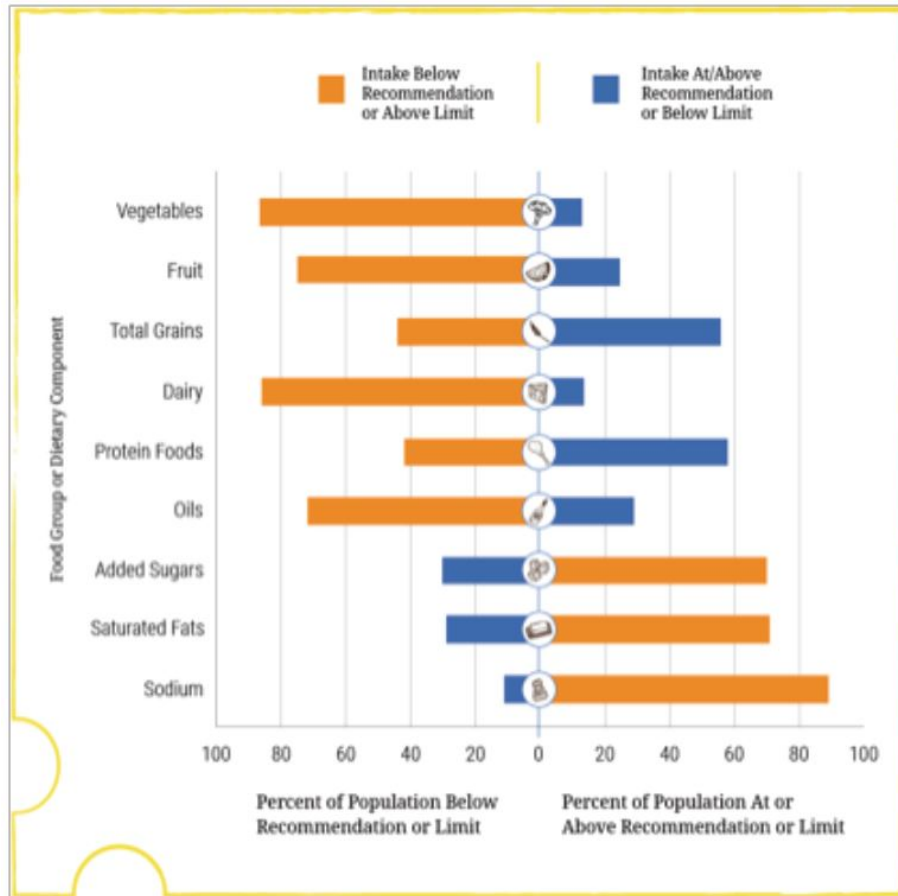


## Meeting the New 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

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The current American eating pattern is far from what the newly released 2015- 2020 USDA Dietary Guidelines recommend. Three-fourths of Americans do not consume an adequate amount of vegetables, fruits, dairy, or oils, while over half of Americans either meet or exceed recommended amounts of grains and protein foods (see Figure 1).<sup>2</sup>

Figure 1. Current Eating Patterns in the United States<sup>1</sup>



Additionally, America's current eating pattern reveals an excess consumption of added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium, which contribute to the development of chronic diseases like cardiovascular diseases (CVD) and diabetes. About one-half of the country's intake of added sugar come from beverages like soft drinks, fruit drinks, sweetened coffee and tea drinks, and sport and energy drinks.<sup>2</sup> Saturated fats, a subset of total dietary fat, come mainly from mixed dishes that consist of cheese, meat, or a combination of the two.<sup>2</sup> Examples include pizza, burgers, sandwiches, rice and pasta dishes, and meat, poultry, and seafood dishes. These mixed dishes, along with soups, account for about half of America's dietary sodium intake. Many high-sodium foods are commercially processed or prepared.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to highlighting the current eating pattern of Americans, the Dietary Guidelines also present three different healthy eating patterns for Americans: 1- Healthy U.S.-Style Eating

Pattern; 2-Healthy Mediterranean-Style Eating Pattern; 3- Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern (see Table 1). Overall, these eating patterns aim to reduce the risk of CVD, diabetes, and certain types of cancers including colorectal and postmenopausal breast cancers.<sup>2</sup>

Vegetable oils like corn and soybean oil are high in polyunsaturated fats and can be incorporated into any of the three eating patterns. The USDA notes that “strong and consistent evidence shows that replacing saturated fats with unsaturated fats, especially polyunsaturated fats, is associated with reduced blood levels of total cholesterol and of lowdensity lipoprotein-cholesterol (LDL-cholesterol).<sup>2</sup>”

