

MEDIA RELEASE

700 Lawrence Ave. W., Suite 310
Toronto, Ontario M6A 3B4

Tel: (416) 367-3313
1-800-267-6817 (Ont)
Fax: (416) 367-2844
E-mail: info@opha.on.ca
www.opha.on.ca

Honorary Patron
The Hon. James K. Bartleman
Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

President
Dr. Garry Aslanyan
E-mail: gaslanyan@opha.on.ca

Executive Director
Connie Uetrecht
E-mail: cuetrecht@opha.on.ca

Constituent Societies
ANDSOOHA – Public Health Nursing
Management in Ontario

Association of Ontario
Health Centres

Association of Public Health
Epidemiologists in Ontario

Association of Supervisors of Public
Health Inspectors of Ontario

Canadian Institute of Public Health
Inspectors (Ontario Branch)

Community Health Nurses' Initiatives
Group (RNAO)

Health Promotion Ontario:
Public Health

Ontario Association of Public Health
Dentistry

Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals
in Public Health

Public Health Research, Education and
Development (PHRED) Program

Charitable Registration
Number 11924 8771 RR0001

All Canadians should benefit from new Food Guide: OPHA

Public health professionals throughout Ontario welcome today's release of *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*, an updated version of the Food Guide that reflects the most current evidence on nutrition and the eating habits of our diverse population. While congratulating Health Canada on this important release, the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) urges governments at all levels to work to ensure that all Canadians can afford to benefit from the new guidelines. Healthy eating reduces the risk of obesity and prevents Type 2 Diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer, and osteoporosis.

By following the recommendations in the new Guide, healthy Canadians over the age of two can meet their nutrient needs. Unfortunately, this goal is simply not achievable for low-income Canadians who often cannot afford to provide their families with an adequate and nutritious diet due to insufficient social assistance and minimum wage rates, a scarce supply of affordable housing, and the ever increasing cost of nutritious food.

Tracy Woloshyn, Chair of OPHA's Food Security Workgroup, confirmed that the problem gets worse for those with the lowest income. "We absolutely know that the lower a household income is, the more likely it is that the family will experience food insecurity." In fact, close to 15% of Canadians indicated in the 2000-2001 Canadian Community Health Survey that in the past 12 months they had worried about not having enough to eat, compromised the quality or variety of food eaten, or did not have enough to eat because of a lack of money. This underestimates the true prevalence of food insecurity because the survey excluded some particularly vulnerable populations – on-reserve Aboriginals, persons living in Northern Canada and remote areas of Quebec and Ontario, homeless people and other people without telephones.

The links among income, nutrition and health are well documented. "Poor nutrition leads to increased risk for chronic and infectious diseases, as well as disease-related conditions such as low birth weight," said OPHA President Dr. Garry Aslanyan. "These conditions and diseases cost more to treat and manage than they would cost to prevent by ensuring people are financially able to purchase adequate and nutritious foods."

The release of *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* is an excellent time for all levels of government to act to ensure that all Canadians, including the most vulnerable, are able to follow these excellent new guidelines.

-30-

Media Contact: Susan Sperling, OPHA Communications & Public Relations
Officer, 416-367-3313 ext 230