

World on Your Plate:

Get to Know Sushi

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Sushi may be served cold, but it sure is hot! According to market research from NPD group, Japanese food is one of the fastest-growing menu items in Canada. Once confined to pricey restaurants, sushi is now widely available at grocery stores and mall kiosks.

What is sushi?

We commonly think of sushi as the collective name for raw fish, rice and seaweed. However, the term “sushi” actually refers to cold, cooked rice that’s pressed into small cakes and seasoned with salt, sugar and vinegar. Once sushi rice is topped with raw fish, it’s called *nigiri sushi*. The seaweed-wrapped rolls, often filled with raw fish and cucumber, are *maki sushi*.

Is sushi healthy?

Low in fat and calories, traditional Japanese nigiri sushi boasts many health benefits, including vitamin D, protein and heart-healthy omega-3 fats from the fish. Paired with a side salad, sushi provides three of the four food groups that make a balanced meal — though the large volume of white rice may be more servings than you need.



Western sushi is a spin on traditional Japanese fare and runs the gamut from nutritious rolls to imaginative designs filled with less-healthy mayonnaise or cream cheese. *Tip:* These additions pack on calories and fat so avoid them.

Watch the soy sauce: With more than 1,000 milligrams of sodium per tablespoon or 15 millilitres, soy sauce provides two-thirds of your daily sodium recommendation in this small serving.

For a nutritious sushi meal:

- Order a mix of nigiri and maki sushi with different types of fish and vegetables.
- Opt for brown rice instead of white rice when available.
- Avoid deep-fried ingredients.
- If you eat sushi often, be aware of the mercury content of different types of fish. Follow Health Canada’s mercury guidelines.

◆ What can you do to help keep health care costs down?

Visit emergency rooms for emergencies only. Hospital emergency rooms provide great care for real emergencies. But for nonemergencies (such as sore throats or lower back pain), visit your primary physician or a walk-in clinic instead.

◆ It’s well known that high blood pressure is bad for your heart.

But recent research suggests it also puts children at higher risk for attention deficit and learning disorders. Among children with high blood pressure in a U.S. study, 28 percent had learning disorders, compared to 9 percent of those with normal blood pressure. **The best strategy:** Make sure your child’s blood pressure is checked regularly and ask about treatment if it’s too high.

◆ March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month —

a good reminder that smoking increases your risk of this common disease. If you want to quit tobacco and wonder how effective nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) is, consider this: It can double your chances of quitting smoking when used in combination with counselling. About one-third of smokers who use medicines can remain smoke-free for at least six months.

Tips for Joyful Living

When people think about what would make them happier, they often envision a new house, a new job or some other happy major life change. But there are ways to easily and inexpensively brighten your day. The more of them you try, the better you're likely to feel. For example:

- **Sensory pleasures.** These include a massage, the smell of fresh-baked bread or a bubble bath.

- **Giving to others.** Easily overlooked but often very powerful, these are activities such as doing a chore for your neighbour, telling a favourite teacher how much he or she helped you or volunteering at a charity fundraiser.

- **Interconnections.** You could organize a block party, attend a religious service or contact long-lost former roommates or coworkers.



Add your own ideas! These suggestions are just the beginning.

Stop Procrastinating — NOW

People procrastinate for many reasons. What about you? Read on to see if any of these reasons for “putting off until tomorrow what should be done today” apply to you.

- I'm not in the mood.** Remember that accomplished people got that way by doing what was necessary under all types of conditions. If you can just get started, you might find that you feel more enthusiastic as you get the work under way.

- I don't have time.** Move essential tasks to the front burner.

- I don't know how to get started.**

If you aren't sure of your goals, lack resources or just need more direction, you might put things off. Do your research so you have what you need to make the job easier.

- I can't let this go until it's perfect.** Perfectionism may cause you to hold on to projects until far past their due date. Seeking perfection can sabotage your goals, deadlines and productivity. Finish your work and move on.

If you're always playing catch-up, take steps to get back on top of your workload.

In a Blink:

Treating Dry Eyes

Tears are critical to eye health. In addition to lubricating the eye, they protect it from infections and provide vital nutrients. When tears are too few or of the wrong consistency, eye damage and discomfort can occur — a condition called dry eye.

With dry eye, you may feel burning, scratching or stinging. You may also have strained or tired eyes after even short periods of reading or computer work, and contact lenses may feel more uncomfortable. Left untreated, dry eye can cause abrasions on the eye which lead to pain, ulcers or scars on the cornea and sometimes loss of vision.

Simple home treatments may help. Try over-the-counter artificial tear drops, and use a humidifier (especially in winter). Avoid smoke, direct wind or air conditioning. Adding an air cleaner to filter out dust and particles can also help.

Dry eye can be temporary or chronic. If self-care doesn't help in a few days, see an eye specialist. If you also experience dry mouth, joint pain or swelling, eye injury, red and painful eyes, or you have eye discharge or a lesion, get medical help right away.

Tears of joy: Treating dry eye early can protect your vision and keep your eyes healthy and comfortable.



Get Active at Work

Consider these easy options.

Many of us sit more than our bodies were designed for. Even with a hectic work schedule though, you can support your fitness goals with these mini-workouts for:

Flexibility

- Starting with feet flat, raise and lower your heels. Next, lift your toes. Finish with standing on one leg and circling the other ankle.
- In a chair, stretch both arms over your head and hold, then extend one hand higher than the other and switch.

Strength

- Do biceps curls or extensions with a resistance band or filled water bottle.



- Try desk pushups: Facing your desk, place your hands at shoulder width and slowly lower your torso toward the desk and push up to your starting point.

