

THE DIETARY GUIDELINES



Nutrition experts study how the food you eat affects your health. Their findings are used to develop *food guides*—simple guidelines to help you make healthy food choices. One of the most commonly used guides is the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Discover...

- ★ the purpose of food guides.
- ★ how the Dietary Guidelines for Americans help you select food wisely.

Key Terms

food guides
diet

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What are the advantages of using guidelines to help you make food choices? Are there any disadvantages?



Choosing Food for Health

What can people do to improve their health? How can they decrease the risk of health problems such as heart disease and cancer? The answers are complex and are still being studied. It appears, however, that food choices play a role.

When you think of the word *diet*, you may think of losing weight or a special medical diet. In food guides, however, **diet** refers to the total balance of foods that you eat over a period of time.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans give science-based advice on food and physical activity choices for good health. These guidelines were developed jointly by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The Dietary Guidelines are revised every five years. The following steps, which are based on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines, can help you reach your best level of health.

- ◆ **Get enough nutrients for your calorie needs.** Choose a variety of nutrient-dense foods and beverages from the basic food groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, milk and milk products, meats and beans, and oils. Just be sure to stay within your calorie limits.
- ◆ **Manage your weight.** As you learned in Chapter 6, keeping your body weight in a healthy range helps you look and feel better. The key to weight management is to balance the energy you get from foods and beverages with the energy your body uses in daily activities. Both forms of energy are measured in calories. If the food you eat has more calories than your body uses, the extra energy is stored as body fat.
- ◆ **Be physically active every day.** Physical activity includes any activity that keeps your body moving. Being active helps you look and feel good. It can also help you manage stress and your weight. Physical



How do you stay physically active?

activity also strengthens your heart and lungs and can help prevent future health problems. Aim to build 60 minutes or more of physical activity into your daily routine. Physical activities may include taking a brisk walk, playing a sport, or doing yard work. What are some ways that you can build physical activity into your daily routine?

Your Food Choices

For good health, you need a variety of foods in the right amounts. Variety helps you get the nutrients you need. No single food can supply all nutrients in the right amounts.

Variety also makes eating more fun. Think of food as an adventure in eating. Try new foods regularly, and look for different ways to prepare familiar foods. You may discover a delicious taste treat.



Variety makes eating more fun—and more nutritious.

Focus on Fruits, Vary Your Veggies

Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and good sources of fiber. They are also good sources of vitamins and minerals, especially vitamins A and C. Plan to get most of your fruit choices from a variety of fruits rather than fruit juices. Fruits are more nutrient-dense than fruit juices. Eat more dark green vegetables, dark orange vegetables, and dry beans and peas.



Grains, vegetables, and fruits are inexpensive, nutrient-dense foods.

Make Half Your Grains Whole

Whole grains are a good source of fiber. In addition, they contain the entire grain kernel and all of its nutrients, including B vitamins. At least half of the grains that you eat daily should be whole grains. Be sure to choose bread and other grain foods that list whole grain as one of the first ingredients listed on the label. Examples of whole grain foods include whole wheat bread, brown rice, and oatmeal.

Eat Calcium-Rich Foods

Teens need three cups of fat-free or low-fat milk every day or equivalent milk products. Other milk products include low-fat cheese and yogurt. People who cannot eat milk products, or choose not to, should be sure to get calcium from other food sources.

