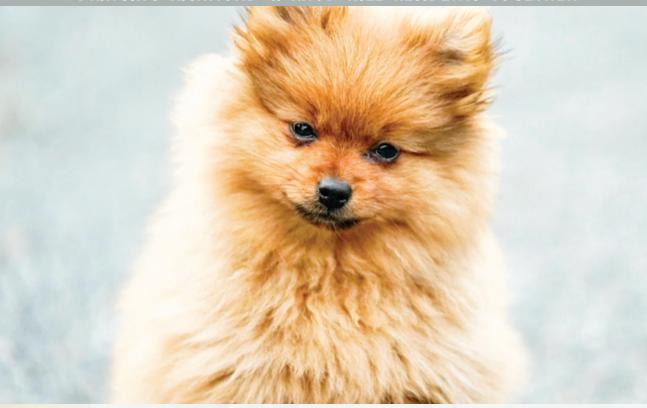
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Reducing Household Food Waste: Planning, Shopping, and Storage

by Alberta Health Services



Food waste is food that was grown or harvested but never eaten. Some food waste at home can't be avoided, like eggshells, bones, tea bags or coffee grounds, but some food waste can. Avoidable food waste is food that is thrown out because we don't store it properly, buy too much, or cook too much. A 2022 study showed that 63% of food Canadians throw away could have been eaten. While all types of foods are wasted, the top foods that are thrown away are: vegetables and fruits, leftovers, and bread.

This article includes tips and resources to reduce your food waste at home.

Planning Your Meals

Planning meals a few days or a week ahead of time may prevent you from buying too much food. Consider what food items you already have. Check your fridge and cupboards carefully to see how much is left in containers or packages. Checking best before dates is helpful so you can use up food while it's at its freshest. Note that 'best before' dates are not the same

as expiration dates. Expiration dates are about food safety, whereas 'best before' dates are about freshness. So just because a food is past its 'best before' date doesn't mean it needs to be tossed. Then think about some meals that you like or can easily make with items you already have. Then create a list on paper or your phone of items you do not have.

Grocery Shopping

When buying fresh, consider what options are best for your family, for example, pre-washed and pre-cut fruits, vegetables and salads can be convenient, but are more expensive. However, if this means you are more likely to eat them instead of throwing out unprepared produce, then this may be an option for you. It can also be helpful to pre-wash and cut your produce for easy access during the week, so you are more likely to eat it and less likely to have waste.

Frozen and canned options are also time-savers as the preparation has already been done for you. They last a lot longer than fresh, so are less likely to go bad before

you can use them up. Buying frozen or canned produce offers year-round variety that otherwise might not be available. Try adding frozen or canned vegetables into pasta sauce, casseroles, soups, or stir-fry. Frozen or canned fruit can be added to yogurt, cereal, baking, or smoothies.

Storing Foods

Consider the order that you use some foods as some foods can keep longer in the fridge than others. Most fresh vegetables and fruits will stay fresh longer if they are unrinsed. Consider washing produce before preparing, freezing, or eating it. Some produce gives off a gas (ethylene) that speeds up ripening - apples, bananas, kiwis, tomatoes, avocados. Keep these vegetables and fruits in a loosely tied bag away from already ripe produce. Some produce will also stay fresh longer than others so consider using produce like kale, chard, carrots, and cabbage later in the week.

Since bread and baked goods are among the top foods that are thrown away, store bread and buns in a cool, dark, and dry place in the original packing. Or consider freezing if you don't think you will be able to use up the bread by the best before date. Storing bread in the fridge may make it go stale more quickly.

If you have leftovers, it's important to store them properly. Wrap leftovers or place them in a covered container. Place them in a refrigerator within two hours of preparing or cooking. Consider labelling them with a date and remember to use the oldest ones first. Leftovers like soup can be safely eaten within two to three days after cooking, while other cooked dishes containing eggs, meat, vegetables, cooked fish, or poultry can be safely eaten within three to four days of being stored at the correct temperature in the fridge. Leftovers can be frozen for longer.

Making some or all of these choices when shopping or storing food can play a part in reducing your food waste at home.

For more helpful tips on food storage and safety visit Canada.ca and search: "Storing Vegetables and Fruits" and "Food Safety".

For more ideas to reduce food waste visit ahs.ca/ nutritionhandouts and search "Reduce Food Waste."



Early Literacy Development in Preschool

by Rima Madi, ECE



The early years of life are a critical period in child development due to the brain's plasticity and the rapid formation of neural connections. During this time, children absorb information quickly and are especially receptive to language and literacy. As Raban and Scull (2013) stated, "The early years are a crucial period for literacy and numeracy acquisition" (p. 101). This developmental stage lays the foundation for formal learning and presents an optimal window for nurturing early literacy. From infancy through the toddler years, children begin to grasp the basic components of letters and numbers that are essential for later academic success.