Heart function

- Sit on a jumbo exercise ball instead of your chair for part of each workday. This will stimulate your posture and balance and increase your heart rate and body temperature.
 - Walk whenever you can. Get a phone headset so you can walk while you chat, or use the stairs to go to the restroom on a different floor.
- More ideas** → See a physical therapist or personal trainer. Exercise software and apps are available too. As always, check with your health care provider before starting any new exercise program.

Step Into My Car

Using your car as an office? Priority no. 1: Keep your attention focused on safe driving. Technology is great; cell phones, laptops, tablet PCs and even portable printers make it easy to work on the road. However, these devices don't mix well with driving. Be sure to use them only when your car is parked safely. More tips for using your car as an office:

Buckle up. Sounds simple enough, but 7 percent of Canadians don't wear seat belts — and they account for almost 40 percent of deaths in vehicle collisions, according to Transport Canada.

Never text and drive. It's deadly — and it's against the law in most provinces.

Don't drive in severe weather conditions. Talk to your supervisor about making other arrangements. No job is worth risking your life.

Pull over if you feel fatigued.

Don't drive when you would normally sleep.

Avoid taking medications that may make you drowsy.

Take time to stretch while driving long distances or for several hours. Good rule: Take a break every 100 miles or 161 kilometres or every two hours.

Maintain your car. Follow your vehicle manufacturer's recommendations, and check your fluid levels and tire pressure regularly.

Bottom line → Keep your electronic devices off when you're driving. This also sets a good example for others, especially younger drivers.



PRODUCE PICK of the Month

Leeks

Leeks are a delicious alternative to onions, with a sweeter, milder flavour.

A source of iron and vitamins A and C, leeks are versatile — use them as a side dish or add to other recipes. The tenderest leeks are small to medium, with a bulb less than 1½ inches or 3 centimetres in diameter. Use the green leaves for soups or stews; lightly sauté the white sections in olive oil or use them in quiches or salads.



KNOW YOUR Numbers



Blended Coffee Drinks

200 extra calories/day = 20 lbs or 9 kg/year

That's how much weight you'd gain if you had one 200-calorie blended coffee drink a day.

Blended coffee drinks — lattes, cappuccinos and mochas — are very popular, but these beverages often contain hundreds of calories. **To cut the calories:** First, order the smallest drink — or look for a "skinny" version of your favourite drink. Switch to low fat or nonfat milk, and skip the whipped cream topping. Instead of flavoured syrups, use cinnamon or chocolate powder to spice up your drink.

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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Uncovering a Food Allergy

Though only about 6 percent of children and nearly 4 percent of adults in North America have true food allergies, many people believe they or a family member suffer from this ailment. Why?

Many of the same symptoms — abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, asthma — can arise from a food allergy, which involves an immune reaction, or from a food intolerance, which does not. Non-allergic food reactions can occur from food poisoning, histamine-containing foods, lactose intolerance, food additives, gluten intolerance and certain conditions of the gastrointestinal tract.

Your health care provider can help you determine if you have a true allergy or food intolerance. The first steps are a detailed patient history with questions such as “Do you always react after eating this food?” or “Did antihistamines help?” and a physical exam.

Keeping a log of foods and symptoms can also single out suspect foods. Or you may be asked to try an elimination diet, where you avoid the suspected food. Blood and skin tests, when used with a patient history and exam, can

help identify food allergies, although a positive result doesn’t always mean you have an allergy. Skin tests can’t be used in some instances, such as when people have severe eczema or are severely allergic.

Only the oral food challenge can definitively diagnose a food allergy, according to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (U.S.). In this test, specific foods are avoided and then reintroduced under medical supervision.

Positive results: If you’re diagnosed with a food allergy, consider contacting the Allergy Asthma Information Association (<http://aaia.ca>) for information and support groups.

The Ten Common Food Allergens:

1. Peanuts
2. Tree nuts (almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios and walnuts)
3. Sesame seeds
4. Milk
5. Eggs
6. Shellfish
7. Fish
8. Soy
9. Wheat
10. Sulphites



The foods listed above cause 90-95 percent of serious allergic reactions, according to Anaphylaxis Canada. Scientists have identified more than 100 foods that can cause a reaction.

Cheesy Leek and Cauliflower Casserole

- 2 tbsp/25ml olive oil
- 4 cups/1 L small cauliflower florets
- 2 medium leeks, trimmed and cut into ½-inch/1cm slices
- 2 tbsp/25ml all-purpose flour
- ⅛ tsp/.5ml ground nutmeg
- ½ cup/125ml evaporated skim milk
- ½ cup/125ml grated reduced-fat feta cheese
- ½ cup/125ml coarse fresh breadcrumbs
- ¼ cup/50ml grated Parmesan cheese

- 1 Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat; add cauliflower and sauté 5 minutes. Add sliced leeks and sauté 2 to 3 minutes. Note: Use bulb and lower leaf portion of leeks; rinse thoroughly before cooking.
- 2 Remove skillet from heat. Sprinkle veggies with flour and nutmeg; gently combine.
- 3 Spoon into a 2-quart or .95 litre (13" x 9"/33cm x 23cm) baking dish. Pour milk over mixture. Sprinkle with remaining ingredients.
- 4 Bake in 400°F/204°C oven for 25 minutes or until top is browned and crispy.

Nutrition Facts

MAKES 6 ONE-CUP/250ml SERVINGS.

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 164	
Total Fat	8.2g
Saturated Fat	2.8g
Cholesterol	0mg
Sodium	311mg
Total Carbohydrate	17.3g
Dietary Fibre	2g
Sugars	8g
Protein	8.9g

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