



Ontario Home Economics Association

Ask a Professional Home Economist

For Immediate Release

Nutrition in the News: Who Can You Trust?

By Erin MacGregor, RD, P.H.Ec.

The number of nutrition resources available to consumers today is mind-boggling, and reports linking diet to health continue to multiply. With the popularity of social media, blogs and the deluge of health-themed smartphone and tablet applications now available to Canadians, it's little wonder people get confused. While some reports are developed using rigorous research by (or with the help of) credentialed professionals, many are not. So at the end of the day, who can you trust?

Tips to help you evaluate nutrition advice and identify fact from fiction:

1. Always consider the source of information:

- Look for material written, edited or developed by Canadian professionals who practice within the standards of a larger regulatory body. Examples include, Registered Dietitians, Physicians and Professional Home Economists;
- Look for publications with a well-established reputation for reporting evidenced-based facts;
- Beware of sensational headlines and stories. While the science of nutrition is constantly evolving, it is unusual for the results of one study to have an impact on an entire body of research;
- Beware of anecdotal nutrition advice which may not be supported by science but instead is based on the personal account of an author or a small group. For example, a weekly nutrition column written by a Registered Dietitian in a national newspaper would be considered a more reliable source of information than an independent blogger writing about his own success with an experimental diet.

2. Look for Information from Registered Dietitians and Professional Home Economists:

Registered Dietitians (RD) are food and nutrition professionals with standardized training who must be part of a regulatory body just like other health professionals such as doctors and pharmacists. Dietitians are trained to review up-to-date nutrition research and interpret new findings for the benefit of average Canadians. Obtaining nutrition advice from a Dietitian ensures you are getting information based on the best scientific evidence available. Whether it is a question about a popular fad diet or the optimal foods for infant and child nutrition, Dietitians are trusted food and nutrition

experts. Be aware that in most provinces there are no regulatory standards to protect the title “Nutritionist” and professionals with this title may have varied levels of training. To speak with a Dietitian near you, visit: www.dietitians.ca and click on “Find a Dietitian”. Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba offer a free service where questions about nutrition and healthy eating can be answered by Dietitians via phone and/or email.

Professional Home Economists (P.H.Ec.) focus on home and family life. Many P.H.Ec.’s are Food and Nutrition university graduates who work closely with families and individuals to help them sort fact from fiction and put trusted science-based nutrition theory into practice. The Ontario Home Economics Association website (www.ohea.on.ca) is a trusted source for P.H.Ec. advice.

3. Use Canada’s Food Guide as a go-to standard for healthy eating:

Canada’s Food Guide has been carefully developed to meet the nutrient needs of healthy Canadians, to reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease and to contribute to your overall health and vitality. The guide describes the type and amount of food required to meet these needs and focuses on a high intake of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains, along with low fat dairy, and meat and alternatives recommendations. Canada’s Food Guide is based on decades of accumulated scientific evidence and was created by Health Canada with input from a wide range of stakeholders such as non-government organizations, academics, health professionals, industry and consumers.

4. Do your own research:

While the volume of nutrition information available to Canadians can seem overwhelming, reliable and consumer-friendly nutrition resources do exist. The following is a list of trusted online resources that can be used to find evidence-based nutrition advice.

[Dietitians of Canada](#)

[Ontario Home Economics Association](#)

[Health Canada - Food and Nutrition](#)

[Canadian Diabetes Association](#)

[Canadian Cancer Society](#)

[The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada](#)

Erin MacGregor is a Registered Dietitian and Professional Home Economist who works at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto. She is a member of the Ontario Home Economics Association and is passionate about promoting food and healthy eating to improve the lives of Canadians.

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Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA), a self-regulated body of Professional Home Economists, promotes high professional standards among its members so that they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life. OHEA is grateful for support from the Gwenyth Bailey Simpson Communications Award from the Canadian Home Economics Foundation. **For further information**, please contact: Ontario Home Economics Association, 14 Totten Place, Woodstock, ON N4S 8G7 Tel/Fax: 519-290-1843 Email: nancyohea@rogers.com Website: www.ohea.on.ca