

# Guiding Principles: Community Funded Meals

## Introduction

Since the summer of 2012, discussions about community funded meals have taken place at meetings of the **Peterborough Food Action Network (PFAN)**. It is critical that all participants and volunteers for community meals experience equity and have access to quality food.

For this reason, a sub-committee of PFAN was formed to create a set of guiding principles for community funded meals. Throughout the fall of 2012, the sub-committee obtained feedback on these guiding principles from both volunteers and participants. These principles were approved by PFAN in November 2012.

In 2015, a community meal program survey, led by Nourish Project Peer Advocates, collected feedback from participants at four meal sites. The results of these surveys provide important information about the experience of people attending the meals. These guiding principles have been updated to reflect the needs, areas for improvement, and things being done well, identified by participants.

If you are interested, please feel free to print off the posters below entitled, "Guiding Principles for Community Funded Meals" and "Nutrition Suggestions for Community Funded Meals" to display at your organization. In response to the release of the updated Canada's Food Guide, these posters were revised and approved by PFAN in 2019.

## Peterborough Food Action Network

705-743-1000



[www.foodinpeterborough.ca](http://www.foodinpeterborough.ca)

# Guiding Principles: Community Meals

The following are a few guiding principles promoted by the **Peterborough Food Action Network** for community meal providers:

1. Every person has the right to meals. Meals should be available to anyone who is hungry. If, for reasons of safety, an individual must be temporarily prevented from entering the building where the meal is being served, arrangements can be made to bring food to the individual. Food should never be withheld as a disciplinary measure.
2. Every person has the right to be respected and deserves to be treated with dignity at community meals including during meal preparation and the serving of food. This includes employees, volunteers who prepare and serve food, and those who attend the community meals.
3. Meals should meet the food safety criteria established by Peterborough Public Health.
4. Meal providers should strive to provide nutritious meals. Where possible, meal providers will provide alternatives to people with food allergies, or for ethical, health, or religious reasons.
5. Meal providers should strive to create a pleasant atmosphere that allows people the opportunity to socialize and enjoy food together (e.g., quiet music, table cloths). Meals should be recognized as a way to meet social needs through meeting and making friends.

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# Nutrition Suggestions for Community Meals

Thank you for your involvement with community meal programs. The **Peterborough Food Action Network** was asked to prepare this list of suggestions to consider in your planning. These suggestions are based on feedback from community members, and the 2019 Canada's Food Guide.

- Offer a variety of healthy foods at main meals, including:**
  - a. Vegetables and Fruit**
    - Serve cooked vegetables beside a salad or raw veggies at lunch/supper.
    - Offer fruit with meals.
  - b. Whole Grains**
    - Examples include oatmeal, wild rice, whole grain bread or pasta (first ingredient is whole grain or whole wheat).
  - c. Protein Foods**
    - Offer plant based protein (beans, peanut butter).
    - Offer milk as an alternative to coffee whitener.
    - Reduce amounts of processed meats (deli meats, bacon, hot dogs, ham, sausage). They are high in sodium, saturated fat and nitrites.
- Reduce the amount of sugar, saturated fats, and salt in meals.** Reduce the amount of processed and convenience foods whenever possible.
  - a. To further reduce salt, season foods with herbs, spices, lemon juice, and/or vinegar instead of salt. Have salt and pepper shakers available.
- Have jugs of cold water available.** Reduce amounts of sugar sweetened beverages such as pop, fruit drinks, energy drinks, juice, and sports drinks.
- Provide nutritious soft food alternatives** for people who are not able to chew properly.
- Recognize that appetites vary**, and allow for this when planning. Allow people to request smaller or larger portion sizes depending on their needs.
- We heard that alternate choices may be appreciated when the following are served:**
  - Pasta/Gluten/Wheat
  - Beans
  - Mushrooms
  - Citrus
  - Spicy foods
  - Onions, Peppers

## Have a nutrition question?

Call a registered dietitian at **Telehealth Ontario**  
at **1-866-797-0000**, or visit **[www.unlockfood.ca](http://www.unlockfood.ca)**



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