

# ZINC & Your Health

## Consumer Fact Sheet

Zinc is essential for growth, strong immune systems and healthy pregnancies. Enjoying zinc-rich foods can help you get the zinc you need for good health.

### GOOD FOR GROWTH

Infants, children and teens rely on zinc for healthy growth.



### STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEMS

Your immune system depends on zinc to help fight infections.



### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Zinc may affect children's learning and adult mental performance.



### HEALTHY PREGNANCIES

Moms-to-be need more zinc to meet baby's needs plus their own.

It's a good idea to always consult a registered dietitian or doctor before taking any supplements. Visit the Dietitians of Canada website to "Find a Dietitian" in your area for more individual advice on healthy eating: [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)

## See How Much Zinc You Need Recommended Dietary Allowances

LIFE STAGE	AGE (Years)	Zinc (mg/day)
Infants	7 months-1 yr.	3
Children	1-3	3
	4-8	5
	9-13	8
Boys & Men	14 plus	11
Girls	14-18	9
Women	19 plus	8
Pregnancy	14-18	13
	19-50	11
Breastfeeding	14-18	14
	19-50	12

## Extra Special Attention!

Everyone needs zinc, but young children, teen girls and older adults are especially vulnerable to mild zinc deficiency. Vegetarians who limit zinc-rich foods, like meat, poultry, fish and seafood, may need up to 50% more zinc.

# Easy Ways to Get the Zinc You Need!

## 1 FOLLOW CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE TO HEALTHY EATING:

Enjoy a variety of foods each day. For a copy of *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*, contact your local health department or visit Health Canada at: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/nutrition](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/nutrition)

## 2 EAT 2 TO 3 SERVINGS OF MEAT & ALTERNATIVES EACH DAY

The Meat & Alternatives group includes some of the best sources of zinc. Keep in mind that a serving of meat is about the size of a deck of cards.

## 3 CHOOSE NATURE'S BEST SOURCES OF ZINC MORE OFTEN

Select plenty of foods that are naturally rich in zinc like lean red meats such as

beef. Use the *Foods with Zinc* list to help you choose zinc-rich foods.

## 4 INCREASE ZINC ABSORPTION WITH HIGH QUALITY PROTEIN

High quality protein from animal sources helps your body absorb more zinc. Add lean meat, poultry and fish to pasta dishes, stir fries, chili, soups, sandwiches, wraps, and salads to increase your overall zinc absorption.

## 5 BE AWARE THAT PLANT FOODS CAN LIMIT ZINC ABSORPTION

Plant foods are important for healthy eating, but phytates found in whole grains, soy products, lentils, dried peas and beans and other plant foods limit zinc absorption. Balance plant foods with animal protein to get more zinc.

### Foods with Zinc

More than 5.0 mg per serving	3.1 to 4.0 mg per serving	1.1 to 3.0 mg per serving	1.0 mg per serving or less
Oysters Most beef cuts Ground beef Liver (beef, lamb, veal) 	Most pork cuts Baked beans 	Lentils Kidney beans Mussels Shrimp Chicken, light & dark meat Cheddar cheese Yoghurt, plain Eggs Bran flakes Tofu 	Milk Peanut butter Tuna, canned Sole fillet Salmon Oatmeal, quick Rice, white and brown Corn flakes Spaghetti/macaroni Bread, whole wheat and white Most fruits and vegetables 

Based on serving sizes recommended by *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*, at:

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/nutrition](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/nutrition)

For Meats and Alternatives - 100 g cooked meat, poultry, fish, tofu; 250 mL legumes; 2 eggs.

Source: Canadian Nutrient File, 2001.

### Zinc Supplements are Seldom Recommended

Most people can get enough zinc by enjoying a variety of zinc-rich foods as part of a balanced diet. The effect of zinc lozenges on the length of the common cold is still not clear. However, long-term use of zinc pills may weaken your immune system, lower HDL (good) cholesterol and interfere with iron absorption.



This nutrition resource is brought to you by the registered dietitians at the Beef Information Centre.

Questions about beef? Visit [www.beefinfo.org](http://www.beefinfo.org) or call 1-888-248-BEEF or contact your local Beef Information Centre in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Mississauga, St. Laurent or Bedford.

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