

New food guide fun, adaptable

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Medicine Hat News

It's pretty, it's fun, interactive, colourful and full of information, but the new Canada's Food Guide is just that — a guide to healthy eating.

People want to make eating well complicated, and not achievable, says Marcia Stodalka, B.Sc.H.Ec., regional community health nutrition program, team leader and registered dietitian.

"This drives many to complicated, expensive, prescriptive diets full of supplements," she added.

"The guide helps simplify eating to better meet your needs."

The fact that you can customize the food guide and get better information on what you should be eating for your age, your gender makes it a valuable tool.

Julie Lacasse, M.Fc, RD, supervisor of clinical nutrition at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital says, "It's not what you eat between Christmas and New Year's, it's what you eat between New Year's and Christmas."

The guide can help you develop a long-lasting healthy lifestyle.

"It's small steps towards achieving a sustainable diet," she continued.

Healthy oils is one focus of the new guide. Some fats are essential and canola, olive and Soya bean oils are important to a balanced diet, adds Lacasse.

She also insists that a healthy diet is tied directly to physical activity.

"Is a piece of cheesecake fattening? We can't answer that question, because it depends on the amount of energy you are using every day. We need the proper balance."

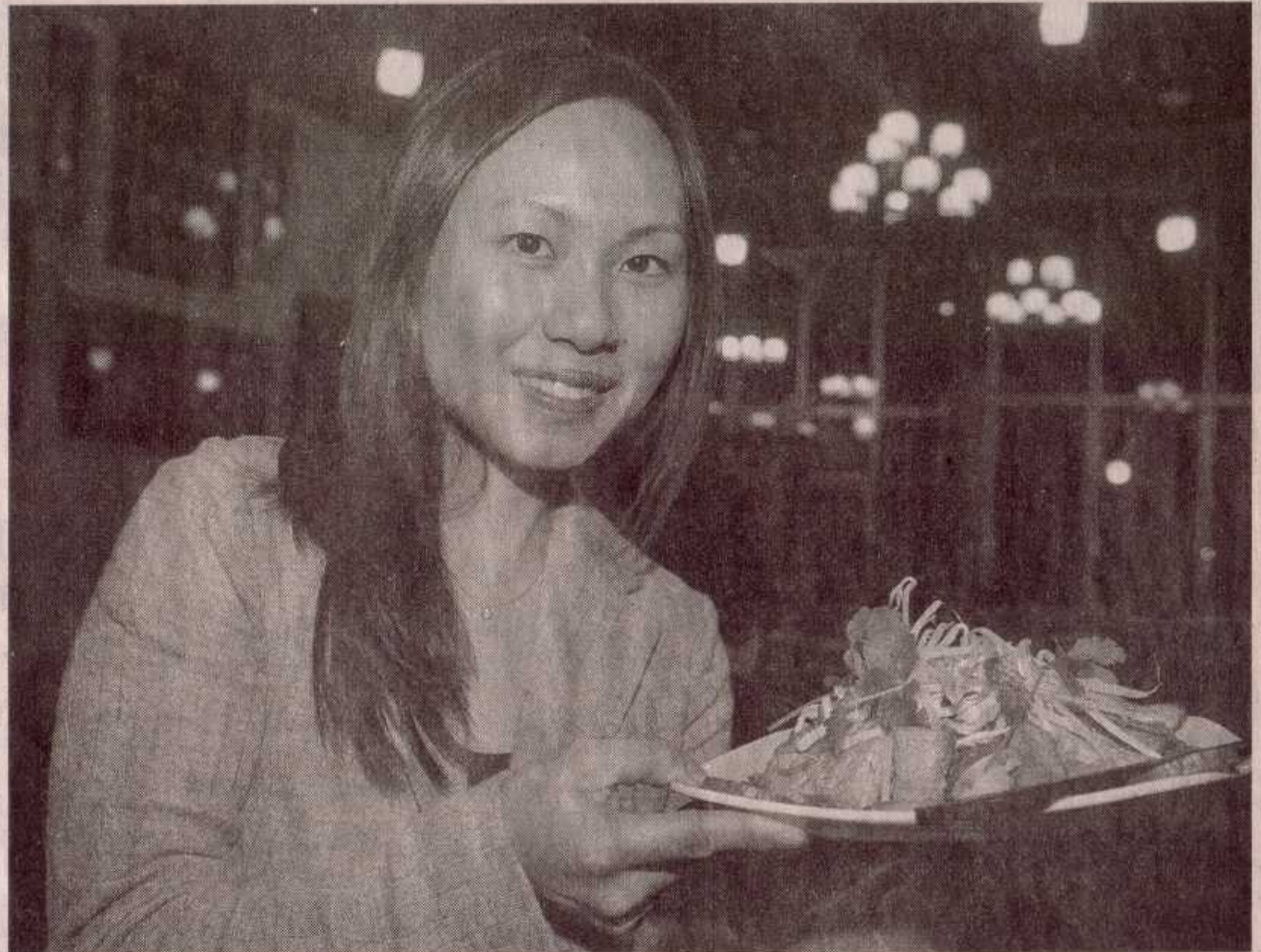
If you read through the new guide, or hear a lot about it on TV, don't be hurt when it recommends less beef, and more meat alternatives.

"The balance between meat choices and non-meat choices to meet protein requirements is essential," said Stodalka.

"Non-meat options tend to be lower in fat, (which) makes them attractive, and they can be beneficial."

But this is Alberta, the beef capital of Canada.

Look closely, she emphasizes, meat can be better, because the quality of protein in meat, with complete amino acids — is necessary.



NEWS PHOTO EMMA BENNETT

Sou Boss, owner of The Orchid Room, serves a vegetarian pad thai dish on Wednesday at her restaurant. The dish includes bean sprouts, carrots, zucchini, onions, bok choy, and tofu. Similar types of ethnic foods are included on the new Canada Food Guide are considered to make the guide more appropriate for the cultural diversity in Canada.

"In vegetarian eating, you have to pay more attention to food selection to get the proper balance of complete protein," explained Stodalka.

This means possibly combining ingredients such as beans with bread.

A notable difference in the new food guide is diversity.

"More examples of ethnic foods also make the food guide more appropriate for our culturally diverse nation," said Lynda Corby, director of public affairs for Dietitians of Canada.

Basically all the favourites, tortillas, tofu, lentils and many more are now recommended by the

guide.

This should help new Canadians maintain healthy diets in our unhealthy food marketing society, says Stodalka.

"The food guides diversity helps them learn how they can adapt their foods to make up a healthy diet."

The food guide by itself won't do it, but the tools that go with it can ease the transition, she concluded.

So get out there and play around with the new Canada's Food Guide online at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index_e.html.