



DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS, 2010

The 7th edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 (DGA2010) were released on January 31, 2011. This set of guidelines are most notable because they are written for an unhealthy population. Truth be told, Americans have largely ignored most of the Dietary Guideline advice over the years:

"Americans eat too many calories and too much solid fat, added sugars, refined grains, and sodium. Americans also consume too little potassium; dietary fiber; calcium; vitamin D; unsaturated fatty acids from oils, nuts, and seafood; and other important nutrients. These nutrients are mostly found in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and low-fat milk and milk products." -DGA2010

The messages that were most widely reported included the following simple to understand (but not always simple to adopt) messages:

Balancing Calories: Enjoy your food, but eat less. Avoid oversized portions.

Foods to Increase: Make half your plate fruits and vegetables. Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.

Foods to Reduce: Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals – and choose the foods with lower numbers. Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

Three More Notable Messages

1. Eat a nutritious breakfast every day. Not only is breakfast linked with school achievement and test scores, it may also be a powerful calorie/weight regulator. Not eating breakfast has been associated with excess body weight, especially among children and adolescents. Consuming breakfast also has been associated with weight loss and weight loss maintenance, as well as improved nutrient intake.

2. Have whole grains and lean protein foods on the other half of your plate. While fruits and veggies are vital, a variety of foods are needed for optimal health. The other half of the plate should be filled out with whole grains (think brown rice, multigrain/whole grain pasta, whole grain rolls, whole corn tortilla chips) and protein foods such as lean meat, poultry, fish, beans, nuts, seeds and eggs. A glass of 1% milk rounds out the meal.

3. Use "SoFAS" to enhance nutrient-dense foods. This acronym refers to solid fats and added sugars. According to the DGA2010, 35% of our calories come from SoFAS, which is way out of balance. Instead of eating daily donuts, fried snacks and sugary beverages, the key is to pick and choose the fats and sugars that add to the taste and enjoyment of nutritious foods. Some examples of nutrient-dense foods containing some solid fats or added sugars include whole-grain breakfast cereals that contain small amounts of added sugars, cuts of meat that are marbled with fat, poultry baked with skin on, vegetables topped with butter or stick margarine, fruit sprinkled with sugar, and fat-free chocolate milk.

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