“The Healthy U.S.-Style Pattern is based on the types and proportions of foods Americans typically consume, but in nutrient-dense forms and appropriate amounts”, according to the Guidelines. It promotes: eating plenty of colorful vegetables; focusing on whole fruits rather than fruit juices; making at least half of the grains you eat whole grains; choosing fat-free or low-fat dairy product options; and incorporating a variety of lower-fat protein sources. The USDA’s newest addition to the guidelines is to limit calories from added sugar to 10% of total daily calories, in the same way calories from saturated fat should not contribute to more than 10% of one’s daily calories.

“The Healthy Mediterranean-Style Pattern is adapted from the Healthy U.S.-Style Pattern, modifying amounts recommended from some food groups to more closely reflect eating patterns that have been associated with positive health outcomes in studies of Mediterranean-Style diets”, states the Guidelines. This eating pattern promotes a high intake of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, seafood, chicken and turkey, legumes, nuts, and seeds.<sup>2</sup> It limits dairy products to once or twice per day, and almost completely omits red meats and sugar-sweetened foods and beverages. While it is higher in overall fat than the U.S. Style, almost all fat comes from healthy sources, including olive oil, fatty fish like salmon, nuts, and seeds. Because the diet incorporates fewer servings of dairy, it may be lower in calcium and Vitamin D, possibly requiring supplementation.

“The Healthy Vegetarian Pattern is adapted from the Healthy U.S.-Style Pattern, modifying amounts recommended from some food groups to more closely reflect eating patterns reported by self-identified vegetarians in the National Health and Nutrition examination Survey (NHANES)”, the Guidelines explain. This pattern includes more legumes (beans and peas), soy products, nuts and seeds, and whole grains. It contains no meats, poultry, or seafood, and is identical to the Healthy U.S.-Style eating Pattern in amounts of all other food groups.<sup>2</sup> This pattern closely follows the same nutrient standards as the Healthy U.S.-Style Pattern, but is somewhat higher in calcium and fiber and lower in vitamin D due to the differences in food selections.<sup>2</sup>

Table 1. Three healthy eating patterns

| <b>Average intake/day</b> | <b>Current Intake</b>    | <b>U.S. Style Pattern</b> | <b>Mediterranean Pattern</b> | <b>Vegetarian Pattern</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Fruit (c-eq)</b>       | ½ - 1                    | 2                         | 2 ½                          | 2                         |
| <b>Vegetables (c-eq)</b>  | 1 ½                      | 2 ½                       | 2 ½                          | 2 ½                       |
| <b>Grains (oz-eq)</b>     |                          |                           |                              |                           |
| whole (minimum)           | 0 - 1 oz                 | 3 oz                      | 3 oz                         | 3 ½ oz                    |
| refined (maximum)         | 6 - 7 oz M<br>4 - 5 oz F | 3 oz                      | 3 oz                         | 3 oz                      |
| <b>Dairy (c-eq)</b>       | 1 ½                      | 3                         | 2                            | 3                         |

|                                   |                          |          |          |                     |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|----------|---------------------|
| <b>Protein</b>                    | 6 - 8 oz M<br>4 - 5 oz F | 5 ½ oz   | 6 ½ oz   | 3 ½ oz<br>(no meat) |
| <b>Sodium</b>                     | 3,600 mg                 | 2,300 mg | 2,300 mg | 2,300 mg            |
| <b>Added sugars<br/>(maximum)</b> | 12 - 15%<br>of calories  | < 10%    | < 10%    | < 10%               |

c-eq and oz-eq represent cup-equivalents and ounce-equivalents, respectively

The three healthy eating patterns offered by the Dietary Guidelines are designed to be flexible in order to accommodate both traditional and cultural foods. Individuals are encouraged to retain the healthy aspects of their eating and physical activity patterns and avoid adopting behaviors that are less healthy.<sup>2</sup> Professionals can help individuals or population groups by recognizing cultural diversity and developing programs and materials that are responsive and appropriate to their belief systems, lifestyles and practices, traditions, and other needs, states the Guidelines. For more information visit: <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/>

## References

1. <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/chapter-2/current-eating-patterns-in-the-united-states/>
2. United States Department of Agriculture. (2016). Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020, eighth edition. Retrieved from: <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>

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