

# Does Canada's food guide provide adequate guidance for older adults?

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The latest [Canada's food guide](#) recommendations are primarily aimed at reducing chronic disease risk; however, how well does our national guide for healthy eating serve the nutritional needs of all Canadians?

Consuming adequate amounts of certain nutrients should be a priority for older adults. But, until now, little has been known if following Canada's food guide adequately supported the specific nutrient recommendations for this subpopulation.

Researchers from McGill University's School of Human Nutrition used dietary intake data from the latest national survey (2015) in Canadians aged 65 years or older to assess if sticking to our country's food recommendations was associated with sufficient nutrient intake for older adults.

The findings are [published](#) in *The Journal of Nutrition*.

"As we expected, for individuals following the food guide's recommendations, we observed greater intakes of nutrients such as fiber, magnesium, vitamin B6, and potassium. However, on the flip side, we also found that these individuals would not consume enough calcium, vitamin D, and folate," explains Didier Brassard, a Postdoctoral Fellow at the School of Human Nutrition at McGill University who led the study. These are among the nutrients that are important for older adults.

Following Canada's dietary recommendations in their current form is not sufficient to consume enough calcium, vitamin D or folate. "Our findings support the value of having additional recommendations tailored for older adults that specifically target foods rich in calcium,

vitamin D, or folate," says McGill professor Stéphanie Chevalier, School of Human Nutrition.

Indeed, the current food guide provides very flexible recommendations for all Canadians, but more precise recommendations are needed to indicate the quantity and frequency of specific foods that may be needed for subgroups of the population, such as [older adults](#).

The next step of this project will be to examine how following the current guidelines affects [health outcomes](#) such as physical function, mobility, and cognition and how guidelines can be modified to improve these outcomes.

**More information:** Didier Brassard et al, Relationship between Adherence to the 2019 Canada's Food Guide Recommendations on Healthy Food Choices and Nutrient Intakes in Older Adults, *The Journal of Nutrition* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.tjnut.2023.07.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tjnut.2023.07.005)

Provided by McGill University

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