Early literacy begins well before children enter school. Parents and caregivers play an essential role by integrating reading, singing, storytelling, and conversation into daily routines. These interactions not only foster early language and literacy development but also promote social bonding and secure attachments. Environments that prioritize relationships and provide consistent opportunities for language-rich exchanges help children build the skills needed to succeed in school and beyond.

Children develop early literacy within the context of their socio-cultural environment, where they learn language through meaningful participation in family and community life. As Raban and Scull (2013) note, equal access to resources and culturally embedded practices allow children to grasp the deeper meanings and uses of language. According to the Canadian Paediatric Society

(2024), "Literacy is a key social determinant of health that affects the daily socioemotional lives of children and their economic prospects later in life" (p. 1). When children are immersed in print-rich environments—where books, signs, and labels are part of everyday life—they begin to understand that written language carries meaning.

Although several factors influence a child's reading ability, including memory, intelligence, and social class, the most consistent predictors of reading success are phonological awareness, print knowledge, and oral language. Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds in spoken words. Print knowledge includes recognizing letters and understanding how print works. Oral language skills—such as vocabulary and sentence formation—support comprehension and expression. Wilson and Lonigan (2010) found that children with stronger vocabularies are more likely to become fluent readers.

Children who experience limited literacy opportunities early on may face significant challenges. Difficulties in reading and writing can lead to academic frustration, reduced confidence, and delayed communication skills. These struggles can have social and emotional consequences, affecting children's ability to interact with peers. As Raban and Scull (2013) observed, "Parents are seeking help from professionals for their children whose self-esteem and behaviour problem are a consequence of learning difficulties..." (p. 102). Westrupp et al. (2020)

linked language delays with behaviour and emotional issues such as hyperactivity, inattention, and anxiety.

To prevent these outcomes, early intervention and structured literacy instruction are essential. According to the Canadian Paediatric Society (2024), well-designed literacy curricula—including systematic teaching of phonemic awareness, phonics, and early word reading—can prevent or resolve difficulties in up to 95% of children.

At the same time, it is vital to maintain a play-based, developmentally appropriate approach. Intentional literacy-rich play allows children to explore language in joyful and meaningful ways. Activities like rhyming songs, storytelling with props, and word games support phonemic awareness and vocabulary growth. Picture book read-alouds paired with reenactments offer multiple modes for children to engage with language. Field trips further support vocabulary by connecting words with real-world experiences. As Wohlwend (2021) explains, "Field trips embed language in actions, sensations, and memories to contextualize vocabulary" (p. 3).

In conclusion, early literacy development is foundational to lifelong learning, and integrating play-based strategies ensures that learning is engaging and effective. When educators and families collaborate to create supportive, literacy-rich environments, children are empowered to become confident and capable learners prepared for future success.

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Roasted Chickpea Salad

by Jennifer Puri

Chickpeas are often considered a superfood due to their high nutritional value and have been enjoyed by humans for over ten thousand years.

Grown in over fifty countries, chickpeas are a type of legume and in the same family as peanuts and kidney beans.

The high plant-based protein and fiber of chickpeas may also promote healthy ageing and assist in retaining our skin's elasticity and firmness.

Roasted chickpea salad is delicious on its own or can be served with pita bread or as a side salad.

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 540 ml can of chickpeas
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. paprika or hot pepper sauce
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 4 cups of chopped head lettuce
- 4 cups of cooked quinoa
- 1 cup Kalamata olives
- 1 cup sliced radishes
- 1 cup cucumber chopped
- 1 cup chopped tomatoes
- 1 small container of store-bought red pepper hummus

Dressing:

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup almond butter
- 3 tbsp. fresh squeezed lemon juice
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp. maple syrup
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. coarsely ground black pepper
- 5 to 6 tbsp. cold water

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 450 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Rinse, drain, and pat dry the chickpeas and place in a small bowl, then combine with the olive oil, salt, black pepper, and paprika or hot pepper sauce.
- Spread chickpeas on a foil lined baking tray and bake in the oven for about 25 to 30 minutes until brown and crisp. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.
- In a screw top jar place the olive oil, salt, pepper, Dijon mustard, lemon juice, and maple syrup, and shake until combined. Next add the almond butter and 5 to 6 tbsp. of cold water and stir until you get a smooth consistency.
- To serve divide the quinoa among the bowls and top with lettuce, olives, radish, tomatoes, cucumber, roasted chickpeas, red pepper hummus, and some dressing. Serve with pita bread if desired.

Bon Appétit!







GAMES & PUZZLES

Guess the Year!

- 1. The Canadian dollar was established across Canada.
- Canada sent its first national team to the summer Olympics in St. Louis.
- 3. Women get the right to vote.
- 4. Alberta becomes a province of Canada.
- 5. The first railway opens in Canada.
- 6. Terry Fox begins his Marathon of Hope.





