



SUMMARY 2015 DIETARY GUIDELINES ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Issued February 19, 2015

BRIEF OVERVIEW

On February 19, 2015, the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) Report was released by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). It summarizes the Committee's conclusions about the science they have reviewed on dietary habits to promote health and reduce risk for disease since their appointment in 2013. With this release, the work of developing the 2015 DGA moves to the DHHS and USDA. The final 2015 DGA is expected to be released by the end of 2015.

HIGH-LEVEL OBSERVATIONS AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Conceptual model

- The DGAC Report is organized around a conceptual model or framework that depicts how personal, social, organizational, and environmental contexts and systems interact to influence individuals' diet and physical activity behaviors and patterns and how diverse health outcomes result from this dynamic interplay.

Components of a healthy dietary pattern

- The DGAC concluded that a healthy dietary pattern is higher in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, **low- or non-fat dairy**, seafood, legumes, and nuts; moderate in alcohol (among adults); and lower in red and processed meat; and low in sugar-sweetened foods and drinks and refined grains.
 - Lean meats were not included in the list of foods above due to how they were assessed in the literature; however, lean meats are included in recommended dietary patterns modeled below.
- Overall, the DGAC recommended three dietary patterns that include the above components of a healthy dietary pattern: the Healthy U.S.-style Pattern, the Healthy Mediterranean-style Pattern, and the Healthy Vegetarian Pattern. It is not necessary to eliminate food groups or conform to a single dietary pattern, rather foods can be combined in a variety of flexible ways to achieve healthy dietary patterns.

Nutrients of public health concern

Under-consumed:

- "Shortfall nutrients" include vitamin A, vitamin D, vitamin E, vitamin C, folate, calcium, magnesium, fiber and potassium; iron is a shortfall nutrient for adolescent and premenopausal females.
- "Nutrients of public health concern" include vitamin D, calcium, potassium and fiber because their under-consumption has been linked to adverse health outcomes (same as 2010 DGA).

Over-consumed:

- **Saturated fat (SF)** recommendations are the same as the 2010 DGA and should not exceed 10% of total calories per day. In addition, the report recommends substituting SF with polyunsaturated fats, and replacing solid animal fats with non-tropical vegetable oils and nuts.
- **Sodium** recommendations are consistent with the 2013 AHA/ACC Lifestyle Guideline for adults who would benefit from blood pressure lowering, and state "consume no more than 2,400 mg of sodium/day; further reduction of sodium intake to 1,500 mg/day can result in even greater reduction in blood pressure" and concludes that "even without achieving these goals, reducing sodium intake by at least 1,000 mg/day lowers blood pressure."
- **Added sugars** recommendations are to consume less than 10% of calories from added sugars per day, and the report supports adding a daily value for added sugars and more information about added sugars to the nutrition facts panel.



- Dietary cholesterol is no longer a nutrient of concern for over-consumption because available evidence shows no appreciable relationship between dietary cholesterol and serum cholesterol.
- Intakes of sodium, SF, and added sugars are not intended to be reduced in isolation, but as part of a healthy dietary pattern that is balanced, as appropriate, in calories. Rather than focusing purely on reduction, emphasis should also be placed on replacement and shifts in food intake and eating patterns.

SOFAS now called empty calories

- ‘Empty calories’ is being used instead of ‘solid fats and added sugars.’ Empty calories are calories from solid fats that occur naturally in foods such as meat and dairy, and sugars that are added to foods.

Sustainability

- Major findings regarding sustainable diets include that a diet higher in plant-based foods, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds, and lower in calories and animal-based foods is more health promoting and is associated with less environmental impact than is the current U.S. diet. The report also states that “dietary patterns that adhered to dietary guidelines were more environmentally sustainable than the population’s current average intake or pattern.”
- The DGAC states that “beef was the single food with the greatest projected impact on the environment; other foods estimated to have high impact include cheese, milk and seafood.” However, it also states that no food groups need to be eliminated completely to improve sustainability outcomes, and that this pattern of eating can be achieved through a variety of dietary patterns, including the Healthy U.S.-style Pattern, the Healthy Mediterranean-style Pattern, and the Healthy Vegetarian Pattern. The DGAC goes on to state that “each of these patterns provides more plant-based foods and lower amounts of meat than are currently consumed by the U.S. population.” Dairy reduction is not specifically mentioned.

Healthy food environments

The DGAC recommended targeted environmental and policy changes and standards that are effective in changing diet and physical activity behaviors and achieving positive health impact in children, adolescents, and adults.

Examples include:

- Front of pack (FOP) labels – The DGAC recommends standardizing and creating easy-to-understand FOP label on all food and beverage products to give clear guidance about a food’s healthfulness.
- School programs – The DGAC encourages the development and expansion of programs that encourage healthy eating and physical activity habits in young children and adolescents within school and early care and other education settings.
- Policies and programs that reduce added sugars and sodium in foods – The DGAC supports approaches that might include: making water a preferred beverage choice in public settings, child care facilities, schools, worksites, etc.; reducing added sugars in foods and sugar-sweetened beverages in school meals; taxing higher sugar- and sodium-containing foods and beverages.

IMPLICATIONS SPECIFIC TO DAIRY

Dairy servings / dairy in dietary patterns

- Dairy servings in the three recommended dietary patterns contain either three cup equivalents of low-fat or fat-free dairy foods per day (Healthy U.S.-style and Healthy Vegetarian Patterns) or two per day (Healthy Mediterranean-style Pattern). It’s unclear how the dairy servings recommendations will be translated into the final DGA policy document.
- All three recommended dietary patterns do not meet potassium and vitamin D recommendations; the patterns that contain three dairy servings meet calcium recommendations, but the Healthy Mediterranean-style Pattern does not meet calcium recommendations for some adolescents and elderly women.



Dairy group and nutrient contributions

- Dairy is acknowledged as an under-consumed food group: “In comparison to recommended amounts in the USDA Food Patterns, the majority of the U.S. population has low intakes of key food groups that are important sources of the shortfall nutrients, including vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and dairy.”
- To reduce added sugars, the DGAC recommends replacing soft drinks and other sugar-sweetened beverages with non-fat fluid milk which would increase intakes of calcium, vitamin D and magnesium.

Dairy and health outcomes

Overall the DGAC acknowledged dairy’s health benefits by stating “Consumption of dairy foods provides numerous health benefits including lower risk of diabetes, metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease and obesity.”

- Cancer – Moderate evidence indicates that dietary patterns higher in low fat dairy foods are associated with a decreased risk for colon/rectal cancer; this is consistent with data presented showing diets high in calcium are associated with probable decreased risk . The DGAC found no link to prostate cancer due to limited evidence about overall dietary patterns and prostate cancer.
- Bone health – Limited evidence indicates dietary patterns higher in vegetables, fruits, grains, nuts and dairy products, and lower in meats and SF, are associated with more favorable bone health outcomes in adults. The DGAC noted that more research about overall dietary patterns and bone are needed.

Cheese

- The DGAC evaluated the effect of increasing low-fat/fat-free fluid milk and yogurt while decreasing cheese on nutrient intakes; this change resulted in higher intakes of magnesium, potassium, vitamin A and vitamin D, while also decreasing the intake of sodium and SF. The DGAC didn’t recommend reducing cheese intake.
- Overall caloric contribution from mixed dishes is 29% of calories. Two-thirds of all cheese intake is in mixed dishes such as pizza, burgers, sandwiches and casseroles. Because cheese is generally higher in SF and sodium and lower in potassium and vitamin D than milk, the DGAC suggested modifying the types of cheese used in these mixed dishes to lower fat and sodium versions to improve their nutritional profile.

Flavored milk

- Flavored milks were not specifically listed as a sugar-sweetened beverage in the report definition and the report noted that sweetened flavored milks and yogurts contribute 4 percent of total added sugars intake.

Lactose intolerance (LI)

- While raised during several of the DGAC meetings, the DGAC Report contains no mention of LI at all.

NEXT STEPS

- Public comment period – open for approximately 45 days – closes midnight EDT April 8, 2015
- Public meeting to comment on the DGAC report scheduled for March 24, 2015
 - Meeting registration will open on or around March 9, 2015; opportunity for oral testimony
- HHS and USDA will review the Report and develop the final DGA which will be delivered to Congress by the end of 2015 and to the public shortly thereafter. New educational materials (MyPlate 2.0) are expected to be issued at the same time as the DGAs.