home in Menu Planning?

CPS offers the COMPLETE Dining Program and eCPS MenuBuilder. This is available for free as a standard part of a CPS membership. eCPS MenuBuilder is a proprietary license-free and cost effective menu management solution designed to enable CPS members to tailor the COMPLETE Menu to meet the unique needs of their home. Tools available include nutrient calculation report, shopping lists, integrated therapeutic menus (including IDDSI), recipes (and a recipe scaler), production sheets, and much more. If you have not yet explored how the COMPLETE Dining Program can assist you in menu planning please call the CPS Menu Hotline at 1.866.694.3277 from Monday – Friday, 9:30 am – 7:00 pm AT.

Suggested Facility Menu Targets for Nutrients of Concern

NUTRIENT	SUGGESTED DAILY MENU TARGET
Energy	2000 kcal minimum
Fluid	2000 ml
Protein	100 g
Fat	20 – 25% of calories
Dietary Fibre	30 g
Sodium	<3500 mg
Vitamins and Minerals	> 75% RDA/AI daily and 100% average over full menu cycle

Figure 1: Nutrients of Concern in LTC Menu Planning and Suggested Daily Menu Targets (including meals and between-meal snacks and beverages). [Click here](#) to view source on page 12.