TAKE ON WELLNESS

Unwrap the Teen Brain

by Recovery Alberta – Community Health Promotion Services

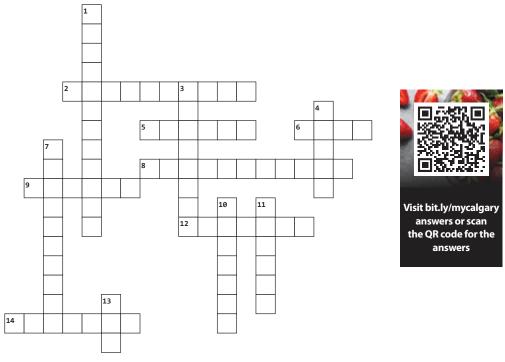


One of the major differences between teen and adult brains can be found in the brain's reward system, which is why youth are at a higher risk for harm connected to substance use or other risk-taking behaviours. Adolescents have higher levels of activation in the areas of the brain that are important in making us feel good, encouraging them to seek risk and reward.

Dopamine is commonly referred to as the "feel good" chemical in our brain that provides intense feelings of reward. So how does this differ between teen and adult brains? For teens, the baseline levels of dopamine are lower, but the release is higher. This means that youth tend to say they are "bored" unless they are actively involved in something rewarding or thrilling. This can also explain impulsive decision making and how some behaviours occur without thoughtful reflection. The desire for a stronger reward gets in the way of them to pause and critically think, problem solve or expect consequences. It is important for youth to learn and then practice pausing and reflecting on what they are doing. Let's teach youth to "pump the brakes" when making decisions.

This is one of the many things that are happening during brain development. Understanding the process will assist with supporting youth to help them thrive at an individual, relationship, school, and community level.

June Crossword



Across

- The harvest season for this juicy, red fruit typically starts in mid-June in Canada.
- 5. This solstice occurs in June in the Northern Hemisphere.
- 6. On June 21, 1970, _____ made history by becoming the first player to win the FIFA World Cup three times.
- 8. Along with the rose, this fragrant plant, popular with bees and hummingbirds, is the birth flower for June.
- 9. The dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George was first published on June 8, 1949.
- 12. Charles Blondin crossed ______ Falls on a tightrope on June 30, 1859.
- 14. On June 23 in the year 930 the world's oldest parliament was established in this Nordic Island nation.

Down

- Canadian actor Dan Aykroyd starred in this spooky comedy which premiered in June 1984.
- 3. Known for his role as Marty McFly in *Back to the Future*, Michael J. Fox was born in ______, Alberta on June 9, 1961.
- 4. Hockey Hall of Fame inductee, Cam _____, was born on June 6, 1965, in Comox, BC.
- Famous for songs such as "Ironic" and "Hand in My Pocket", Alanis ______ celebrates her birthday on June 1.
- 10. Avril _______'s debut album *Let Go* was released on June 4, 2002.
- 11. This superhero movie, directed by Tim Burton, premiered in June 1989.
- 13. The first broadcast of this 24-hour news channel occurred on June 1, 1980.

MENTAL HEALTH MOMENT

Stop Apologizing Already

by Nancy Bergeron, R.Psych. | info@nancybergeron.ca

This is something that really took me some time and awareness to change. Maybe it's because I'm Canadian...sorry?! Over-apologizing can be rooted in people-pleasing, a fear of conflict, feeling like you're a burden, or that you don't have a place to express yourself freely. The good news is you can unlearn it by becoming more aware of when you say "sorry" and replacing it with more confident or accurate expressions.

Here's how to start:

1. Notice Your Patterns

Start paying attention to when you say "sorry." Is it when you:

- Ask a guestion?
- Express a need?
- Walk past someone?
- Take up space?

Awareness is the first step.

2. Swap "Sorry" for More Empowering Phrases

a). When you're late

Instead of: "Sorry I'm late."

Try: "Thanks for your patience." or "I appreciate you waiting for me."

b). When you didn't respond right away

Instead of: "Sorry I didn't get back to you."

Try: "Thanks for your patience while I got back to you." or "I appreciate your patience."

c). When you need something

Instead of: "Sorry to bother you, but..."

Try: "Do you have a moment?" or "Can I ask you something?" or "Are you free for a consult?"

d). When you accidentally bump into someone

Instead of: "Sorry!"

Try: "Excuse me." or "Pardon me."

e). When you disagree

Instead of: "Sorry, but I think..."



Try: "I see it differently." or "Here's another perspective..." or just be curious and ask for more information on the topic.

f). When you're expressing emotion

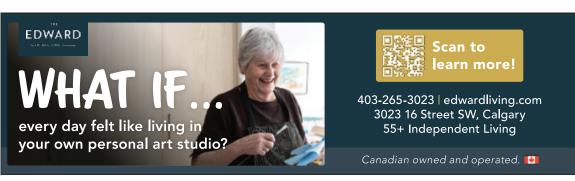
Instead of: "Sorry I'm crying." or "I'm sorry I'm so angry."

Try: "Thanks for being here while I process this." or "I'm feeling a lot right now." or "Wow, this is overwhelming."

3. Use Apologies Intentionally

Apologize when you genuinely hurt someone or made a mistake. That keeps apologies meaningful. For everything else, aim for assertiveness and gratitude.







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