Nebraska Lincoln EXTENSION

Know how. Know now.

What You Should Know about the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010

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Begin to take action on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 (DGA2010) by making changes in these three areas. The following three areas are taken from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services *Dietary Guidelines 2010, Selected Messages for Consumers* and with further information provided from the 112 page online booklet, *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010*. (Citations at end of article.)

The Executive Summary giving 23 key messages for the general public plus six key messages for specific population groups can be found at *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010*. For more information and other recommendations for consumers (including food safety and physical activity), visit *www.dietaryguidelines.gov*.

1. Balancing Calories

Alexa Clark (LexnGer), *www.creativecommons.org*

Enjoy your food, but eat less

The total number of calories consumed is what is important to body weight. Although total calorie intake is ultimately what affects calorie balance, some foods and beverages can be easily over consumed, which results in a higher total calorie intake.

The best advice is to monitor what you eat and replace foods higher in calories with nutrient-dense foods and beverages lower in calories. Decrease your intake of added fats and sugars and increase your intake of lower calorie, nutrient dense whole grains, vegetables, and fruits:

- Moderate evidence shows adults who eat more whole grains, particularly those higher in dietary fiber, have a lower body weight compared to adults who eat fewer whole grains.
- Moderate evidence in adults, and limited evidence in children and adolescents, suggests increased intake of vegetables and/or fruits may protect against weight gain.

Tim Deering, *www.creativecommons.org*

Avoid oversized portions

People eat and drink more when they are given larger portions. Downsize your portion size. Eat off smaller plates and/or serve smaller portions at home.

When eating out:

- Order a small-sized option when possible
- Share a meal, or take home part of the meal.
- Consider asking for the to-go box right away and put half the meal away so you can't see it.
- Review the calorie content of foods and beverages offered and choose lower-calorie options. Calorie information may be available on menus, in a pamphlet, on food wrappers, or online.

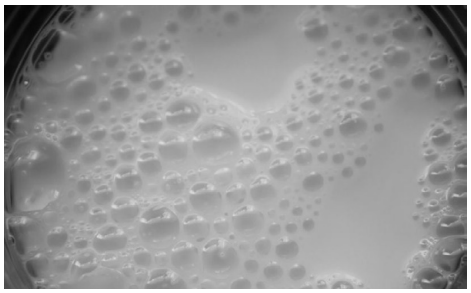
2. Foods to Increase

Colleen Proppe, *www.creativecommons.org*

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables

Eat a variety of vegetables, especially dark-green, red, and orange vegetables, and cooked dry beans and peas.

As a general guideline, your plate should contain half fruits and vegetables. Divide the other half between a protein and a grain source. Make half your grains whole grains.



Chapendra, *www.creativecommons.org*

Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk

Increase your intake of fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products, such as milk, yogurt, cheese, or fortified soy beverages. If you are drinking whole milk, gradually switch to lower fat options.

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If you are drinking whole milk, go to 2%, and move on down to 1%, or fat-free milk.

Lower fat milk provides the same nutrients as higher fat milk, but is lower in calories.

3. Foods to Reduce

Andrivete, www.creativecommons.org

Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals — and choose the foods with lower numbers.

A strong body of evidence supports that as sodium intake for adults decreases, so does blood pressure. There is moderate evidence the same is true for children.

The key recommendations for sodium are as follows:

- Reduce daily sodium intake to less than 2,300 mg.
- Further reduce intake to 1,500 mg among persons who are 51 and older and those of any age who are African American or have hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease.

The 1,500 mg recommendation applies to about half of the U.S. population, including children, and the majority of adults.

Check the Nutrition Facts label on foods for sodium content

Drink water instead of sugary drinks

Added sugars contribute an average of 16 percent of the total calories in American diets. As a percent of calories from total added sugars, a major source of added sugars in the diets of Americans is soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks (36% of added sugar intake).

Strong evidence shows children and adolescents who consume more sugar-sweetened beverages have higher body weight compared to those who drink less, and moderate evidence also supports this relationship in adults.

Sugar-sweetened beverages provide excess calories and few essential nutrients to the diet and should only be consumed when nutrient needs have been met and without exceeding daily calorie limits. Reduce the intake of sugary drinks by:

- Drinking fewer sugar-sweetened beverages
- Consuming smaller portions
- Substituting water and other beverages with few or no calories for sugar-sweetened beverages

Sources:

Dietary Guidelines 2010, Selected Messages for Consumers, retrieved Feb. 1, 2011 at http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/SelectedMessages.pdf

Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010, retrieved Feb. 1, 2011 at http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/PolicyDoc.pdf

This publication has been peer reviewed.