

# Nutrition and Health Info Sheet

# DIETARY GUIDELINES

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## What are the Dietary Guidelines?

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans provide five general diet-based recommendations to help Americans reduce their risk of chronic disease and maintain good health.



### ***1. Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan.***

The combination of different foods eaten over time make up a person's overall eating pattern. In a healthy eating pattern:

- All food and beverage choices matter.
- Nutritional needs should be met from whole foods.
- An eating pattern can be adapted to personal preferences.

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

***3. Limit Calories from added sugars and saturated fats; reduce sodium intake.***

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

Choose nutrient-dense foods and beverages in place of less healthy options.

- Shift towards consuming more vegetables, fruits, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products.
- Shift away from solid fats, such as butter, to oils.
- Shift towards a variety of nutrient-dense protein food choices. For example, try

*A nutrient-dense food is one that has essential nutrients but relatively few Calories.*



incorporating seafood into your meals twice a week. Also, try using legumes or nuts and seeds in mixed dishes.

- Make half of all grains consumed whole grains.
- Shift towards consuming less added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium.
- The eating patterns of the majority of the population are too high in Calories.<sup>1</sup>

Small shifts in food choices (over a meal, day, or week), can make a large difference. Refer to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans for 2015-2020 for more specific examples of small, healthy shifts in eating patterns.

### **5. Support healthy eating patterns for all.**

It's important that healthy lifestyle choices are available to all people in the community. Be a voice for positive change in your community! Support policies or program changes that make healthy choices affordable and easy and look for ways to help others to be physically active



## **What are the Key Recommendations for Following the Guidelines?**

A healthy eating pattern aims to balance the energy from food with the energy needed each day. The energy needed each day is also known as a person's Calorie needs. Age, height, weight and level of physical activity all affect a person's Calorie needs.

### **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)
- *Fruits:* especially whole (including fresh, canned, frozen, dried, and 100% fruit juice)
- *Grains:* half should be whole grains
- *Fat-free or low-fat dairy:* including yogurt, cheese,

**What is a Whole Grain?**  
Grains are made up of three components: the bran or outer layer, the endosperm, and the germ. During processing, the bran and some of the germ is typically removed. However, to be considered a whole grain, 100% of these original components must be present.

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.<sup>2</sup>
- Sodium (less than one teaspoon of salt per day; adults with high blood pressure should consume less)
- Moderate caffeine consumption (no more than 4 cups of coffee)
- Alcohol should be consumed 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



### What about physical activity recommendations?

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans is based on the best scientific evidence to provide adults and children with guidelines to improve or maintain health with physical activity.<sup>3</sup> They can be found online at <https://health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/>.

### What do Healthy Eating Patterns Look Like?

Below are some examples of healthy eating patterns for a 2,000-Calorie diet.

- *Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern:* This eating pattern is designed to represent the amount and type of food Americans typically eat, but in nutrient dense forms and appropriate amounts.
- *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:* Includes more legumes (beans and peas), nuts and seeds, soy products, and whole grains than the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern. It does

not include any meat, poultry, or seafood but is identical in all other food groups

More information on the eating patterns can be found at: <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>

## References:

1. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015–2020 8th Edition. 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines. <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>. Accessed December 2017.
2. Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. Food Additives & Ingredients - High-Intensity Sweeteners. U S Food and Drug Administration Home Page. <http://www.fda.gov/food/ingredientspackaginglabeling/foodadditivesingredients/ucm397716.htm>. Accessed December 2017.
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