



# Wellness Newsletter

## Special Edition

Last month, the much anticipated 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans were released by the Department of Health and Human Services and the USDA. These Guidelines are so important that I decided to devote this whole issue to them.

Wait! Don't stop reading now if you find the thought of following a bunch of eating "rules" overwhelming. I've broken down the Guidelines into several segments ranging from easy and general to complex and specific recommendations. My hope is that everyone can find their own "sweet spot" where the Guidelines will build your confidence in practicing healthy eating habits, without feeling too restrictive or punitive.

Before we get to the Guidelines themselves, I'd like to revisit some basic "mission statements" for healthy eating. Here are 3 examples (You may remember these from October 2015):

- ◇ **Wholesome foods in sensible combinations.**  
...*Frank Hu and David Katz*
- ◇ **Eat food, not too much, mostly plants.**  
... *Michael Pollan*
- ◇ **Real food close to nature, mostly plants.**  
...*Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee*

If you honestly follow one of these very general statements, your eating patterns will be healthy ones and you may not need anything more complicated. (Please remember though – if you have special health and/or dietary needs, your healthcare provider is the best person to advise you on diet.) If a healthy eating mission statement is your sweet spot, you have my blessing to stop reading here. I do suggest that you put your mission statement in writing and post it somewhere visible as a daily reminder.

If you'd like a few reminders of why healthy eating is so important, read the box below. And if you can "stomach" a little more detail in making your eating decisions, see page 2. Wherever you land on the healthy eating continuum, I wish you good eats and the best of health!



Karen DeBonis  
R&K Wellness Director

## Why healthy eating is so important

Here's what the Dietary Guidelines say:

- A lifetime of healthy eating helps to prevent chronic diseases like obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, and Type 2 Diabetes.
- Healthy eating is one of the most powerful tools we have to reduce the onset of disease. The Dietary Guidelines recommendations can help you make informed choices about eating for you and your family.
- Most Americans can benefit from making small shifts in their daily eating habits to improve their health over the long run. Small shifts in food choices—over the course of a week, a day, or even a meal—can make a difference in working toward a healthy eating pattern that works for you.
- Eating patterns are the combination of foods and drinks you eat over time. A healthy eating pattern is adaptable to a person's taste preferences, traditions, culture and budget.



## Ready to dig deeper? Here you go:

According to the new guidelines, a healthy eating pattern should be a life-long practice that includes:

- A variety of vegetables: dark green, red and orange, legumes (beans and peas), starchy and other vegetables.
- Fruits, especially whole fruit.
- Grains, at least half of which are whole grain.
- Fat-free or low-fat dairy, including milk, yogurt, cheese, and/or fortified soy beverages.
- A variety of protein foods, including seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, legumes (beans and peas), soy products, and nuts and seeds.
- Oils, including those from plants: canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean, and sunflower. Oils also are naturally present in nuts, seeds, seafood, olives, and avocados.



## For those of you who really want to drill down for details, this is for you:

**Limit *added* sugars.** Less than 10% of your daily calories should come from added sugars. **ChooseMyPlate.gov** provides more information about added sugars, which are sugars and syrups that are added to foods or beverages when they are processed or prepared. *This does not include naturally occurring sugars such as those consumed as part of milk and fruits.*

**Limit saturated and *trans* fats.** Less than 10% of your daily calories should come from saturated fats. Foods that are high in saturated fat include butter, whole milk, meats that are not labeled as lean, and tropical oils such as coconut and palm oil. Saturated fats should be replaced with unsaturated fats, such as canola or olive oil.

**Limit sodium.** Adults and children ages 14 years and over should limit sodium to less than 2,300 mg per day, and children younger than 14 years should consume even less. Use the Nutrition Facts label to check for sodium, especially in processed foods like pizza, pasta dishes, sauces, and soups.



## Exercise Recommendations



The Dietary Guidelines also include exercise recommendations. Whaaat? You thought this was all about food? Wrong!

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things individuals can do to improve their health. According to the Department of Health and Human Services' Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, adults need at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each week and should perform muscle-strengthening exercises on two or more days each week. Children ages 6 to 17 years need at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day, including aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and bone-strengthening activities.

For more information on the Dietary Guidelines, go to: <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>



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