

Food For Thought

Dietary Guidelines Take Another Look at Fat

For the past decade, nutrition scientists have been investigating the role of fat in the diet. They have looked at the different types of fat—saturated and unsaturated—and their effect on health outcomes such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. The United States Dietary Guidelines¹ and the American Heart Association (AHA) Dietary Guidelines² both emphasize **type** of fat in the diet. Specifically, the guidelines encourage consumers to:

- Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat (US Dietary Guidelines 2000)
- Limit foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol and substitute unsaturated fat from vegetables, fish, legumes and nuts (AHA Dietary Guidelines 2000)

United States Dietary Guidelines

The US Dietary Guidelines 2000 point the way to good health. The guidelines are intended for healthy children ages two and older and for adults of any age.

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.



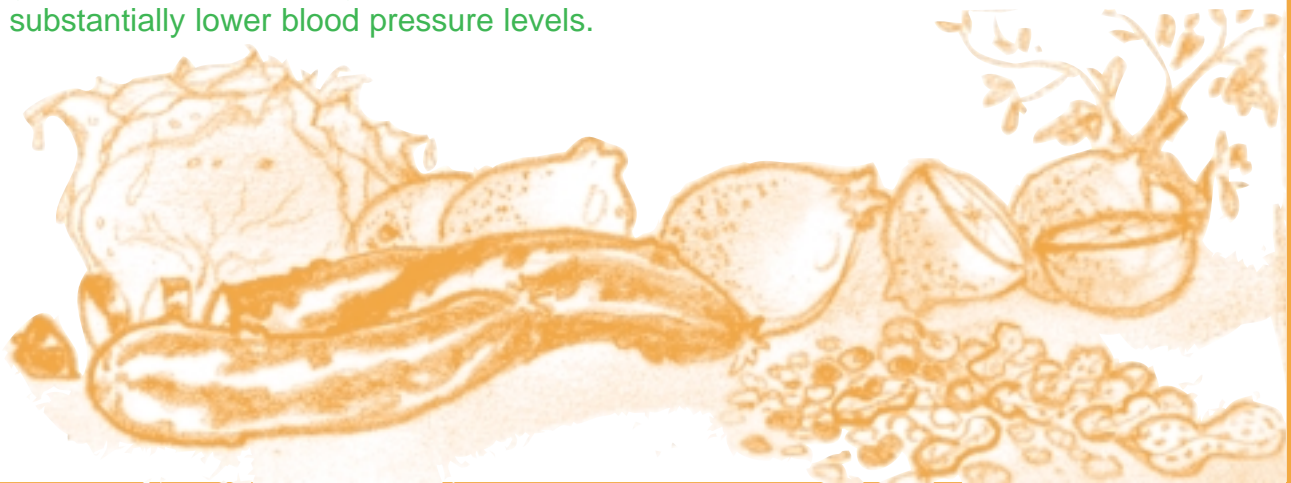
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American Heart Association (AHA) Dietary Guidelines

The AHA guidelines provide population-wide recommendations for cardiovascular disease prevention and treatment that are supported by decades of research. These user-friendly guidelines help consumers put research into practice by placing an increased emphasis on foods and the overall eating pattern, rather than focusing on numbers and percentages.

- 1. Achieve an overall healthy eating pattern.** Include a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, low-fat or nonfat dairy products, fish, legumes, poultry and lean meats. This goal emphasizes the total quality of the diet. Complex plant foods like fruits and vegetables, legumes such as peanuts, and grains are nutrient dense and contain plenty of fiber, antioxidants and phytochemicals that are thought to benefit health.
- 2. Maintain an appropriate body weight.** Match energy intake to energy needs and make appropriate changes to achieve weight loss when necessary. The message here is that a calorie is a calorie, so be careful of portion sizes and make the calories you do eat count nutritionally.
- 3. Achieve a desirable cholesterol profile.** The AHA advises limiting foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol and substituting unsaturated fat from vegetables, fish, legumes and nuts. When researchers at Penn State University tested diets that included 2-3 servings daily of peanuts or peanut butter, rich in monounsaturated fats (MUFA), they found that total and LDL cholesterol was lowered by 11-14%, compared to the average American diet which is higher in saturated fat.³
- 4. Achieve a desirable blood pressure.** Limit salt and alcohol, maintain a health body weight and eat a diet with emphasis on vegetables, fruits, and low-fat or nonfat dairy products. This goal is similar to the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stopping Hypertension) Diet which recommends that people eat four to five servings from the nuts, seeds and legumes group each week. The DASH diet is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, legumes such as peanuts, nuts and seeds and has been shown to substantially lower blood pressure levels.



