

Adequate Nutrients within Energy Needs

- Consume a variety of nutrient-dense foods and beverages within and among the basic food groups; limit intakes of saturated and *trans* fats, cholesterol, added sugars, salt, and alcohol.
- Meet recommended intakes within energy needs by adopting a balanced eating pattern, such as the USDA Food Guide (see pp. 40–41).

Weight Management

- To maintain body weight in a healthy range, balance kcalories from foods and beverages with kcalories expended (see Chapters 8 and 9).
- To prevent gradual weight gain over time, make small decreases in food and beverage kcalories and increase physical activity.

Physical Activity

- Engage in regular physical activity and reduce sedentary activities to promote health, psychological well-being, and a healthy body weight.
- Achieve physical fitness by including cardiovascular conditioning, stretching exercises for flexibility, and resistance exercises or calisthenics for muscle strength and endurance.

Food Groups to Encourage

- Consume a sufficient amount of fruits, vegetables, milk and milk products, and whole grains while staying within energy needs.
- Select a variety of fruits and vegetables each day, including selections from all five vegetable subgroups (dark green, orange, legumes, starchy vegetables, and other vegetables) several times a week. Make at least half of the grain selections whole grains. Select fat-free or low-fat milk products.

Fats

- Consume less than 10 percent of kcalories from saturated fats and less than 300 milligrams of cholesterol per day, and keep *trans* fats consumption as low as possible (see Chapter 5).
- Keep total fat intake between 20 and 35 percent of kcalories; choose from mostly polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat sources such as fish, nuts, and vegetable oils.
- Select and prepare foods that are lean, low fat, or fat-free and low in saturated and/or *trans* fats.

Carbohydrates

- Choose fiber-rich fruits, vegetables, and whole grains often.
- Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little added sugars (see Chapter 4).
- Reduce the incidence of dental caries by practicing good oral hygiene and consuming sugar- and starch-containing foods and beverages less frequently.

Sodium and Potassium

- Choose and prepare foods with little salt (less than 2300 milligrams sodium or approximately 1 teaspoon salt daily). At the same time, consume potassium-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables (see Chapter 12).

Alcoholic Beverages

- Those who choose to drink alcoholic beverages should do so sensibly and in moderation (up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men).
- Some individuals should not consume alcoholic beverages (see Highlight 7).

Food Safety

- To avoid microbial foodborne illness, keep foods safe: clean hands, food contact surfaces, and fruits and vegetables; separate raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods; cook foods to a safe internal temperature; chill perishable food promptly; and defrost food properly.
- Avoid unpasteurized milk and products made from it; raw or undercooked eggs, meat, poultry, fish, and shellfish; unpasteurized juices; raw sprouts.

NOTE: These guidelines are intended for adults and healthy children ages 2 and older.

SOURCE: The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, available at www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines.