

National Prevention Strategy

HEALTHY EATING



Eating healthy can help reduce people's risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis, and several types of cancer, as well as help them maintain a healthy body weight. As described in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, eating healthy means consuming a variety of nutritious foods and beverages, especially vegetables, fruits, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and whole grains; limiting intake of saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium; keeping trans fat intake as low as possible; and balancing caloric intake with calories burned to manage body weight. Safe eating means ensuring that food is free from harmful contaminants, such as bacteria and viruses.

ACTIONS: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL

- ▶ Work to ensure that foods purchased, distributed, or served in Federal programs and settings meet standards consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- ▶ Improve agricultural policies to better align with the nutrition goals of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- ▶ Strengthen the Nation's comprehensive food safety system.
- ▶ Develop voluntary guidelines for food marketed to children and monitor and report on industry activities.
- ▶ Support initiatives to increase the availability of healthy and affordable foods in underserved urban, rural, and frontier communities.
- ▶ Implement the menu labeling provisions of the Affordable Care Act to help provide consistent facts about food choices in chain restaurants.
- ▶ Provide information, tools, and expertise to help Americans understand and apply the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (e.g., MyPlate).
- ▶ Support breastfeeding, including implementing the breastfeeding provisions in the Affordable Care Act.
- ▶ Implement programs and regulations to increase access to healthy food and eliminate food insecurity (e.g., Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act; USDA Healthier U.S. School Challenge).
- ▶ Improve and expand the use of existing food and nutrition systems to track changes in eating patterns and conduct research to identify effective approaches.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase access to healthy and affordable foods in communities.
2. Implement organizational and programmatic nutrition standards and policies.
3. Improve the nutritional quality of the food supply.
4. Help people recognize and make healthy food and beverage choices.
5. Support policies and programs that promote breastfeeding.
6. Enhance food safety.

Eating healthy means consuming a variety of nutritious foods and beverages, especially vegetables, fruits, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and whole grains.



ACTIONS: PARTNERS CAN

Individuals and Families

- ▶ Eat less by avoiding oversized portions, filling half of the plate with fruits and vegetables, making at least half of the grains whole grains, switching to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk, choosing foods with less sodium, and drinking water instead of sugary drinks.
- ▶ Balance intake and expenditure of calories to manage body weight.
- ▶ Breastfeed babies exclusively for the first 6 months after birth when able.
- ▶ Prevent foodborne illness by following key safety practices—clean (wash hands and surfaces often), separate (do not cross-contaminate), cook (cook food to proper temperatures), and chill (refrigerate promptly).

Community, Nonprofit, and Faith-Based Organizations

- ▶ Lead or convene city, county, and regional food policy councils to assess local community needs and expand programs (e.g., community gardens, farmers markets) that bring healthy foods, especially locally grown fruits and vegetables, to schools, businesses, and communities.
- ▶ Implement culturally and linguistically appropriate social supports for breastfeeding, such as marketing campaigns and breastfeeding peer-support programs.

Early Learning Centers, Schools, Colleges, and Universities

- ▶ Implement and enforce policies that increase the availability of healthy foods, including in a la carte lines, school stores, vending machines, and fundraisers.
- ▶ Update cafeteria equipment (e.g., remove deep fryers, add salad bars) to support provision of healthier foods.

- ▶ Eliminate high-calorie, low-nutrition drinks from vending machines, cafeterias, and school stores and provide greater access to water.
- ▶ Implement policies restricting the marketing of unhealthy foods.
- ▶ Provide nutrition education.

Health Care Systems, Insurers, and Clinicians

- ▶ Use maternity care practices that empower new mothers to breastfeed, such as the Baby-Friendly Hospital standards.
- ▶ Screen for obesity by measuring body mass index and deliver appropriate care according to clinical practice guidelines for obesity.
- ▶ Assess dietary patterns (both quality and quantity of food consumed), provide nutrition education and counseling, and refer people to community resources (e.g., Women Infants and Children [WIC]; Head Start; County Extension Services; and nutrition programs for older Americans).

Businesses and Employers

- ▶ Increase the availability of healthy food (e.g., through procurement policies, healthy meeting policies, farm-to-work programs, farmers markets).
- ▶ Adopt lactation policies that provide space and break time for breastfeeding employees (in accordance with the Affordable Care Act) and offer lactation management services and support (e.g., breastfeeding peer-support programs).
- ▶ Provide nutrition information to customers (e.g., on menus), make healthy options and appropriate portion sizes the default, and limit marketing of unhealthy food to children and youth.
- ▶ Reduce sodium, saturated fats, and added sugars and eliminate artificial trans fats from products.
- ▶ Implement proper handling, preparation, and storage practices to increase food safety.

Find more information at:

Website:

www.surgeongeneral.gov/nationalpreventionstrategy

Email:

prevention.council@hhs.gov

Twitter:

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State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Governments

- ▶ Ensure that foods served or sold in government facilities and government-funded programs and institutions (e.g., schools, prisons, juvenile correctional facilities) meet nutrition standards consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- ▶ Strengthen licensing standards for early learning centers to include nutritional requirements for foods and beverages served.
- ▶ Work with hospitals, early learning centers, health care providers, and community-based organizations to implement breastfeeding policies and programs.
- ▶ Ensure laboratories, businesses, health care facilities, and community partners are prepared to respond to outbreaks of foodborne disease.
- ▶ Use grants, zoning regulations, and other incentives to attract full-service grocery stores, supermarkets, and farmers markets to underserved neighborhoods, and use zoning codes and disincentives to discourage a disproportionately high availability of unhealthy foods, especially around schools.