Healthy Eating Patterns

The US Dietary Guideline on fat points out that you need some fat in the foods you eat, but advises consumers to choose fats sensibly. The guideline goes on to say that *"Some kinds of fat, especially saturated fats, increase the risk of coronary heart disease by raising cholesterol. In contrast, unsaturated fats (found mainly in vegetable oils) do not increase blood cholesterol."*

The American Heart Association (AHA) dietary guidelines also tell consumers to decrease saturated fat and cholesterol in the diet, but go one step further and suggest replacing saturated fat with unsaturated fat, instead of carbohydrate.

What does all of this mean? Here is an example. Butter contains saturated fat, so choose a different spread on your morning bagel or toast. Instead of reaching for the low-fat, high-carbohydrate option, which is jelly, choose something that has the good unsaturated fat in it, like peanut butter. Below is a chart with more of these simple substitutions to help you decrease the saturated fat in your diet.









The guidelines also encourage consumers to replace saturated fat in the diet with unsaturated fat. Remember small changes in your diet can equal big rewards to your health.

Instead of	Eat	Benefits to Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strawberry flavored cream cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peanut butter and fresh strawberry slices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Saturated fat ↑ Monounsaturated fat ↑ Fiber ↑ Phytochemicals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A handful of potato or corn chips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A handful of peanuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Monounsaturated fat ↑ Fiber ↑ Vitamin E ↑ Plant protein
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Butter on waffles or pancakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melted peanut butter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Saturated fat ↓ Cholesterol ↑ Minerals like copper, selenium, and zinc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shredded cheese on your salad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toasted peanuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Saturated fat ↑ Monounsaturated fat ↑ Phytochemicals ↑ Fiber

Based on equal-sized portions and data from the USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 13.⁴

Facts About Peanut Consumption

Peanuts are actually legumes, but are categorized with other nuts when it comes to nutrition research and consumption patterns. Peanuts and peanut butter account for over two-thirds of the "nuts" eaten in the United States⁵. They are eaten like nuts as snacks and are found in the US Food Guide Pyramid in the protein group, along with other nuts.

-  About one in five Americans eats peanuts on any given day.
-  Males consume 83% more peanuts than females.
-  Northwestern consumers eat more peanuts than other consumers.
-  Peanut butter accounts for almost two-thirds of all peanuts consumed.
-  Americans eat three-fourths of all peanut products for snacks or at lunch.
-  44% of all peanut products are consumed as snacks.

According to USDA and CSFII 1994-1996 (Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals)



References:

1. United States Department of Agriculture and Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2000.
2. Krauss, RM et al. AHA Dietary Guidelines. *Circulation*. 2000;102:2296-2311.
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4. United States Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Research Service (1999, November). USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 13. Washington, DC. Retrieved November, 1999, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.usda.gov/fnic>
5. USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. (2000, December). Nutrition Insights: The Role of Nuts in a Healthy Diet. Washington, DC. Retrieved January 30, 2001, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.usda.gov/cnpp>

The Peanut Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to establishing sound science as the basis for food, nutrition, and health discussions about peanuts and peanut products.

The Peanut Institute pursues its mission through research programs, educational initiatives, and the promotion of healthful lifestyles to consumers of all ages. As an independent forum, The Peanut Institute is uniquely positioned to work with all segments of the food industry, the research community, academia, consumer organizations and government.

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