

Nutrient-dense beef contains key nutrients that many Canadians need more of in their diets

A recently published study*, conducted by researchers at the University of Toronto, has found that a significant number of Canadian adults do not meet the dietary intake recommendations for several essential nutrients.

Nutrients of concern include iron, zinc, the B-vitamins B₁₂, B₆ and thiamin, magnesium and potassium, among others.

Nutrients of Concern

Nutrient	Risk of Inadequate Intake
Iron	Nearly 30% of women aged 19-50 years
Zinc	30-34% of women and 21-44% of men (depending on age group)
Calcium	More than 60% of women and 40% of men 19+ years
Magnesium	66% of women and 58% of men 19+ years
Vitamin A	47% of women and 51% of men 19+ years
Vitamin B ₁₂	> 20% of all women (19+) had inadequate intakes
Other B Vitamins	Many Canadians had inadequate vitamin B ₆ , thiamin and folate intakes
Vitamin C	28-59% of women and 38-64% of men (depending on age group)
Vitamin D	Almost all Canadian adults - 98% of women and 94% of men
Potassium	Intakes were below the AI for all adults
Fibre	>80% of Canadians had intakes below the AI
Sodium	Majority of Canadian adults consumed sodium in excess of recommendations

The study, published in the prestigious American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, was based on data collected by Health Canada, in partnership with Statistics Canada, as part of the most recent national survey of Canadians' food and beverage intakes, called the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). The data assessed the dietary intake of 11,992 Canadian adults, ≥19 years.

CCHS data is used for nutrition policy and planning purposes by the Canadian Government (for e.g., development of Canada's Food Guide) which makes this study of particular importance.

According to the study, many Canadians are at risk of not meeting the recommended intake levels for several essential nutrients. The authors commented that Canadians' adherence to dietary guidelines and recommendations is low. This, along with the consumption of energy-rich, nutrient-poor foods and physical inactivity, predisposes many Canadians to chronic diseases, the authors noted.

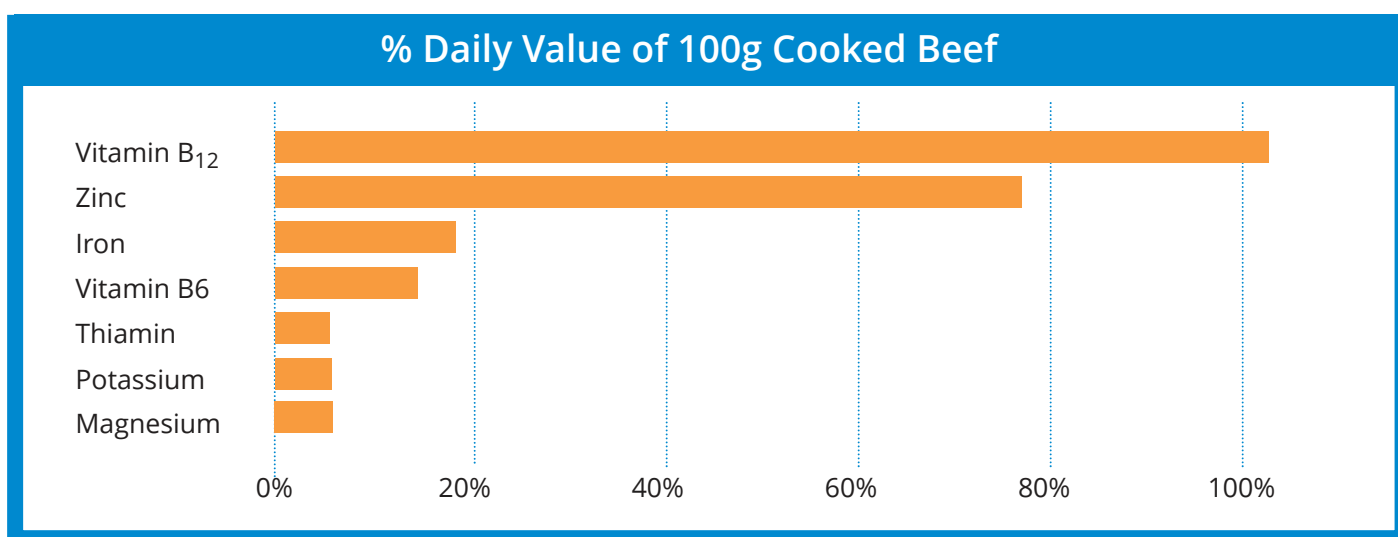
Study findings noteworthy to beef consumption included:

- **Iron** - nearly 30% of women between 19-50 years of age did not get enough iron from their diet. Iron is critical for women during childbearing years and to prevent anemia.
- **Zinc** - is a concern for 20% to > 40% of men and women, and the risk of inadequate intakes increased with age. Zinc is essential for healthy pregnancies, normal brain function and resistance to infection.
- **Magnesium** - is a concern for 2 out of 3 women (66%) and >1 in 2 men (58%). Magnesium is important for blood pressure regulation. Over 65% of Canadians aged 65 and over have high blood pressure. High blood pressure is the number one risk factor for stroke.
- **Potassium** - Mean intakes were below the adequate intake (AI) for all demographics. Like magnesium, potassium helps regulate blood pressure.

How Beef can Help Address Nutrient Shortfalls

This study is extremely useful to help us understand beef's valuable role in the diet of Canadians. Beef is a naturally nutrient-dense protein food that contains a number of the nutrients of concern that many Canadians need more of in their diets. A relatively small portion of beef can go a long way towards helping Canadians meet their nutrient needs.

Here are the nutrients of concern beef delivers:



Source: Nutrition - ThinkBeef (<https://thinkbeef.ca/nutrition>)

Steering people towards more whole, nutrient-dense foods, like beef, and away from nutrient-poor, highly processed foods, can help to address the nutrient shortfalls identified in the study. In fact, the authors of the study stated that: "Following a healthy eating pattern that includes nutrient-dense foods can help ensure nutrient intakes are met, while supporting periods of growth, development, and aging, as well as a healthy body weight."

*Ahmed M, Praneet Ng A, and L'Abbe MR. Nutrient intakes of Canadian adults: results from the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)-2015 Public Use Microdata File. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2021;114(3):1131-1140.