

Update dietary guidelines for a healthier you

February 5 2019, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—Every five years, the U.S. government updates its dietary guidelines based in part on new research, but always with the goal of disease prevention.

The 2015-2020 guidelines stress the need to shift to [healthier foods](#) and beverages. Although research links vegetables and fruits to a lower risk of many chronic illnesses and suggests they may protect against some cancers, roughly 3 out of 4 Americans still don't get enough.

While more than half of Americans eat the recommended amounts (or more) of grains and protein, not enough are making healthier choices like whole rather than refined grains, a step that may reduce heart disease risk and help with weight control.

What to Eat:

- A variety of vegetables: dark green, red and orange, legumes and some starchy ones.
- Fruits, especially eaten whole.
- Grains, with at least half whole [grains](#).
- No-fat or low-fat dairy, including milk, yogurt, cheese and/or fortified soy beverages.
- A variety of protein, including seafood, [lean meats](#) and poultry, eggs, nuts, seeds and soy products.
- Plant-based oils.

Most people eat too many added sugars, saturated fats and salt, and need to cut back.

The prior guideline to limit [cholesterol](#) to 300 milligrams a day has been left out, because [dietary cholesterol](#), found in animal-based foods, is no longer seen as affecting blood cholesterol. But foods that are higher in cholesterol, like fatty meat and full-fat dairy, are also higher in saturated fats, so they still need to be limited. Egg yolks and some shellfish are higher in cholesterol but not in saturated fat and can be part of your protein choices.

Where to Cut Back:

- Less than 10 percent of daily calories should come from added sugars.
- Less than 10 percent of daily calories should come from saturated fats.
- Less than 2,300 milligrams of salt is a daily goal.

An easy place to cut back on calories is snacks. About half of us eat two to three snacks a day, and about one-third eat four or more.

Remember: Every time you reach for something to eat or drink, you have the opportunity to make a choice for better health. A series of small shifts at every meal, over time, can add up to significant change.

More information: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has more about the [dietary guidelines](#) for Americans.

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Citation: Update dietary guidelines for a healthier you (2019, February 5) retrieved 15 February 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-02-dietary-guidelines-healthier.html>

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