**Making our Holiday Meals Healthier using Canada's food guide**

The holiday season is fast approaching, and food and beverages are often central to many of our holiday celebrations and festivities. The new Canada's food guide is a great tool to help you and your family make healthier food choices throughout this holiday season.

1. **Keep Proportions in Mind**
   Encourage your family to use Canada's food guide as a model at holiday meals. Aim to fill half the plate with vegetables and fruit and choose protein foods and whole grain foods for the other two quarters of the plate.

1. **Be Mindful**
   The new food guide encourages us to think beyond what we eat, and to also think about how we eat. During celebrations there is often an abundance of food and festivities. Use these tips to help your kids be more mindful eaters in the busyness of the holiday season:
   - Take time to eat: find the time and space to sit down as a family and focus on eating without any distractions.
   - Notice your feelings of hunger and fullness: encourage kids to make food choices based on their hunger level, rather than boredom or availability.

2. **Think about your drink**
   There are lots of sweets and treats during the holiday season. Replacing sugary drinks with water is a simple way to reduce the amount of sugar your kids are having. Let your kids try adding fresh fruit to water if they want a special drink for a special occasion. Here are some ideas to try:
   1. Chopped apples + cinnamon stick
   2. Cranberry + lemon
   3. Raspberries + cucumber
   4. Blackberries + mint

   *To avoid risk of choking, make flavoured water in a pitcher and serve in glasses without fruit or flavours.*

3. **Think Beyond Food to Celebrate**
   Finally, instead of celebrating with food, try celebrating with a family activity like playing a favourite game, making a holiday craft, going skating or playing outside.

Adapted from food-guide.canada.ca. Visit food-guide.canada.ca for more information.

Brought to you by Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services.