

# Release of the 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

January 7, 2026

Food, Beverage, and Dietary Supplements

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On January 7, 2025, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [released the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans \(DGAs\)](#). The DGAs, updated every five years, provide the basis for federal food and nutrition policy and education initiatives, including school meals, military and veteran meals, and other child and adult nutrition programs. The new DGAs are much shorter than prior iterations and more directly addressed to consumers, but HHS and USDA also released detailed supplementary documents including The Scientific Foundation for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans on a new website, [realfood.gov](#).

The 2025-2030 DGAs, described in the HHS Press release as “the most significant reset of federal nutrition policy in decades,” call for a focus on “real food,” defined as “whole, nutrient-dense, and naturally occurring” and recommend “prioritizing high-quality protein, healthy fats, fruits, vegetables and whole grains – and avoiding highly processed foods and refined carbohydrates.” Notably, the DGAs do not use the term “ultra processed foods.” “Highly processed foods” are defined in the Scientific Foundation document as “any food, beverage, or engineered food-like item that is made primarily from substances extracted from food (eg refined sugars, grains, starches or oils) and/or containing industrially manufactured chemical additives,” but are not explicitly defined in the DGAs themselves. Rather, in the DGAs they are generally characterized as packaged, prepared, or ready to eat food that contain refined carbohydrates, added sugars, excess sodium, unhealthy fats, and chemical additives – that is, with a heavier focus on their nutrient density than degree of processing.

## Specific Recommendations Include:

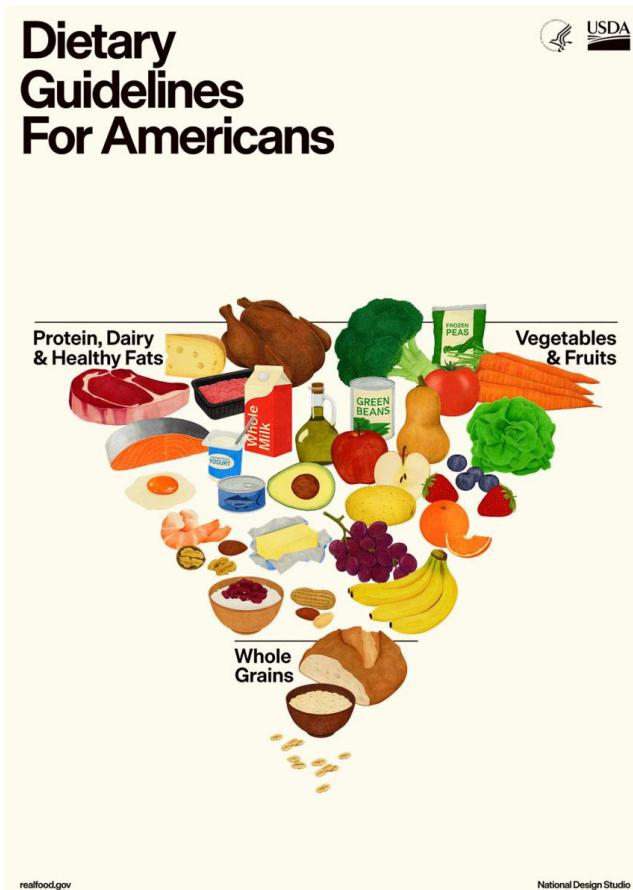
- **Prioritize Protein:** The DGAs recommend prioritizing high-quality, nutrient-dense protein foods in every meal. Notably, the recommendation includes the consumption of red meat, while prior DGAs have noted that lower consumption of red meat is associated with health benefits. Additionally, the new guidelines update protein consumption recommendations from a blanket recommendation of 46-56 g per day for adults, to a bodyweight-based recommendation of 1.2-1.6 g per kg of bodyweight per day (roughly 82-109 g per day for a 150 lb. person).
- **Limit Highly Processed Foods, Added Sugar, & Refined Carbohydrates:** The DGAs recommend avoiding “highly processed packaged, prepared, ready-to-eat, or other foods that are salty or sweet” and “sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soda, fruit drinks, and energy drinks.” The DGAs state that “highly processed foods” may “disrupt a well-balanced microbiome and healthy digestion.” Additionally, the DGAs recommend

Americans “limit foods and beverages that include artificial flavors, petroleum-based dyes, artificial preservatives, and low-calorie non-nutritive sweeteners.” The recommendation against low- (and no-) calorie non-nutritive sweeteners for all age groups is a notable departure from prior DGAs, which also historically did not focus on flavors, colors, and preservatives.

