

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARIES

We are pleased to present the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*. Based on the most recent scientific evidence review, this document provides information and advice for choosing a healthy eating pattern—namely, one that focuses on nutrient-dense foods and beverages, and that contributes to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Such a healthy eating pattern also embodies food safety principles to avoid foodborne illness.

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines are intended to be used in developing educational materials and aiding policymakers in designing and carrying out nutrition-related programs, including Federal nutrition assistance and education programs. The Dietary Guidelines also serve as the basis for nutrition messages and consumer materials developed by nutrition educators and health professionals for the general public and specific audiences, such as children.

This document is based on the recommendations put forward by the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. The Committee was composed of scientific experts who reviewed and analyzed the most current information on diet and health and incorporated it into a scientific, evidence-based report. We want to thank them and the other public and private professionals who assisted in developing this document for their hard work and dedication.

Our knowledge about nutrition, the food and physical activity environment, and health continues to grow, reflecting an evolving body of evidence. It is clear that healthy eating patterns and regular physical activity are essential for normal growth and development and for reducing risk of chronic disease. The goal of the Dietary Guidelines is to put this knowledge to work by facilitating and promoting healthy eating and physical activity choices, with the ultimate purpose of improving the health of all Americans ages 2 years and older.

We are releasing the seventh edition of the Dietary Guidelines at a time of rising concern about the health of the American population. Americans are experiencing an epidemic of overweight and obesity. Poor diet and physical inactivity also are linked to major causes of illness and death. To correct these problems, many Americans must make significant changes in their eating habits and lifestyles. This document recognizes that all sectors of society, including individuals and families, educators and health professionals, communities, organizations, businesses, and policymakers, contribute to the food and physical activity environments in which people live. We all have a role to play in reshaping our environment so that healthy choices are easy and accessible for all.

Today, more than ever, consumers need sound advice to make informed food and activity decisions. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines will help Americans choose a nutritious diet within their calorie needs. We believe that following the recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines will assist many Americans to live longer, healthier, and more active lives.



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