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A STRONG TRADITION OF COLLABORATION:

# The Federal/Provincial/Territorial Group on Nutrition



**F**or more than 50 years, representatives of federal, provincial and territorial governments have met to exchange information and develop collaborative policies, programs and resources in community/public health nutrition. Today, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Group on Nutrition (FPTGN) carries on this important tradition, bringing together professionals working in nutrition policy and program development in the federal government and each province and territory to promote the nutritional health of Canadians. In recent years, the FPTGN has contributed to a wide range of working papers, nutrition guidelines and evaluation frameworks, and participated in national workshops and consultations on key nutrition policies and issues.

## NUTRITION MILESTONES

### 1930s

- First Dietary Standard for Canada developed

### 1940s

- Canada's Official Food Rules introduced

### 1950s and 1960s

- New Canadian Dietary Standard released
- Canada's Food Guide replaces Canada's Official Food Rules

### 1970s

- Health promotion and disease prevention move to the forefront
- Lalonde report entitled *New Perspective on the Health of Canadians* released
- Nutrition Canada Survey conducted
- Canada's Food Guide revised and *Handbook* developed

### 1980s

- Health promotion framework entitled *Achieving Health for All* developed
- *Promoting Healthy Weights: A Discussion Paper* released
- Heart Health initiatives begin
- Voluntary nutrition labelling on foods

### 1990s

- VITALITY program addresses healthy weights issue
- *Nutrition Recommendations and Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating* prepared
- Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating released
- Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP)
- *Nutrition for Health: An Agenda for Action* released

## LOOKING BACK

Intergovernmental collaboration on nutrition issues has evolved considerably over the years, reflecting half a century of change in Canada's social, economic, political and technological environment.

### The early roots (1945)

Federal/provincial/territorial collaboration on nutrition issues dates back to 1945 and the establishment of the Dominion Provincial Nutrition Committee. An arm of the Canadian Council on Nutrition — which functioned as the nationally recognized body on nutrition for more than 30 years — the Committee's primary responsibility was to promote coordination and cooperation on nutrition education materials among federal and provincial governments. Each of the provinces was represented on the Committee, as were supervisors in the Nutrition Division and regional nutritionists of what was then the Department of National Health and Welfare. When membership on the Council was discontinued in 1969, the Committee followed suit.

### Evolution and change (1971-87)

The 1970s saw a number of changes to both the structure and direction of federal/provincial/territorial collaboration. When federal and provincial/territorial nutritionists met in the early 1970s, their focus was on determining provincial/territorial roles in *Nutrition Canada*, the first national nutrition survey in Canada. In January of 1975, federal and provincial nutritionists came together as the Federal-Provincial Committee on Nutrition, reporting to the ministers and deputy ministers of health through the Advisory Committee on Community Health.

As a result of an overall restructuring of advisory committees, federal-provincial collaboration on nutrition was transferred to the Federal-Provincial Committee on Lifestyles and Health Promotion in the late 1970s. In its new incarnation, the Federal-Provincial Subcommittee on Nutrition (FPSCN) assumed a number of important roles aimed at maintaining and improving the nutritional health of Canadians and preventing nutrition-related diseases in Canada. These included:

- providing advice to federal and provincial ministers and deputy ministers of health on issues related to the nutritional health of Canadians and on appropriate joint federal-provincial strategies for action
- serving as a mechanism for federal-provincial cooperation and coordination of nutrition programs and exploring areas for future direction of nutrition programs
- offering leadership in the development of effective community health nutrition services and programs

## THE FPTGN TODAY

Changes to the structure of federal/provincial/territorial advisory committees led to the formation of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Group on Nutrition in 1988. Initially charged with sharing information, and providing advice on policy and other nutrition issues, the Group's roles and responsibilities were revised in 1997-98 to include:

- promoting and supporting the development and review of public policies in food and nutrition with federal/provincial/territorial significance
- providing technical input into the development of programs, position papers and resource materials and participating on national committees
- identifying emerging issues and priorities for federal/provincial/territorial collaboration
- providing advice to federal/provincial/territorial and international committees and subcommittees on food and nutrition issues, programs and policies
- sharing information about technical food and nutrition issues, programs and policies; community/public health nutrition personnel issues; and issues that impact on the nutritional health of Canadians

The Group meets semi-annually and communicates regularly by teleconference and electronic mail. The chair is shared between a federal and a provincial/territorial representative.





## THE FPTGN'S COMMITMENT

In pursuing its goals, the FPTGN is committed to:

- actions and communications that are timely, strategic and effective
- alliances and collaboration with other agencies, organizations and intergovernmental committees
- minimizing duplication for federal, provincial and territorial governments



## Key initiatives

In recent years, the Group has collaborated successfully on a number of important initiatives, including:

### Landmark reports

- represented on the Joint Steering Committee for *Nutrition for Health: An Agenda for Action*, Canada's national strategic plan
- participated in the development of *Canada's Plan of Action on Food Security*

### Influencing public policy

- provided input to the development of *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*, an important element of Canada's nutrition policy
- advocated to Health Canada for an improved nutrition labelling scheme
- participated in three national workshops to identify and define relevant issues related to nutrition labelling, health claims and the addition of vitamins and minerals to foods

### Setting practice guidelines

- in partnership with the National Institute of Nutrition, developed and distributed *Promoting Nutritional Health During the Preschool Years: Canadian Guidelines*
- worked with the Canadian Paediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada and Health Canada in the development of *Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants*
- endorsed and contributed to the development of *Nutrition for a Healthy Pregnancy: National Guidelines for the Childbearing Years*

- provided input to the development of Health Canada's recommendations regarding *Reducing the Risk of Neural Tube Defects*

### Food and nutrition issues

- supported the development and implementation of the nutritious food basket as a food costing tool
- ongoing participation on the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada
- developed working paper *Nutrition Personnel in Public Health in Canada for the 1990s and Beyond*

### Nutrition surveillance for Canada

- represented on the Working Group for the National Food and Nutrition Surveillance System

### Research and evaluation

- participated in development of the evaluation framework for the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program

### Nutrition education resources

- provided input into teaching materials such as *Food Guide Facts — Background for Educators and Communicators*; *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating — Focus on Children Six to Twelve Years*; and *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating — Focus on Preschoolers*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ...

Contact your provincial/territorial member or Health Canada representative, or check out the Health Canada Web site at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>

