

[Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005:](#)
Selected Key Recommendations for the General Public

Adequate nutrients within calorie needs:

- Consume a variety of nutrient-dense foods & beverages within and among the basic food groups.
- Limit the intake of saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, added sugars, salt, and alcohol.
- Meet the recommended intakes within energy needs by adopting a balanced eating pattern, such as the USDA Food Guide or the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) Eating Plan.

Foods groups to encourage:

- Consume a sufficient amount of fruits & vegetables while staying within energy needs. Two cups of fruit and 2 ½ cups of vegetables per day are recommended for a reference 2,000-calorie intake,¹ with higher or lower amounts depending on the calorie level.
- Choose a variety of fruits & vegetables each day. In particular, select from all five vegetable subgroups (dark green, orange, legumes, starchy vegetables, and other vegetables) several times a week.
- Consume 3 or more ounce-equivalents of whole-grain products per day, with the rest of the recommended grains coming from enriched or whole-grain products. In general, at least half the grains should come from whole grains.
- Consume 3 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products.

Fats:

- Consume less than 10% of calories from saturated fats, less than 300 mg/day of cholesterol, and keep trans fats as low as possible.
- Keep total fat intake between 20% - 35% of calories, with most fats coming from sources of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids, such as fish, nuts and vegetable oils.
- When selecting and preparing meat, poultry, dry beans, and milk or milk products, make choices that are lean, low-fat or fat-free.
- Limit intake of fats and oils high in saturated and/or trans fatty acids, and choose products low in such fats and oils.

Carbohydrates:

- Choose fiber-rich fruits, vegetables and whole grains often.
- Choose and prepare foods & beverages with little added sugars or caloric sweeteners.
- Reduce the incidence of dental caries by practicing good oral hygiene and consuming sugar- and starch-containing foods & beverages less frequently.

Sodium & potassium:

- Consume less than 2,300 mg (approx. 1 teaspoon of salt) of sodium per day. **Please note** that blacks, middle-aged and older adults, and individuals with high blood pressure should consult their health care provider regarding their sodium and potassium intake, since their requirements may vary from this recommendation.
- Choose and prepare foods with little salt. At the same time, consume potassium-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables.

Weight management:

- To maintain body weight in a healthy range, balance calories from foods & beverages with calories expended.
- To prevent gradual weight gain over time, make small decreases in food & beverage calories and increase physical activity.

[Source:](#) *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005.* U.S. Dept of Health & Human Services & U.S. Dept of Agriculture.
<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/pdf/DGA2005.pdf>

¹ The Dietary Guidelines recommendations are based on a 2,000-calorie/day reference level for consistency with the Nutrition Facts on food products. Recommended calorie intake will differ for individuals based on age, sex and activity level.