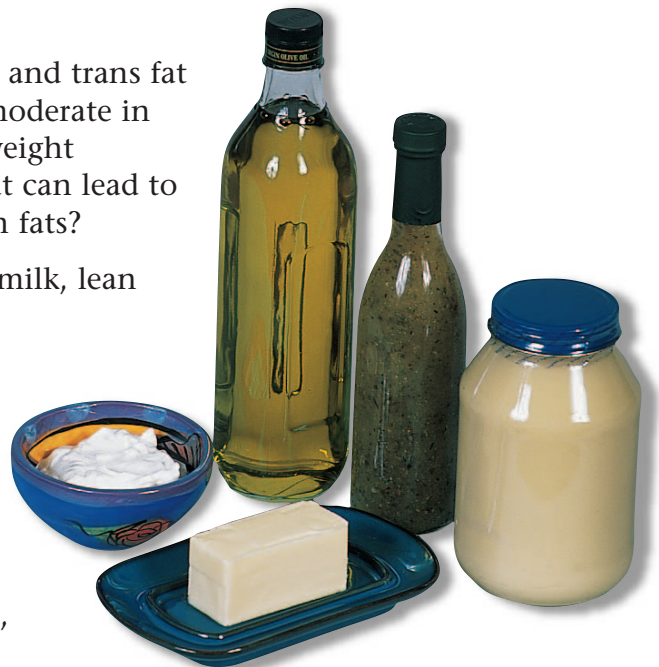
Go Lean with Protein

Many people eat more protein than they need on a daily basis. Vary your protein choices by including beans, peas, nuts, and seeds. Make your meat, poultry, and fish choices lean ones. Choose cooking methods that add little or no fat, such as baking, broiling, or grilling.

Limit Fats

A diet low in saturated fat, cholesterol and trans fat reduces the risk of heart disease. A diet moderate in total fat can help you stay at a healthy weight throughout your life. Eating too much fat can lead to excess weight. How can you cut down on fats?

- ◆ Choose low-fat foods, such as low-fat milk, lean meat, and cooked dry beans and peas.
- ◆ Read labels. Compare the amount of total fat and saturated fat in foods you buy. (Chapter 12 explains how to find nutrition information on food labels.)
- ◆ Use only small amounts of butter, margarine, sour cream, salad dressings, and other fats.



Fat is an essential nutrient, but a little goes a long way.

Be Choosy About Carbohydrates

A diet that's high in added sugar is out of balance. Sugary carbohydrate foods—such as candy, sweetened cereals, soft drinks, and cookies—often have a low nutrient density. The sugar adds calories without adding vitamins, minerals, complex carbohydrates, or protein. Eat fiber-rich fruits, vegetables, and whole grains often to get the nutrients you need without added sugar.



To cut down on foods high in added sugar, try snacking on fruit.

Reduce Sodium, Increase Potassium

Eating too much sodium may be linked to high blood pressure in some people. Most Americans eat more salt and sodium than they need. Processed foods provide most of the sodium. It's also found in table salt.

How can you eat less salt and sodium and increase potassium?

- ◆ Try not to salt food when you eat.
- ◆ Use as little salt as possible in cooking. Try flavoring with pepper and herbs instead.
- ◆ Eat potassium-rich fruits and vegetables to help counteract sodium's effects on blood pressure.
- ◆ Choose low-sodium processed foods such as canned and dried soups, lunch meats, and frozen dinners.
- ◆ Use only small amounts of some nuts, mustard, some types of crackers, and pickled foods.



Herbs add flavor without sodium.

Play it Safe with Food

When food isn't handled, stored, and prepared properly, it can cause illness. You'll learn more in Chapter 21. For now, remember these rules for keeping food safe to eat:

- ◆ Wash your hands before and after handling food.
- ◆ Keep work surfaces clean and always use clean utensils.
- ◆ Separate raw meat, poultry, or fish from ready-to-eat foods while shopping, preparing or storing.
- ◆ Cook foods to a safe temperature.
- ◆ Promptly refrigerate foods that spoil easily.

CHAPTER 7 REVIEW

Understanding Key Ideas

1. Why have food guides been developed? What are they based on?
2. Name any two of the Dietary Guidelines. Explain how each can benefit you.
3. Explain three ways people can reduce the fat in their diet.

Applying Knowledge and Skills

- ◆ **A Personal Plan:** How well do you follow the Dietary Guidelines in your own eating and activity habits? Choose one area in which you feel you could improve. Identify three specific steps you could take to build healthier habits.
- ◆ **Sharing Favorite Foods:** Think of a food you enjoy that might be new to some of your classmates. Find or

draw a picture of it. Write a description of its color, texture, aroma, and flavor. How do you like it to be prepared and served? Share your description with the class. Which foods described by your classmates would you like to try?

- ◆ **Snack Display:** Design a poster or other display showing pictures of tasty snacks, featuring grain products, vegetables, and fruits, that can replace sugary, high-fat snacks.

Exploring Further

- ◆ **Seasoning Ideas:** Make a chart showing ways to flavor foods with herbs or spices instead of sugar and salt. Use a cookbook or other resources for ideas.