

NUTRITION AND HEALTH INFO SHEET

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FACTS ABOUT THE DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS, 2015 - 2020

Healthy eating patterns and regular physical activity can help reduce the risk of chronic disease and maintain good health throughout all lifespan stages.

What are the Five Guidelines?

In considering a person's cultural, personal, and traditional preferences, one should:



1. Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan.

- All food and beverage choices matter; an eating pattern represents the totality of all foods and beverages consumed.
- Nutritional needs should be met primarily from foods.
- An eating pattern can be individualized to socio-cultural, personal, and economic preferences.

2. Focus on variety, nutrient density, and amount.

3. Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake.

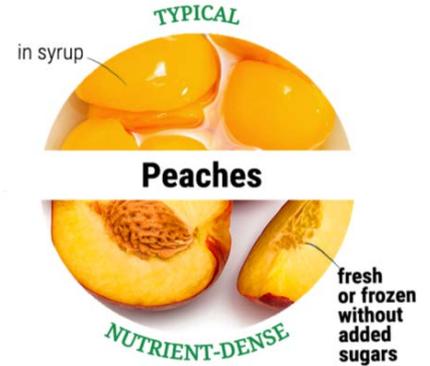
4. Shift to healthier food and beverage choices while considering cultural and personal preferences.

- *Shifts* can be achieved by making substitutions over time through choosing nutrient-dense foods and beverages in place of less healthy options, instead of increasing intake overall.
 - About 75% of Americans have an eating pattern low in vegetables, fruits, dairy, and oils¹. *Shift to consume more vegetables, fruits, and dairy products in nutrient-dense forms. Shift from solid fats, such as butter, to oils.*
 - Greater than 50% of the U.S. population is exceeding total grain and total protein foods recommendations without meeting the recommendations for subgroups within these food groups¹.



Shift to increase the variety of nutrient-dense protein food choices and make half of all grains consumed whole grains.

- Most of the population exceeds recommendations for added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium¹. *Shift to decrease intake of these.*
- The eating patterns of the majority of the population are too high in calories¹.
- Small *shifts* in food choices (over a meal, day, or week), can make a large difference.
 - The Dietary Guidelines for Americans for 2015-2020 provides graphic representations of small, realistic shifts.



5. Support healthy eating patterns for all.

- Healthy lifestyle choices at home, school, work, and in the community should be easy, accessible, and affordable.
- The food and physical activity choices an individual makes are influenced by social and cultural norms, public policies, organizations such as school and work environments, and relationships among friends and family members in combination with an individual's knowledge, attitudes, or beliefs. Implementing change at various levels may improve eating and physical activity behaviors.

What are the Key Recommendations for Following the Five Guidelines?

Account for all foods and beverages within an appropriate calorie level in consuming a healthy eating pattern.

What does a healthy eating pattern consist of?

- A variety of vegetables: dark greens, red and orange, legumes (beans and peas), starchy, and other (including all fresh, frozen, dried, and canned versions in cooked or raw form)
- Fruits: especially whole (including fresh, canned, frozen, and dried forms, as well as 100% fruit juice)
- Grains: half being whole grains
- Fat-free or low-fat dairy: including yogurt, cheese, milk, and/or fortified soy beverages
- A variety of protein foods from both animal and plant sources: including seafood, nuts, seeds, legumes (beans and peas), lean meats and poultry, eggs, and soy products
- Oils



What does a healthy eating pattern limit?

- Saturated fats (less than 10% of calories per day)
- Trans fats (as low as possible)
- Added sugars (less than 10% of calories per day)
 - Replacing added sugars with artificial sweeteners is safe for the general public and may help reduce calorie intake in the short term. Further research is needed to determine how well switching to artificial sweeteners works as a long term weight management strategy².
- Sodium (less than 2,300mg per day for adults and children ages 14 years and older; adults with prehypertension and hypertension should limit intake to less than 1,500mg per day)
- Moderate caffeine consumption in amounts limited to 400mg of caffeine per day, roughly 4 cups of coffee, may be included in a healthy eating pattern.
- If alcohol is consumed, it should be done so in moderation and only by those adults of legal drinking age:
 - Up to 1 drink per day for women
 - Up to 2 drinks per day for men

Are there any physical activity recommendations?

- Yes, promote health and reduce the risk of chronic disease by attaining and maintaining a healthy body weight by meeting the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* in tandem with the recommendations above.



What Do Healthy Eating Patterns Look Like?

The following examples of healthy eating patterns at the 2,000-calorie level are provided in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2015–2020*, available at:

<http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>:

- Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern
- Healthy Mediterranean Style Eating Pattern
 - Contains more fruits and seafood and less dairy than the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern
- Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern
 - Replaces the previous lacto-ovo vegetarian adaptation of the USDA Food Patterns featured in the *2010 Dietary Guidelines*

- Includes more legumes (beans and peas), nuts and seeds, soy products, and whole grains than the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern; does not include any meat, poultry, or seafood but is identical in all other food groups

References

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2015 – 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 8th Edition. December 2015. Available at <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>.
2. "U.S. Food and Drug Administration." *High-Intensity Sweeteners*. N.p., 19 May 2014. Web. 29 Feb. 2016. <<http://www.fda.gov/food/ingredientpackaginglabeling/foodadditivesingredients/ucm397716.htm>>.

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