

Living Well Today to Enjoy Tomorrow

What Americans eat has a tremendous impact on overall health. Personal preferences, tradition, culture, health concerns, and cost are a few factors that influence our food choices. Additionally, Americans are inundated with the “latest and greatest” diet on the market, often with little or no evidence to support its merits. The following is a review of some current diet trends, concluding with a review of the principles of healthy eating.

Ketogenic Diet



The premise of the ketogenic diet is to put the body through a state of ketosis, an adaptation that allows the body to survive during starvation. When severely restricting the body of carbohydrates, the brain’s main source of energy, the body will metabolize fats instead, creating ketones. This switch usually happens over 2-4 days of eating fewer than 20-50 grams of carbohydrates per day.

Despite the diet showing short-term benefits, there is debate on whether such a restrictive diet is necessary and the stress on the body is safe over a long period. There are inherent dangers (such as kidney stones, kidney disease, risk of colon cancer due to low fiber intake, increase in LDL cholesterol due to high saturated fat intake, etc.) that need to be studied further.

Pros:

- Reports that the high-fat content helps keep people feeling full
- Some studies have shown short-term benefits, including weight loss, cardiovascular markers and possible improvement in insulin resistance

Cons:

- Increases LDL cholesterol
- Very restrictive diet - difficult to adhere.
- Exclusion of grains and most fruit
- Lack of long-term evidence

Includes:

- Butter, lard, margarine, oils, & coconut meat
- Hard cheeses, low-carb milk alternatives, eggs, red meats, organ meats, poultry, fish & seafood, tofu, nuts & seeds
- Non-starchy vegetables
- Dark chocolate, unsweetened vinegars & mustards, herbs & spices, unsweetened tea & coffee
- **Nutrient composition:** 5-10% Carbs, 70-80% fats, and 10-20% protein

Prohibits:

- Grains (whole and refined)
- Starchy vegetables
- Most fruits and all fruit juices
- Legumes (peanuts, beans & lentils)
- Added and natural sugars
- Cream, ice cream, cow’s milk
- Full carb wines and beer

Intermittent Fasting



Intermittent fasting (IF) is an eating pattern involving regular periods of fasting. IF is an umbrella term including a wide variety of dieting approaches, most of which fall into one of two categories; alternate day fasting or restricted eating window.

Restricted Eating Window (REW)

- This IF method restricts the timing of meals and not food intake.
- There are many versions of REW, which focus on the time of fasting vs. non-fasting. Some REW plans limit non-fasting to a 4-hour window, while others allow two or three meals within a 8-10 hour window.
- An example would be the 16/8 diet. This diet requires fasting every 16 hours and consume foods only with an 8 hour window.

Alternate Day Fasting (ADF)

- This IF method involves switching back and forth between days when eating more and days when eating less.
- Some ADF plans allow eating nothing or next to nothing on fasting days and as much as desired on “feast” days.
- Other ADF plans cut usual food intake by a third to a half on fasting days and then allow eating more than usual food intake on feast days. (Another name is “*calorie cycling*”)
- Depending upon the ADF plan, the proportion of fast to feast days varies. Some plans involve fasting every other day while others may involve fasting multiple days.
- An example would be the popular 5:2 diet, requires fasting for two non-consecutive days every week.

Advantages



- IF can be very effective for weight loss if done correctly.
- IF is easier for some to follow when compared to the traditional continuous calorie restriction approaches.
- Depending on the type of IF eating plan the timing of the “window” where eating is permitted may seem like a “natural” eating pattern.
- There are many different types of IF to use, so finding one that fits with a personal lifestyle may be easy.
- IF does not specify which foods should be consumed during the “window” of non-fasting. However **selecting healthy foods and consuming a balanced eating pattern is recommended.**

Caution: Not for Everyone

- IF has been shown to have health benefits if done correctly. However, it can be dangerous if not done properly. Depending upon the type of IF chosen to adopt, hunger may occur while fasting.
- Short fasting periods are recommended. Long-fast health complications may include dehydration, irritability, mood changes, fainting/dizziness, feeling weak, and inability to focus.
- When fasting 72 hours or more, seek medical supervision.
- **IF is not for everyone.** Consult a healthcare provider before trying IF, especially with any chronic health issues, taking medications or any of the following apply:
 - Older adult or an adolescent.
 - Underweight or currently have or a history of disordered eating.
 - Female dealing with fertility issues, have a history of amenorrhea or are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Whole 30 Diet

The “Whole 30” Diet is a restrictive way of eating set-up for 30 days in order to “reset” the body for healing and recovery. There is no scientific evidence to this claim and some of the eating protocols are harsh. In clinical settings, elimination diets may be used to identify food sensitivities or allergies. It is best to seek medical treatment from certified health care professionals.

