

Appendix G-5: History of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*

In early 1977, after years of discussion, scientific review, and debate, the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, led by Senator George McGovern, recommended Dietary Goals for the American people. The Committee recommended that the American diet

- Increase carbohydrate intake to 55 to 60 percent of calories
- Decrease dietary fat intake to no more than 30 percent of calories, with a reduction in intake of saturated fat, and recommended approximately equivalent distributions among saturated, polyunsaturated, and monounsaturated fats to meet the 30 percent target
- Decrease cholesterol intake to 300 mg per day
- Decrease sugar intake to 15 percent of calories
- Decrease salt intake to 3 g per day

The issuance of the Dietary Goals was met with a great deal of debate and controversy from both industry groups and the scientific community. These groups believed the science might not have supported the specificity of the numbers in the Dietary Goals.

To support the credibility of the science used by the Committee, the Department of Agriculture and, at that time, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare pulled together scientists from the two Departments and expertise from the scientific community throughout the country. In February 1980, the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* brochure was issued collaboratively by the two Departments and represented their points of view, at that time, on ways to build a healthful diet and lifestyle.

Even though the recommendations of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* might have been viewed as relatively innocuous and straightforward extrapolations from the science base, they too were met with a fair amount of controversy. Some of the controversy was generated from industry, some from the scientific community.

The debate, though, about the issuance of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* in 1980 led to report language that directed the two Departments to convene a Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee to ensure that the capture of outside advice was both formal and informal. Hence, the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee established shortly after that directive was very helpful in the development of the *1985 Dietary Guidelines* in which relatively few changes were made but which was issued with much less debate from either industry or the scientific community.

In 1990, with the passage of Public Law 101-445, Congress formally directed the two Departments to issue the guidelines every 5 years. A Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee was established to assist in the preparations of the 1990, 1995, 2000, and now 2005 versions of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. While there has been a tremendous amount of consistency throughout those guidelines, there have also been some notable changes throughout the years that reflect the emerging science.

Thus, in over two decades, the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* has evolved to become a broadly accepted document that reflects scientific consensus and provides the statutory basis of Federal nutrition education efforts.

Development of the Dietary Guidelines--A Chronology

- 1977 *Dietary Goals for the United States* (the McGovern report) was issued by the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs (1). These goals were the focus of controversy among some nutritionists and others concerned with food, nutrition, and health.
- 1979 The American Society for Clinical Nutrition formed a panel to study the relationship between dietary practices and health outcomes (2). The findings, presented in 1979, were reflected in *Healthy People: The Surgeon General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention* (3).
- 1980 *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, first edition, was issued jointly by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in response to the public's desire for authoritative, consistent guidelines on diet and health (4). The guidelines were based on the most up-to-date information available at the time and were directed to healthy Americans. The guidelines generated considerable discussion by nutrition scientists, consumer groups, the food industry, and others.
- 1980 A U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations report directed that a committee be established to review scientific evidence and recommend revisions to the *1980 Dietary Guidelines* (5).
- 1983-84 A Federal advisory committee of nine non-government nutrition scientists was convened to review and make recommendations to HHS and USDA about the first edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (6).
- 1985 HHS and USDA jointly issued a second edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (7). This revised edition was nearly identical to the first. Some changes were made for clarity, while others reflected advances in scientific knowledge of the associations between diet and a range of chronic diseases. The second edition received wide acceptance and was used as a framework for consumer education messages.
- 1987 Language in the *Conference Report of the House Committee on Appropriations* indicated that USDA, in conjunction with HHS, "shall reestablish a Dietary Guidelines Advisory Group on a periodic basis. This Advisory Group will review the scientific data relevant to nutritional guidance and make recommendations on

appropriate changes to the Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services (8).”

- 1989 USDA and HHS established a second advisory committee, which considered whether revision to the *1985 Dietary Guidelines* was needed and then proceeded to make recommendations for revision in a report to the Secretaries. The 1988 *Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health* (9) and the 1989 National Research Council's report titled *Diet and Health: Implications for Reducing Chronic Disease Risk* were key resources used by the Committee (10).
- 1990 The National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act (P.L.101-445) was passed, which requires publication of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* every 5 years (11). This legislation also requires review by the Secretaries of USDA and HHS of all Federal publications containing dietary advice for the general public.
- 1990 HHS and USDA jointly released the third edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (12). The basic tenets of the *1990 Dietary Guidelines* were reaffirmed, with additional refinements made to reflect increased understanding of the science of nutrition and how best to communicate the science to consumers. The language of the new *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* was more positive, was oriented toward the total diet, and provided more specific information regarding food selection. For the first time, numerical recommendations were made for intakes of dietary fat and saturated fat.
- 1993 The HHS Charter established the 1995 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.
- 1994 The 11-member Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee was appointed by the Secretaries of HHS and USDA to review the third edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* to determine whether changes were needed and, if so, to recommend suggestions and the rationale for any revisions.
- 1995 The report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee to the Secretaries of HHS and USDA was published (13). This report served as the basis for the fourth edition of *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- 1995 USDA and HHS jointly released the fourth edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (14). This edition continued to support the concepts from earlier editions. New information included the Food Guide Pyramid, Nutrition Facts Labels, boxes highlighting good food sources of key nutrients, and a chart illustrating three weight ranges.
- 1997 The USDA Charter established the 2000 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.

- 1998 The 11-member Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee was appointed by the Secretaries of HHS and USDA to review the fourth edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* to determine whether changes were needed and, if so, to recommend suggestions for revision.
- 2000 The Committee submitted its report to the Secretaries of HHS and USDA. This report served as the basis for the fifth edition of *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- 2000 The President, USDA, and HHS jointly issued the fifth edition of the *Dietary Guidelines* (15). Earlier versions included seven statements. This version included 10—created by breaking out physical activity from the weight guideline, splitting the grains and fruits/vegetables for greater emphasis, and adding a new guideline on safe food handling.
- 2003 The HHS Charter established the 2005 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.
- 2003 The 13-member Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee was appointed by the Secretaries of HHS and USDA to review the fifth edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* to determine whether changes were needed and, if so, to recommend suggestions for revision.
- 2003–04 In keeping with the current emphasis on data quality, a systematic review of the scientific literature was conducted to develop the Committee’s recommendations.
- 2004 The Committee submitted its report to the Secretaries of HHS and USDA. This report will serve as the basis for the sixth edition of *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- 2005 HHS and USDA will jointly issue the sixth edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. This publication will continue to serve as the basis of Federal nutrition policy. Additional consumer communication materials will be developed to provide advice to consumers about food choices that promote health and decrease the risk of chronic disease.

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