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2016.02 *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide*

Whereas, *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide* has not been revised since 2007; and

Whereas, The 2016 report *Obesity in Canada* of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology recommends that the federal minister of health immediately undertake a complete revision of the guide; and

Whereas, The Canada Food Guide is designed to help those who teach children and adults about healthy eating and physical activity; therefore, be it

Resolved, That national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, in 96th annual national convention assembled, urge the federal government:

- to revise *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide* using evidence-based guidelines
- to set policy to review the guide every five years
- to publish the date of revision on the guide.

1 **BRIEF:** *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide*

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3 Canada's first food guide, *the Official Food Rules*, was introduced to the public in July 1942. Since then
4 the title has changed many times; *Canada's Food Rules* (1944, 1949), then *Canada's Food Guide to*
5 *Healthy Eating* (1992) and eventually evolved to *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* in 2007. It took
6 Health Canada 15 years before it revised the 1992 *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*, and it has
7 already been nine years since the launch of our 2007 version, *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.
8 (Health Canada). Canadians deserve "...an evidence-based, easy to understand guide, to lead Canadians
9 to follow a pattern of eating that will minimize their risk of developing chronic diseases (including
10 obesity)". (Freedhoff)

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12 The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, in its 2016 report *Obesity in*
13 *Canada*, recommends "a complete revision of Canada's food guide in order to better reflect the current
14 state of scientific evidence". (Senate Canada) "Each year 48,000 to 66,000 Canadians die from
15 conditions linked to excess weight; nearly two thirds of adults and one third of children are obese or
16 overweight; and obesity costs Canada between \$4.6 billion and \$7.1 billion annually in health care and
17 lost productivity". (ibid)

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19 Consensus shows "with respect to food consumption trends was that the consequence of Health Canada's
20 evolving food guide and the increasing variety and availability of processed and ready-to-eat foods has
21 been a pronounced decrease in consumption of whole foods and an alarming increase in the consumption
22 of ultra-processed foods. As a result, Canadians are eating too much calorie-rich and nutrient-poor food."
23 (Senate Canada)

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25 Intake of free sugar products including fruit juice, consuming processed foods high in sodium and foods
26 with trans fats may be detrimental to one's health. "Processed foods, more specifically ultra-processed
27 foods, are more and more conclusively linked to unhealthy dietary patterns, and as such our current best
28 evidence would suggest they be explicitly discouraged." (Freedhoff)

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30 The Standing Senate Committee also recommended that the revised food guide "be evidence-based; ...
31 effectively and prominently describe the benefits of fresh, whole foods compared to refined grains, ready-
32 to-eat meals and processed foods and to make strong statements about restricting consumption of highly
33 processed foods." (Senate Canada)

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35 The *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* indicates that having a healthy diet reduces the risk of
36 obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis. (Health Canada)

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38 "Canada's dated food guide is no longer effective in providing nutritional guidance to Canadians". (Senate
39 Canada) The federal government is therefore urged to review and revise the nine-year-old Canada Food
40 Guide using evidence-based guidelines; The federal government is also urged to set policy to review and
41 update the *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide* every five years and print the year the guide was last
42 revised.

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1 **Action Plan**

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3 1. Write letters to the prime minister and minister of health with copies to your local member of
4 parliament urging the federal government to revise *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide* as
5 requested in the resolution.

6 2. Hold a speaker presentation on healthy living and food choices.

7 3. Educate members about the food guide and encourage healthy food choices

8 4. Monitor the federal government's response to the request contained in the resolution.