

# dietary guidelines for Americans

The ABCs for health are to **A - Aim for fitness;**  
**B - Build a healthy base;** and **C - Choose sensibly.**  
Ten guidelines fit into these ABCs and point the way  
to good health.

## AIM FOR FITNESS . . .

### **Aim for a healthy weight.**

Choose a lifestyle that combines sensible eating with regular physical activity to help you maintain a healthy body weight.

### **Be physically active each day.**

Physical activity involves moving the body. You can spread activity over two or three times a day or do it all at once. It is a good goal to accumulate 30 minutes of activity a day.

## BUILD A HEALTHY BASE . . .

### **Let the pyramid guide your food choices.**

Your body needs more than 40 different nutrients to survive and no single food group provides all of them. Variety is the key to getting all the nutrients you need to look and feel your best.

### **Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains.**

Foods made from grains like wheat, rice and oats help form the basis of a healthy diet. They provide vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber and other substances that are important to good health.

### **Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.**

Eating fruits and vegetables of different kinds helps to protect you against many chronic diseases. Different fruits and vegetables are rich in different nutrients. Fruits and vegetables provide vitamins, minerals, fiber and other substances that are important to good health.

### **Keep food safe to eat.**

Keep hot foods hot (at least 140 degrees F or hotter depending on the food). Keep cold foods cold (at least 40 degrees F or colder). Wash hands and clean surfaces often to avoid harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness.



## CHOOSE SENSIBLY . . .

### **Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.**

Help reduce your risk of heart disease and certain types of cancer by lowering your intake of fat and cholesterol.

### **Choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars.**

Sugary foods are typically low in nutrients and supply unnecessary calories, so eat them sparingly.

### **Choose and prepare foods with less salt.**

To help reduce your risk of high blood pressure, aim for a daily sodium intake of 2,400 milligrams or less. The average American consumes 4,000 to 6,000 milligrams of sodium every day.

### **If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.**

Alcohol supplies calories, but little or no nutrients. Drinking can cause a number of health problems and can lead to addiction.