

DGAC Makes Food-Based Recommendations in the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*

Key Points for Practice

- Diets should include nutrient-dense foods in all food groups and in the proper amounts.
- Intake of added sugars and saturated fat should be limited, and sodium intake should be reduced.
- Nutrient-dense foods should replace those that are less healthy, taking into account cultural and personal preferences.

From the *AFP* Editors

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About one-half of the adults in the United States have at least one chronic disease (e.g., cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes mellitus) that could be prevented. Data indicate that a healthy diet and regular physical activity can reduce the risk of these diseases. The Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) has released the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, which update the previous 2010 guideline, to provide guidance regarding healthy eating. Although previous guidelines focused on individual food groups and nutrients, the current guidelines emphasize these nutritional components in combination and in dietary patterns.

Five general guiding principles are outlined to promote a healthy diet. Persons should eat a healthy diet throughout their lives, including consuming the appropriate amount of calories to maintain a healthy weight. Diets should include nutrient-dense foods in all food groups and in the proper amounts; intake of added sugars and saturated fat should be limited, and sodium

intake should be reduced. These nutrient-dense foods should take the place of those that are less healthy, taking into account cultural and personal preferences. In addition, these healthy diets should be supported in all settings, including work and school.

Key recommendations for a healthy diet are also provided. A healthy diet consists of vegetables of all types (e.g., dark green, red, orange, legumes, starchy); fruits; grains, with one-half or more being whole grains; fat-free or low-fat dairy; protein (e.g., lean meat and poultry, seafood, eggs, legumes); and oils. Intake of saturated and *trans* fats should be limited. Saturated fats should make up less than 10% of calories per day, as should intake of added sugars. Sodium should be reduced to less than 2,300 mg per day. If consuming alcohol, women and men of legal drinking age should have only one and two drinks per day, respectively. In addition, the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* should be followed.

Guideline source: Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee

Evidence rating system used? Yes

Literature search described? Yes

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Available at: <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/executive-summary/>

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