



Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2025-2030

Key Points for Healthy Living



What are the Dietary Guidelines?

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans show how to choose healthy foods that help your body grow strong and stay well. They are appropriate for most people, but if someone has a health condition, they should ask a doctor or health professional what foods are best for them.



Build a Better Plate

- Healthy eating can be simple: eat whole, nutrient-dense foods most of the time.
- These foods have vitamins and minerals that help your body grow, stay strong, and have energy. Choose fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans and lentils, nuts and seeds, lean meats, fish, eggs, and dairy.
- Eating a variety of foods helps your body get the nutrients it needs.
- Try to eat less highly processed foods like candy, chips, packaged snacks, and sugary drinks, which often have: added sugars, too much sodium (salt), saturated fat, and refined carbohydrates.



Eat the Right Amount for You

- Everyone needs a different amount of food, based on age, body size, sex, and activity level.
- Pay attention to portion sizes - especially for foods and drinks high in calories.
- Choose healthy drinks like water, sparkling water, or unsweetened beverages more often to stay hydrated.



Prioritize Protein at Every Meal

- Protein helps your body grow, build muscle, and stay strong.
- Choose a variety of protein from both animal sources, including eggs, poultry, seafood, and meat; and plant sources, including beans, peas, lentils, legumes, nuts, seeds, and soy.
- Cook in healthy ways: bake, broil, grill, roast, or stir-fry more often. Try to eat less deep-fried foods. Consider air frying as a healthier option.
- **How much:** Aim for 1.2 - 1.6 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day (0.54 - 0.73 grams per pound). Adjust based on how many calories you need.



Include Dairy Foods

- Dairy supports strong bones and overall health. It provides protein, healthy fats, and important vitamins and minerals (including calcium).
- Choose milk, yogurt, and cheese. Pick full-fat or reduced-fat options with little or no added sugar. If you don't drink dairy or can't, fortified soy products are a good option.
- **How much:** Aim for 3 servings of dairy foods per day.
- *Gut Health is important to overall health. Eat vegetables, fruit, fermented foods (sauerkraut, kimchi, kefir, miso) and other high-fiber foods to feed healthy bacteria in your gut.*



Eat Fruits and Vegetables More Often

- Fruits and vegetables help your body stay healthy. Eat them throughout the day.
- Eat a variety of colors: red, green, orange, yellow, and more.
- Eat whole fruits and vegetables when you can: fresh, frozen, canned, or dried. The best options have little or no added sugar or sodium.
- Choose whole fruits and vegetables most of the time. If you do drink juice, choose 100% fruit or vegetable juice in small amounts or mix with water.
- **How much:** Vegetables: 3 servings per day, Fruits: 2 servings per day.



Incorporate Healthy Fats

- Healthy fats give your body energy, support brain health, and help absorb fat-soluble vitamins.
- Choose fats from: seafood, nuts, seeds, avocados, meats, poultry, eggs, and dairy products.
- **Saturated fats** should be less than 10% of daily calories. Foods high in saturated fat include fatty meats, butter, and tropical oils like coconut and palm oil. Eating fewer highly processed foods can help you stay within this limit.



Focus on Whole Grains

- Whole grains give you energy, help you feel full, and support digestion.
- Choose whole grains like 100% whole wheat bread, whole grain pasta, brown rice, oats, and corn tortillas that are high in fiber.
- Limit refined grains like white bread, packaged breakfast foods, crackers, and flour tortillas.
- **How much:** Aim for 2-4 servings of whole grains per day.



Limit Highly Processed Foods, Added Sugars, and Sodium

- Some foods and drinks are less healthy because they have too much added sugar, sodium, unhealthy fats, or refined carbohydrates. Examples include chips, cookies, candy, and sugary drinks like sodas, fruit drinks, and energy drinks.
- Instead, choose a variety of whole, nutrient-dense foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and dairy.
- Added sugars** are sugars put into foods and drinks. Look for ingredients that have “sugar” or “syrup” in the name or end in “-ose”. Some common examples are high-fructose corn syrup, agave syrup, cane sugar, honey, and molasses.
- How Much:** Try to limit added sugars. Adults should aim for 10 grams or less per meal.
- Sodium** is needed by your body to work properly, but too much can be unhealthy. Try to avoid highly processed foods that are high in sodium.
- How Much:** Teens (14+) and adults should consume less than 2,300 mg per day of sodium.
- For children, recommendations vary by age:
 - 1–3 yrs: less than 1,200 mg/day
 - 4–8 yrs: less than 1,500 mg/day
 - 9–13 yrs: less than 1,800 mg/day



Limit Alcoholic Beverages

- Drinking less alcohol is better for your health.
- Who should avoid alcohol completely:** pregnant women, people under the legal drinking age, people recovering from alcohol use disorder, people who cannot control how much they drink, and people taking certain medicines or with medical conditions.



Daily Servings by Calorie Level

Food Group	Calorie Level of Pattern Serving Size Examples	1000	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	2400	2600	2800	3000	3200
		Daily Servings											
Protein Foods	3 oz cooked meat, poultry, or seafood; 1 egg; ½ cup beans, peas, or lentils; 1 oz nuts or seeds; 2 tbsp nut or seed butter; 3 oz soy	1–1 ½	1 ½–2	2–2 ½	2 ½–3 ½	2 ½–3 ½	3–4	3 ½–4 ½	3 ½–4 ½	3 ½–4 ½	4–5	4–5	4–5
Dairy	1 cup milk; ¾ cup yogurt; 1 oz cheese	2	2 ½	2 ½	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Vegetables	1 cup raw or cooked; 2 cups leafy greens	1 ¼	1 ¾	1 ¾	2 ½	3	3	3 ½	3 ½	4 ¼	4 ¼	4 ¾	4 ¾
Fruits	1 cup raw; ½ cup dried	1	1	1 ½	1 ½	1 ½	2	2	2	2	2 ½	2 ½	2 ½
Whole Grains	½ cup cooked oats, brown rice, barley, quinoa, or buckwheat; 1 slice bread; 1 tortilla	1–2	1 ½–2 ¾	1 ¾–3 ¼	1 ¾–3 ¼	2–4	2–4	2 ¼–4 ½	2 ¾–5 ¼	3–6	3 ¼–6 ½	3 ¼–6 ½	3 ¼–6 ½

Choose a variety of foods from each food group. Pick nutrient-dense foods, with no or limited added sugars, refined carbohydrates, or chemical additives. Pay attention to portion sizes, since foods can have different calories and nutrients. Include healthy fats, which are found in many foods and can also be used in small amounts when cooking.



Special Populations & Considerations



Infancy & Early Childhood (Birth – 4 Years)

- For the first 6 months of life, infants should only have breast milk or iron-fortified formula for their nutrition.
- Keep breastfeeding as long as mother and child want, for up to 2 years or more. For infants who use formula, switch to whole milk at 12 months.
- Talk to a health care provider about supplements, because needs can be different. Vitamin D and iron are most often recommended.
- At 6 months, and after consulting with your health care provider, introduce infants to nutrient-dense complementary foods, including possibly allergenic foods like nut butters, eggs, shellfish, and wheat. Offer a variety of foods in appropriate textures and avoid added sugars.
- Start solid foods when children are developmentary ready. Signs include:
 - Sitting up with little or no help
 - Controlling the head and neck
 - Grabbing toys or food
 - Bringing items to the mouth
 - Opening the mouth for food
 - Moving food to the back of the tongue
 - Swallowing food instead of pushing it out.
- Offer new foods many times – it may take 8 to 10 attempts before baby will try a new food. Model healthy eating habits by eating a variety of foods yourself.



Middle Childhood (5-10 Years)

- All dairy foods can be part of a healthy diet. Full-fat dairy can help kids grow by giving them energy and supporting brain development, but it's still important to limit saturated fat from other foods.
- Limit added sugars as much as possible and avoid caffeinated drinks.
- Cook meals at home more often and make it fun, so kids can learn healthy habits and life skills.



Adolescence (11-18 Years)

- During these years, teens grow fast and need more energy, protein, calcium and iron (especially for girls due to menstruation). Adequate calcium and vitamin D are important for building strong bones.
- Limit added sugars, especially in sugary drinks and energy drinks.
- Encourage adolescents to help with grocery shopping and cooking.



Young Adulthood

- Following the Dietary Guidelines helps young adults stay healthy and lowers the risk of chronic diseases.
- Iron and folate are especially important for women.



Pregnant Women

- During pregnancy, women need more nutrients - especially iron, folate, and iodine. Eat a range of nutrient-dense foods, including those high in choline and low-mercury omega-3-rich seafood like salmon, sardines, and trout.
- Talk to a health care provider about taking a daily prenatal vitamin during pregnancy.



Lactating Women

- Lactating women need more energy and nutrients to make milk and stay healthy. Eat a variety of nutrient-dense foods, including seafood rich in omega-3s and foods high in folate like legumes and leafy greens.
- Talk to a health care provider about taking supplements during lactation.



Older Adults

- Some older adults need fewer calories but may not get enough protein, vitamin B₁₂, vitamin D, or calcium. They should eat nutrient-dense foods, and talk to a health care provider about if supplements are needed.



Individuals with Chronic Disease

- Following the Dietary Guidelines can help lower your risk of chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. People with a chronic disease should talk with a health care provider to adapt the guidelines to meet their needs.



Vegetarians and Vegans

- Eat a variety of foods, including protein-rich foods like beans, peas, lentils, nuts, seeds, tofu, tempeh, and if you choose, dairy and eggs.
- Pay attention to nutrients you may miss getting enough of on a vegetarian or vegan diet, like iron, vitamin B₁₂, choline, zinc, and iodine.
- Talk to a health care provider about supplements to help fill any nutrient gaps.