

New personal diet calculator checks how your diet stacks up against guidelines

October 13 2023, by Sachintha Wickramasinghe



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The [Dietary Pattern Calculator \(DiPaC\)](#), developed by a cross-Canadian team led by University of British Columbia assistant professor Dr. Mahsa Jessri, is a screening tool that can help anyone make healthier

food choices and for health care providers to integrate food and nutrition information more easily into their practice.

The [*Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*](#) published the methodology behind DiPaC on Oct. 12.

"In under 15 minutes, DiPaC can capture how healthy your diet is overall, compare it to other Canadians of the same age and sex, and provide tips on how to change your [eating habits](#) for the better," said Dr. Jessri, assistant professor in the faculty of land and [food systems](#) and Canada research chair in nutritional epidemiology for population health. "This assessment could become part of everyone's [electronic medical records](#) and be used to identify patients who could benefit from a referral to a dietitian."

DiPaC asks its users a series of short questions about their [physical activity](#) and home-cooking practices, and how often they eat from nine food groups like [sugar-sweetened beverages](#), fast foods, salty snacks, dark green and orange vegetables, fruits, legumes and whole grains, among others.

Dr. Jessri's research team identified these food groups as the strongest predictors of diet quality and non-communicable disease risk by studying the eating habits of more than 13,000 Canadians, as reported in the nutrition-specific version of the [Canadian Community Health Survey](#).

Encouraging education and discussion around food as preventative medicine is important because what people eat can greatly affect their risk of chronic disease. According to a [2022 report from Diabetes Canada](#), 74.6% of Canadian adults are not eating enough fruits and vegetables, and 46.2% are physically inactive.

DiPaC was developed based on a North American diet using Canadian

food surveys and nutritional data, so it won't work for everyone—especially those adhering to special diets or those with certain diseases, said Dr. Jessri.

More information: Mahsa Jessri et al, Development and Evaluation of the Dietary Pattern Calculator (DiPaC) for Personalized Assessment and Feedback, *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research* (2023).

[DOI: 10.3148/cjdpr-2023-013](https://doi.org/10.3148/cjdpr-2023-013)

Provided by University of British Columbia

Citation: New personal diet calculator checks how your diet stacks up against guidelines (2023, October 13) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-10-personal-diet-stacks-guidelines.html>

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