Pros:

- High vegetable content
- The focus is on whole, unprocessed foods
- Eliminates added sugars, alcohol and all processed foods

Cons:

- Exclusion of grains, dairy and plant-based proteins
- “No pain, No gain” rhetoric
- Short term approach
- Promises to cure ailments



Paleo Diet



Pros:

- Encourages fruits & veggies, nuts & seeds, lean protein
- Some (4) studies have shown weight loss and health benefits

Cons:

- Heavy reliance on meats
- Exclusion of grains and dairy
- Very restrictive diet
- Lack of evidence of effectiveness and safety

The hypothesis is—the body has not been able to adapt to a modern diet. Thus the American modern diet is contributing to the prevalence of diabetes, heart disease and obesity. A paleo plate might look like: 1/3 fruits, 1/3 vegetables and 1/3 protein. Compared to the USDA MyPlate, the paleo diet has removed the grains and dairy and increased the protein.

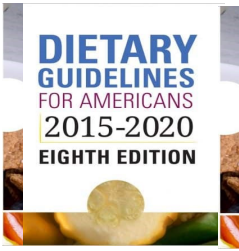
Healthy Lifestyle Resources

The following page provides information on two evidence-based healthy eating plans, neither of which requires you to remove an entire food group. For additional healthy eating resources, see below.

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2015 – 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 8th Edition. December 2015, <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>
- U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, Your guide to lowering your blood pressure with DASH: DASH eating plan : lower your blood pressure. August 2015, <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/dash-eating-plan>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. ChooseMyPlate.gov Website. Washington, DC. *Start Simple with MyPlate*, Accessed 10/2019, <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

Healthy Eating

Consider asking the question, “Is this an eating pattern that can last a lifetime?” or “Is it simply a passing trend that is not sustainable?” Adopting a healthy eating plan as part of a healthy lifestyle that is able to be maintained across the lifespan will have lasting positive health impact.



Dietary Guidelines for Americans

- **Added Sugars:** Limit to **less than 10%** of total calories daily
- **Saturated & Trans Fats:** Limit saturated fats to **less than 10%** of total calories daily by replacing them with unsaturated fats and limit trans fats to as low as possible
- **Sodium:** Limit to **less than 2,300 mg daily** (for adults 14 years and older)

Mediterranean Eating Plan

- The Mediterranean Eating Plan (MEP) is based on the habits of people living within countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. This eating plan focuses on lifestyle and is an approach to eating rather than a specific diet plan.
- The MEP reduces cardiovascular risk by minimizing inflammation, controlling blood sugar and promoting a healthy weight.
- There are many variations of the MEP because there are many countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. However, the MEP is typically high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nut and seeds, and olive oil.
- The main components include:
 - Daily consumption of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and healthy fats
 - Weekly intake of fish, poultry, beans and eggs
 - Moderate portions of dairy products
 - Limited intake of red meat
- Vital lifestyle components to the MEP include:
 - Sharing meals with family and friends
 - Being physically active

Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (D-A-S-H)

- DASH is a flexible and balanced eating plan focusing on a heart-healthy eating plan. Studies show the DASH diet lowers blood pressure and LDL (bad) cholesterol.
- This eating plan is rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, fiber, and protein
- Low in saturated and trans fats and low in sodium
- DASH eating plan focuses on:
 - Eating vegetables, fruits, and whole grains
 - Including fat-free or low-fat dairy products, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, and vegetable oils
 - Limiting foods that are high in saturated fat, such as fatty meats, full-fat dairy products, and tropical oils such as coconut, palm kernel, and palm oils
 - Limiting added sugars, such as those found in sugar-sweetened beverages and sweets
 - Limiting sodium intake to 2,300 mg/day
- Physical activity is part of all healthy eating plans. Aerobic activity should be spread throughout the week. Aim for:
 - **150-300 minutes/week moderate-intensity**
 - **75-1250 minutes/week vigorous-intensity**