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USDA, HHS RELEASE UPDATED *DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS*

The Federal Government today released the fifth edition of [*Dietary Guidelines for Americans*](#), providing easily understood, science-based information on how Americans can choose diets that promote good health.

The new guidelines, announced by President Clinton in his weekly radio address, have been improved to be more consumer-friendly, to contain more specific scientific recommendations and to address the need for safe food handling to prevent illness.

"This edition of the *Dietary Guidelines* provides practical advice and useful information for American families," HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala said. "They will help consumers apply the most current scientific knowledge to the way they eat every day, both to promote health and to reduce their chances of developing many chronic diseases."

"The *Dietary Guidelines* are the gold standard when it comes to applying scientific research to what people should be eating," said Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman.

The new guidelines continue to emphasize balance, moderation and variety in food choices, with a special emphasis on grain products, vegetables and fruits. The guidelines include specific examples of foods that deliver given nutrients, including choices for vegetarians.

The new guidelines also emphasize physical activity as important for healthy living, more than just for weight management. For example, physical activity can help build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints; build endurance and muscular strength; and promote psychological well-being and self-esteem. Moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes most days of the week is recommended for adults and 60 minutes for children.

For the first time, there is a guideline that focuses on keeping food safe to eat, particularly the need to keep and prepare foods safely in the home. Recommendations include keeping preparation areas and utensils clean; separating raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods; cooking food to a safe temperature; and chilling perishable foods promptly.

"We have long recognized the importance of a healthy diet," said Secretary Shalala. "The guidelines now highlight the integral relationships of physical activity and safe food handling to healthful eating patterns."

In his radio address, President Clinton also announced that USDA will require nutrition labeling for meat and poultry products, including all ground or chopped meat. Under the rule to be proposed this summer, retailers would be required to provide nutrition information through product labels or at the point of purchase by posting signs or making information readily available in brochures or leaflets. The required information would include fat, calories and cholesterol content. Providing such information currently is voluntary, but fewer than 60 percent of retailers did so last year.

The *Dietary Guidelines* are published every five years, and they provide the basis of the Food Guide Pyramid. In addition to providing information to consumers, the *Dietary Guidelines* form the basis for Federal nutrition policy and programs.

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* were first published in 1980. The law requires that they be updated every five years to incorporate advances in medical and scientific research.

These updates are based on the recommendations of an 11-member Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, a group of widely recognized nutrition and medical experts. The advisory committee for this version was chaired by Dr. Cutberto Garza of Cornell University.

The 2000 edition of the *Dietary Guidelines* makes ten recommendations, a change from the seven recommendations of past editions. For ease in understanding, the recommendations have been placed in three groups:

Aim for Fitness:

- Aim for a healthy weight.
- Be physically active each day.

Build a Healthy Base:

- Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.
- Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains.
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Keep food safe to eat.

Choose Sensibly:

- Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.
- Choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

The Dietary Guidelines and related information may be downloaded from the Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/cnpp> or through HHS Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, at <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines>.

Printed copies will be available in August 2000 through the Government Printing Office or the Consumer Information Center. The Government Printing Office, at (202) 512-1800, will sell packets of 25 copies for \$92.00, stock number 001-000-04681-1. The Consumer Information Center will sell single copies for \$4.75, by sending check or money order to Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

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