

## **The Dietary Guidelines**

1. Eat a variety of foods.
2. Maintain a healthful weight.
3. Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat and cholesterol.
4. Choose a diet with plenty of vegetables, fruits and grain products.
5. Use sugars in moderation.
6. Use salt and sodium only in moderation.
7. Do not drink alcoholic beverages.

### **I WILL FOLLOW THE DIETARY GUIDELINES**

The dietary guidelines for Americans are recommendations for diet choices for healthy Americans two years of age or more. The guidelines are the result of research by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services. By following the Dietary Guidelines, a person can improve their chance of having better health and reduce the chance of getting certain diseases.

### **EAT A VARIETY OF FOODS**

It is important to eat a variety of foods that contain nutrients for good health. No single food can supply all nutrients in the amounts that a person needs. It also is important to eat a variety of foods from each food group shown on the Food Guide Pyramid.

### **MAINTAIN A HEALTHFUL WEIGHT**

It is possible to be too fat or too thin. Both situations have risks of health problems. Being overweight is linked to high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. Being underweight is linked to eating disorders and nutrient deficiency. Desirable weight is the weight and body composition that is recommended for a person's age, height, sex and body build.

### **CHOOSE A DIET LOW IN FAT, SATURATED FAT, AND CHOLESTEROL**

Fat in foods contains over twice the calories of equal amounts of carbohydrates or proteins. The amount of fat in a diet should be limited to 30 percent or less of total calories.

### **CHOOSE A DIET WITH PLENTY OF VEGETABLES, FRUITS AND GRAINS**

Vegetables, fruits, and grain products are good sources of complex carbohydrates, fiber, vitamins and minerals. These foods also are generally low in fat content.

### **USE SUGARS ONLY IN MODERATION**

Sugars add calories to foods but are limited in nutrients. Eating too many foods that have a high sugar content can contribute to tooth decay.

### **USE SALT AND SODIUM ONLY IN MODERATION**

Sodium is an important nutrient that is needed by the body, but only in moderation. Table salt is the major source of sodium in the diet. Approximately ¼ teaspoon of salt daily provides the amount needed. Most people eat about ten times this amount. Foods that tend to be very high in sodium content include luncheon meats, salty snack foods, cheeses, and many fast food products. Using salt and sodium in moderation helps reduce the risk of high blood pressure.

### **IF YOU DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, DO SO IN MODERATION**

Alcoholic beverages contain calories, but little or no nutrients. An adult who drinks alcoholic beverages should do so only in moderation. Moderation is defined as one ounce of pure alcohol or less per day. Drinking alcohol can lead to many health problems and dependence. Alcohol should not be consumed by young people or by pregnant females.