

# Dietary Guidelines\* for Americans

## Key recommendations for the general population



### Adequate nutrients within calorie needs

- ▶ Consume a variety of nutrient-dense foods and beverages within and among the basic food groups while choosing foods that limit the intake of saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, added sugars, salt, and alcohol.
- ▶ Meet recommended intakes within energy needs by adopting a balanced eating pattern, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Guide or the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) Eating Plan.

### Weight management

- ▶ To maintain body weight in a healthy range, balance calories from foods and beverages with calories expended.
- ▶ To prevent gradual weight gain over time, make small decreases in food and beverage calories and increase physical activity.

### Physical activity

- ▶ Engage in regular physical activity and reduce sedentary activities to promote health, psychological well-being, and a healthy body weight.
  - To reduce the risk of chronic disease in adulthood: Engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity, above usual activity, at work or home on most days of the week. For most people, greater health benefits can be obtained by engaging in physical activity of more vigorous intensity or longer duration.
  - To help manage body weight and prevent gradual, unhealthy body weight gain in adulthood: Engage in approximately 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity activity on most days of the week while not exceeding caloric intake requirements.
  - To sustain weight loss in adulthood: Participate in at least 60 to 90 minutes of daily moderate-intensity physical activity while not exceeding caloric intake requirements. Some people may need to consult with a health care provider before participating in this level of activity.

\*Dietary Guidelines for Americans is published jointly every five years by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Guidelines provide authoritative advice for people two years and older about how good dietary habits can promote health and reduce risk for major chronic diseases. The 2005 edition of the Guidelines was released January 2005.

- ▶ Achieve physical fitness by including cardiovascular conditioning, stretching exercises for flexibility, and resistance exercises or calisthenics for muscle strength and endurance.

### **Food groups to encourage**

- ▶ Consume a sufficient amount of fruits and vegetables while staying within energy needs. Two cups of fruit and 2 1/2 cups of vegetables per day are recommended for a reference 2,000-calorie intake, with higher or lower amounts depending on the calorie level.



- ▶ Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables each day. In particular, select from all five vegetable subgroups (dark green, orange, legumes, starchy vegetables, and other vegetables) several times a week.
- ▶ Consume 3 or more ounce-equivalents of whole-grain products per day, with the rest of the recommended grains coming from enriched or whole-grain products. In general, at least half the grains should come from whole grains.
- ▶ Consume 3 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products.

### **Fats**

- ▶ Consume less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fatty acids and less than 300 mg/day of cholesterol, and keep trans fatty acid consumption as low as possible.
- ▶ Keep total fat intake between 20 to 35 percent of calories, with most fats coming from sources of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids, such as fish, nuts, and vegetable oils.
- ▶ When selecting and preparing meat, poultry, dry beans, and milk or milk products, make choices that are lean, low-fat, or fat-free.
- ▶ Limit intake of fats and oils high in saturated and/or trans fatty acids, and choose products low in such fats and oils.

### **Carbohydrates**

- ▶ Choose fiber-rich fruits, vegetables, and whole grains often.
- ▶ Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little added sugars or caloric sweeteners, such as amounts suggested by the USDA Food Guide and the DASH Eating Plan.
- ▶ Reduce the incidence of dental cavities by practicing good oral hygiene and consuming sugar- and starch-containing foods and beverages less frequently.

## **Sodium and Potassium**

- ▶ Consume less than 2,300 mg (approximately 1 teaspoon of salt) of sodium per day.
- ▶ Choose and prepare foods with little salt. At the same time, consume potassium-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables.

## **Alcoholic beverages**

- ▶ Those who choose to drink alcoholic beverages should do so sensibly and in moderation. Moderation is defined as the consumption of up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men.
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages should not be consumed by some individuals, including those who cannot restrict their alcohol intake, women of childbearing age who may become pregnant, pregnant and lactating women, children and adolescents, individuals taking medications that can interact with alcohol, and those with specific medical conditions.
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages should be avoided by individuals engaging in activities that require attention, skill, or coordination, such as driving or operating machinery.

## **Food safety**

To avoid microbial foodborne illness:

- ▶ Clean hands, food contact surfaces, and fruits and vegetables.
- ▶ Separate raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods while shopping, preparing, or storing foods.
- ▶ Cook foods to a safe temperature to kill microorganisms.
- ▶ Chill (refrigerate) perishable foods promptly and defrost foods properly.
- ▶ Avoid raw (unpasteurized) milk or any products made from unpasteurized milk, raw or partially cooked eggs or foods containing raw eggs, raw or undercooked meat and poultry, unpasteurized juices, and raw sprouts.

*Note: The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 contains additional recommendations for specific populations. The full document is available at [www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines](http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines).*



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