

2015 DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS

Key Recommendations

THE DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS, UPDATED EVERY FIVE YEARS BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS), ARE INFLUENTIAL IN SHAPING FEDERAL FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY, PROCUREMENT AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES THAT AFFECT OUR CHILDREN'S LIFETIME OF GOOD EATING AND HEALTH.

The dietary guidelines provide the foundation for children's learning about nutrition and what constitutes "good food." They also inform the nutrition standards for the National School Lunch Program, which impacts 30.7 million children a day in schools and childcare settings, including 21.5 million children on free or reduced price meals and living in households that earn 185 percent or less of the federal poverty level.

Children consume up to half of their daily calories at school. For low-income children, school lunch may be their most nutritious meal of the day. Analysis from the Union of Concerned Scientists' "Lessons from the Lunchroom" shows that having healthy choices at school can significantly shape children's eating habits, especially for low-income children and children of color. According to a 2014 Harvard School of Health study, children's consumption of vegetables increased by 16 percent and fruit by 23 percent since the new federal nutrition standards launched in 2012.

Federal nutrition assistance programs that benefit millions of children, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) also are shaped by the dietary guidelines. Three-quarters of all SNAP benefits go to households with children. And in 2014, more than 4.3 million children benefitted from WIC on a monthly basis. Additionally, the dietary guidelines form the basis of federal nutrition education programs such as MyPlate and USDA Food Plans used for setting SNAP allotments and child support guidelines.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) believes the dietary guidelines provide an important framework for developing public policies that support the health of our children and our nation. WKKF supports the recommendations that will help address health inequities and increase children's access to healthy food in low-income and communities of color. We are especially pleased with two new recommendations that communities have long advocated for, which are to:

- Include sustainable agriculture for plant and animal-based food production in the dietary guidelines.
- Establish healthy food environments that make water a preferred beverage choice and readily available in school and childcare settings.

WKKF HAS LONG HELD THAT GOOD NUTRITION REQUIRES "GOOD FOOD" – FOOD THAT IS HEALTHY, FAIR (ENSURING HUMANE WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS FOR ALL ALONG THE FOOD CHAIN), EQUITABLE (PHYSICALLY AND FINANCIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO ALL), CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE AND SUSTAINABLY PRODUCED. THE FOUNDATION BELIEVES IN AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO NUTRITION THAT RECOGNIZES AND ADDRESSES THE ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FACTORS IN PLANT AND ANIMAL PRODUCTION PRACTICES AND THAT BENEFITS EVERYONE, INCLUDING KIDS, FAMILIES, FARMERS AND COMMUNITIES.

We support the dietary guidelines' incorporation of sustainable agriculture as defined by Congress, which says sustainable agriculture is an integrated system of plant and animal practices that, over the long-term, satisfy human food and fiber needs; enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends; make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources; sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

WKKF also supports the recommendations to establish healthy food environments that make water a preferred beverage choice and readily available in schools, childcare and other public settings. Increasing kids' access to and consumption of drinking water supports their health and learning

SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS TODAY

The public comment period on the dietary guidelines has been extended to May 8, 2015. We encourage you to show your support for the dietary guidelines' inclusion of sustainable agriculture for plant and animal-based food production and the establishment of healthy food environments that make water the preferred beverage choice and readily available in school, childcare and other public settings.

Visit <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2015/comments/> to submit your comments by May 8, 2015, 12 p.m. ET.

Before submitting your comments online, you will be asked to select applicable topics from a check-list. Please check the boxes for the following two topics:

- Chapter D.4: Food Environment and Settings
- Chapter D.5: Food Sustainability and Safety

Sample Comment

I am writing to express my support for the recommendations of the 2015 Scientific Report of the Dietary Guidelines Committee calling for the inclusion of sustainable agriculture for plant and animal-based food production and the establishment of healthy food environments that make water the preferred beverage choice and readily available in school, childcare and other public settings. Both are paramount to improving the health of our children and of our nation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015-scientific-report/> for the scientific report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC), the scientific body that advises USDA and HHS.