

Minister of Health



Ministre de la Santé

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K9

Mr. Bill Casey, M.P.
Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Casey,

Thank you for your letter of August 10, 2018, on behalf of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, summarizing input shared with the Committee relating to Canada's Food Guide by a number of stakeholders. As the Minister of Health, I value the input received from those who provided testimony or submitted briefs to the Committee. Their interest in Canada's Food Guide, and the time it took to devote to this undertaking, is appreciated, and is being considered by Health Canada as the guidance is being refined and finalized.

As you know, in October 2016 we announced the revision of Canada's Food Guide, a key element of Health Canada's [Healthy Eating Strategy](#) which aims to curb the rising burden of obesity and chronic disease by making the healthier choice easier. In an era of conflicting nutrition messages, the revision of Canada's Food Guide will give Canadians confidence in guidance that is based on the best available evidence and consistent with other respected health authorities.

Canadians have grown up learning about healthy eating from the Food Guide, which has provided a consistent foundation for nutrition and health education policies and programs across the country. It provides the foundation for what children are taught in schools and what health professionals promote when supporting Canadians to eat well. It also influences the foods served and sold in Canada's public institutions from day cares and schools, to long-term care facilities, as well as the foods Canadians choose for themselves and their families. Although the Food Guide is developed to benefit all Canadians, Health Canada recognizes that individuals with specific dietary requirements, including those receiving care in a clinical setting, may need additional guidance, or specialized advice, from a health care professional.

Health Canada considers the strongest convincing evidence in the revision of Canada's Food Guide, where there is a well-established evidence base to support public health need, and where the evidence is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. The [2015 Evidence Review for Dietary Guidance](#), published in October 2016, forms the foundation of the evidence to support Canada's Food Guide. Health Canada continues to monitor the evidence and plans to release an updated evidence review on food, nutrients and health in fall 2018.

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Health Canada held two online public consultations on Canada's Food Guide. The consultations were open to all interested Canadians, including health professionals, educators, health organizations, and industry. Input from online public consultations, experts, and stakeholders is being considered as our guidance is being finalized, prior to its release later this year.

The revised Canada's Food Guide will communicate guidance in ways that better meet the needs of the general public and health professionals. It will include a suite of online tools and resources for different users, including the general public, health professionals and policy makers.

Health Canada also notes the Committee's recommendations related to promoting a healthy food environment, encouraging sustainable development, and reflecting the cultural diversity of Canada. Health Canada has taken these recommendations into consideration and will aim to ensure that they are reflected in the revised Canada's Food Guide. For example, the revised Canada's Food Guide will provide guidance on cultural preferences and food traditions, including how traditional food improves diet quality among Indigenous Peoples.

New healthy eating recommendations and supporting resources for Canadians will begin to be released in 2018 and will continue into 2019.

Thank you for studying this important issue and for sharing the input received from those who provided testimony or submitted briefs to the Committee. The Committee's work will be of great assistance in finalizing the revised Canada's Food Guide. We look forward to sharing the new Canada's Food Guide with Canadians later this year.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, P.C., M.P.