

Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010

February 2, 2011

On January 31, 2011 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010](#). A copy of the [executive summary is available here](#). Supporting documents include [Questions and Answers](#) on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines, a [Backgrounder regarding the History and Process for the Dietary Guidelines](#), and [Selected Messages for Consumers](#).

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (Dietary Guidelines) are reviewed by USDA and HHS every five years, pursuant to Public Law 101-445. Traditionally, the Dietary Guidelines recommendations have been intended for healthy Americans ages 2 years and older. “[R]ising concern about the health of the American population,” however, has led the USDA and HHS to publish Dietary Guidelines for all Americans ages 2 years and older, including those at increased risk of chronic disease.

Taken together, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines recommendations encompass two overarching concepts, encouraging Americans to:

- "maintain calorie balance over time to achieve and sustain a healthy weight," by decreasing calorie consumption and increasing the calories expended through physical activity; and
- "focus on consuming nutrient-dense foods and beverages," by reducing intake of sodium and calories from solid fats, added sugars, and refined grains, and increasing consumption of nutrient-dense foods and beverages such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat milk products, seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans and peas, and nuts and seeds.

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines note that while “nutrient needs should be met primarily through consuming foods,” in some cases “fortified foods and dietary supplements may be useful in providing one or more nutrients that otherwise might be consumed less than recommended amounts.” The Dietary Guidelines also encourage consumer education on food preparation and preservation to promote food safety and prevent foodborne illness.

The information in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines is used in developing educational materials and aiding policymakers in designing and carrying out nutrition-related program, including federal food, nutrition education and information programs. In addition, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines has the potential to offer authoritative statements as provided for in the Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act (FDAMA), which, in some cases may be used by food marketers to substantiate use of new health claims or nutrient content claims in food labeling.

[More information regarding the 2010 Dietary Guidelines](#) is available here.