

Fact Sheets for Families

New Dietary Guidelines

The federal government's sixth edition of Dietary Guidelines, released on January 12, 2005, replaced the familiar old Food Guide Pyramid. The new dietary guidelines encourage most Americans to eat fewer calories, be more physically active and make wiser food choices.

Use of the dietary guidelines

Recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines are targeted to the general public over 2 years of age. The science-based guidelines are the backbone of all federal policies concerning nutrition and are the primary source of dietary health information for policy-makers, nutritionists, nutrition educators and health care providers. Information in the guidelines is useful for the development of educational materials and will help the public in reducing their risk of obesity and chronic disease.

Healthy diet and physical activity

Overweight and obesity among adults and children in the United States have significantly increased over the last two decades. People of all ages may reduce their risk of chronic disease by adopting a nutritious diet and engaging in regular physical activity. Poor diet and physical inactivity lead to obesity, a high risk factor for premature death, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, stroke, osteoporosis, gall bladder disease, respiratory dysfunction, gout, arthritis and certain types of cancers.

Summary of Major Dietary Guidelines

Adequate nutrients within calorie needs. Meeting nutrient recommendations must go hand in hand with keeping calories under control.

- Consume a variety of nutrient-dense foods and beverages from the basic food groups. Limit the intake of saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, added sugars, salt and alcohol.

- Adopt a balanced eating pattern to meet recommended intakes within energy needs.

Appropriate Body Weight. Eating fewer calories while increasing physical activity are the keys to controlling body weight.

- To maintain body weight in a healthy range, balance calories from foods and beverages with calories spent. To prevent gradual weight gain over time, make small decreases in food and beverage calories and increase physical activity.
- Those who need to lose weight should aim for a slow, steady weight loss by decreasing calorie intake and increasing physical activity.
- Overweight children should reduce the rate of body weight gain while allowing growth and development. Consult a healthcare provider before placing a child on a weight-reduction diet.

Physical Activity. Regular physical activity and physical fitness contribute to one's health, sense of well-being and maintenance of a healthy body weight.

- Engage in regular physical activity. Reduce sedentary activities.
- Children and adolescents should engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most (preferably all) days of the week.

Food groups to encourage. Increased intake of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products can have important health benefits for most Americans.

- Consume a sufficient amount of fruits and vegetables while staying within energy needs.
- 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.
- Children and adolescents should consume whole-grain products often; at least half the grains should be whole grains. Children 2 to 8 years should consume two cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products. Children 9 years of age and older should consume 3 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products.

by A. Rahman Zamani, MD, MPH

Resource

For more information and consumer-friendly brochures see the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 at www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines.



Provided by California Childcare Health Program
For more information, please contact:
Healthline 1-800-333-3212

Distributed by: