



Nutrition & Health

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Do new “Dietary Guidelines for Americans” call for changes?

New dietary guidelines are released every five years and are considered a blueprint for how Americans should modify their eating and activity based on research. Not everything about the advice changes, but the guidelines do emphasize some important changes Americans need to work on each time they are released. Sometimes it is just a tweaking of how the advice is stated to make the advice more clear and emphatic.

Here are some highlights from the guidelines released in January of 2005.

- Eat three or more servings of whole grains a day (or half of your whole grain servings if your calorie requirements allow more than six grain servings daily). *We have been teaching this for some time because of the health benefits of whole grains, but now the advice is clearly stated in the guidelines.*
- Consume three cups of fat-free or low-fat milk (or equivalent servings of other low-fat or fat-free dairy products) daily. *Dairy products are important for their nutrients that prevent osteoporosis and for their role in heart health, including controlling blood pressure.*
- Limit your intake of trans fats. *These fats are formed when liquid oils are converted to a more solid form and is linked as strongly as saturated fats to increasing serum cholesterol levels. To avoid trans fats, avoid foods made with hydrogenated fats like baked goods, crackers, and stick marg- arines. Trans-fat information will be required on food labels beginning in January 2006. Some labels provide this information now as manufacturers prepare to comply with the new food labeling law, so watch food labels.*
- Eat two servings of fish a week (8 oz. total) to reduce the risk of heart disease. *Dark fleshed fish like salmon are particularly beneficial as they contain higher amounts of Omega 3 fatty acids which tend to protect the heart against deadly rhythm disturbances.*
- Eat nine servings a day of fruits and vegetables (equals two cups of fruit and two and a half cups of vegetables) on a 2,000 calorie a day diet. *If you eat more than 2,000 calories a day, you need more servings and if you eat fewer calories, you can consume fewer servings. The DASH eating plan for controlling hypertension recommends seven to eight servings a day for a 1,600 calorie diet. Choose whole fruits and vegetables, using only one serving daily of fruit juice to get adequate fiber in your diet. Remember that variety in color is a key to getting a variety of plant chemicals that are beneficial to health.*

There are many more recommendations in the guidelines. For more information go to: <http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/>

Did you know?

Food safety recommendations no longer advise rinsing poultry to reduce salmonella bacteria. The heat of cooking will destroy the bacteria; but when rinsing, you risk spreading the bacteria and contaminating other foods.

The roots of mold on food run deep, so by cutting away mold you don't always cut away all of the toxins . At greatest risk to mold toxins are those in frail health or who suffer respiratory reactions to mold. It can be safe to cut a small area of mold from a hard vegetable or fruit, but the safest action when mold is spotted on food is to throw it out.

There are new cutting board options to help us keep food safe. Colored boards help us prevent cross contamination by using different colored boards for foods that will be eaten without cooking and those that need to be cooked, like meats. Disposable cutting boards are also available to use when preparing meats.