- **Avoid added sugars:** The DGAs state, “no amount of added sugars or non-nutritive sweeteners is recommended or considered part of a healthy or nutritious diet.” Further, the DGAs recommend parents completely avoid added sugar for children aged four and under. Prior DGAs recommended reducing consumption of added sugars but this is the strongest proscription yet, as the 2020-2025 DGAs allowed up to 10 percent of calories per day from added sugars in a healthy dietary pattern.
- **Incorporate Healthy Fats:** The DGAs recommend individuals receive the bulk of dietary fat from whole food sources and that individuals prioritize oils with essential fatty acids, such as olive oil, when cooking, though “[o]ther options can include butter or beef tallow.” During the White House Press announcement, HHS Secretary Kennedy described the DGAs as “ending the war on healthy fats.” While, consistent with prior DGAs, the 2025-2030 DGAs maintain the guidance that “saturated fat consumption should not exceed 10% of total daily calories,” they also note that “more high-quality research is needed to determine which types of dietary fats best support long-term health.”
- **Consume Dairy:** The DGAs include a recommendation to consume “full-fat dairy with no added sugar.” This is a significant difference from prior DGAs, which have recommended low-fat or fat-free dairy to limit saturated fat intake. Consumers choosing full-fat dairy as well as protein from animal sources would need to make careful dietary choices in order to not exceed the recommended limit of 10% of calories from saturated fat.
- **Focus on Whole Grains:** The DGAs recommend Americans “prioritize fiber-rich whole grains” and “significantly reduce the consumption of highly processed, refined carbohydrates.” Unlike prior DGAs, these do not acknowledge the significant public health benefits of enriched bread and flour, which contain folic acid and have been responsible for a major reduction in neural tube birth defects in the United States.
- **Sodium:** Consistent with the 2020-2025 DGAs, the current DGAs recommend that the general population (ages 14 and above) should consume less than 2,300 mg per day of sodium. But unlike prior DGA’s, the new DGAs contain little emphasis on reducing sodium intakes. While sodium content is a hallmark of highly processed foods as described in the DGAs, the section on sodium begins with a positive spin – “Sodium and electrolytes are essential for hydration,” and consumers are advised that they may choose to season their meat or vegetables with salt (or herbs and spices).
- **Alcohol:** The DGAs recommend that Americans consume less alcohol for better overall health, and that certain populations avoid alcohol completely.

## The New Pyramid

Alongside the release of the 2025-2030 DGAs, the White House launched the “The New Pyramid” which emphasizes protein, dairy, healthy fats, fruits, and vegetables by turning the traditional food pyramid upside down. This visual will replace the “MyPlate” graphic, which recommended filling your plate with roughly equal parts fruits, vegetables, protein and grains along with a portion of low-fat or fat-free dairy or fortified soy alternative.



### Emphasis on Reducing Health Care Costs

The White House Press Announcement, HHS Press Release, and statements on RealFood.gov emphasize the connection between diet, chronic disease, and healthcare costs. RealFood.gov announces "America is sick. The Data is clear" and asserts that "90% of U.S. healthcare spending goes to treating chronic disease—much of which is linked to diet and lifestyle." The website then positions the DGAs as the solution, stating "we can solve this crisis" and "for the first time, we're calling out the dangers of highly processed foods and rebuilding a broken system from the ground up with gold-standard science and common sense." Additionally, the HHS Press Release states that "if followed, this new guidance will dramatically lower chronic disease – and health care costs – for Americans." Further, the DGAs explain that "following the Dietary Guidelines can help prevent the onset or slow the rate of progression of chronic disease, especially cardiovascular disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes."

### Recommendations & Considerations for Special Populations

The guidelines also provide recommendations and considerations for special populations, including individuals with chronic disease, individuals at various life stages (infancy & early childhood, middle childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, pregnant and lactating women, and older adults), and individuals following a vegetarian or vegan diet.

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In sum, certain aspects of the new DGAs reflect marked departures from prior federal nutrition guidance, but other recommendations remain consistent with longstanding policy.

If you have any questions concerning the material discussed in this client alert, please contact the following members of our Food, Beverage, and Dietary Supplements practice:

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