



The Wellness News

Tips and resources for living well

March 2021

New Dietary Guidelines



Every five years the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) are reviewed and updated based on new research. The aim of these *Dietary Guidelines* is to promote health and prevent disease. Because of this public health orientation, the *Dietary Guidelines* is not intended to contain clinical guidelines for treating chronic diseases. This edition marks the first time the Guidelines provide recommendations by life stage, from birth through older adulthood. The full publication may be viewed and downloaded from the

internet at www.DietaryGuidelines.gov.

A fundamental premise of the *2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines* is that just about everyone, no matter their health status, can benefit from shifting food and beverage choices to better support healthy dietary patterns. The focus is away from individual nutrients, foods, or food groups in isolation. It provides recommendations for healthy dietary patterns by life stage, identifying needs specific to each life stage, and considering healthy dietary pattern characteristics that should be carried forward into the next stage of life. For the first time since the 1985 edition, the *2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines* includes recommendations for healthy dietary patterns for infants and toddlers.

The Guidelines suggest to “**Make every bite count**”. Here is a summary of recommendations to do so:

1. Follow a healthy dietary pattern at every life stage.

- **For about the first 6 months of life**, exclusively feed infants human milk. Continue to feed infants human milk through at least the first year of life, and longer if desired. Feed infants iron-fortified infant formula during the first year of life when human milk is unavailable. Provide infants with supplemental vitamin D beginning soon after birth.
- **At about 6 months**, introduce infants to nutrient-dense complementary foods. Introduce infants to potentially allergenic foods along with other complementary foods. Encourage infants and toddlers to consume a variety of foods from all food groups. Include foods rich in iron and zinc, particularly for infants fed human milk.
- **From 12 months through older adulthood**, follow a healthy dietary pattern across the lifespan to meet nutrient needs, help achieve a healthy body weight, and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

2. Focus on meeting food group needs with nutrient-dense foods and beverages and stay within calorie limits. The core elements that make up a healthy dietary pattern include:

- **Vegetables of all types**—dark green; red and orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other vegetables
- **Fruits**, especially whole fruit
- **Grains**, at least half of which are whole grain
- **Dairy**, including fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese, and/or lactose-free versions and fortified soy beverages and yogurt as alternatives
- **Protein foods**, including lean meats, poultry, and eggs; seafood; beans, peas, and lentils; and nuts, seeds, and soy products
- **Oils**, including vegetable oils and oils in food, such as seafood and nuts



3. Limit foods and beverages high in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, and limit alcoholic beverages

- **Added sugars**—Less than 10 percent of calories per day starting at age 2. Avoid foods and beverages with added sugars for those younger than age 2.
- **Saturated fat**—Less than 10 percent of calories per day starting at age 2.
- **Sodium**—Less than 2,300 milligrams per day—and even less for children younger than age 14.
- **Alcoholic beverages**—Adults of legal drinking age can choose not to drink, or to drink in moderation by limiting intake to 2 drinks or less in a day for men and 1 drink or less in a day for women, when alcohol is consumed. Drinking less is better for health than drinking more. There are some adults who should not drink alcohol, such as women who are pregnant.

If you have any chronic health conditions, be sure to discuss those with your doctor and ask for dietary guidance for your specific health needs.

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach. Your EAP is here to help with family, work, health, well-being & legal issues.

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All About Artificial Sweeteners



Wanting to control blood glucose levels and maintain a healthier overall lifestyle sometimes leads to making goals that involve less sugar. Artificial sweeteners can be controversial, and there are so many options on the market.

How can we know which ones are best and how they affect our bodies?

In short, artificial sweeteners can be much sweeter than sugar itself, so a little goes a long way. This can help reduce how many calories you consume. Additionally, the body does not absorb artificial sweeteners in the same way as sugar, making it less of a concern for weight gain

or glucose fluctuations.

Artificial sweeteners make healthy eating more flexible, and they do not take away from one's daily carbohydrate allotment. You can often find ones that are compatible with baking, so you can even make some of your favorite desserts with less calories.

While artificial sweeteners do have fewer carbohydrates or calories, the foods they are in likely have calories and carbs from other ingredients. Claims like "sugar-free," "reduced sugar" or "no sugar added" do not necessarily mean carb-free or lower in carbs than the original version of the food. For this reason, you should always carefully read the nutrition facts label to understand how many carbs and calories you are eating.

Using sugar substitutes doesn't make an unhealthy choice healthy.

It just means it's *less* unhealthy.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the American Heart Association, and the American Diabetes Association have all issued statements indicating that people should use artificial sweeteners cautiously when eaten as part of a healthy diet guided by current federal nutrition recommendations.

"The expert consensus on low calorie sweeteners found low calorie sweeteners to be safe, they reduced sugar and energy intake, and had no adverse effects on sweet preference, appetite, or glucose control. Artificial sweeteners may improve diabetes management, but there hasn't been enough data on gut health and artificial sweeteners to comment on that aspect." So, while they are safe to use, they should be used in moderation.

Sugar alcohol sweeteners occur naturally in foods and are absorbed by the body more slowly than sucrose. So, while they may not be completely calorie-free or carb-free, the slower absorption prevents dramatic spikes in blood sugar. Swerve is a sugar alcohol sweetener that is popular among people eating very low-carb diets – it has zero calories and does not impact blood glucose. However, sugar alcohols can cause diarrhea, stomach cramps, gas and bloating in some people, especially if you eat a lot of them.

In conclusion, there is no "best" artificial sweetener. All are okay in moderation, but perhaps concentrating on "de-sweetening" our lives in general is a better option.

Enjoy your sweets, but in *small* amounts!

References

Alkon, C. (2020, December 01). How Sweet It Is: All About Artificial Sweeteners and Diabetes. Retrieved December 28, 2020, from <https://diatriber.org/how-sweet-it-all-about-artificial-sweeteners-and-diabetes>

Healthier Chocolate No-Bake Cookies

Ingredients

- 1 cup of almond butter
- 1/2 cup of coconut oil
- 1/2 cup of honey
- 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract
- 1 cup of bittersweet chocolate chips
- 2 1/2 cups of quick cooking or old-fashioned oats
- 3 tablespoons of cocoa powder
- 1 cup of coarsely chopped almonds (toasted)

Directions

1. In a medium saucepan, melt the peanut or almond butter and coconut oil over medium heat, stirring constantly, until melted and smooth. Off the heat, stir in the honey and vanilla until combined.
2. Immediately stir in the chocolate chips until melted (if the mixture is too cool to melt them completely, return the saucepan to low heat to help it along without bringing it to a simmer).
3. Add the oats, cocoa powder and almonds and stir until well-combined.
4. Drop by heaping spoonfuls onto parchment-lined baking sheets. Refrigerate until set.
5. The cookies will keep in a tupperware-type in the refrigerator for a week or more.



Health Tip: for a better night's sleep

You're not doomed to toss and turn every night. Consider simple tips for better sleep, from setting a sleep schedule to including physical activity in your daily routine.

- Stick to a sleep schedule
- Pay attention to what you eat and drink
- Create a restful environment
- Limit daytime naps
- Include physical activity in your daily routine
- Manage worries

Action: *If you don't fall asleep within about 20 minutes, leave your bedroom and do something relaxing. Read or listen to soothing music. Go back to bed when you're tired. Repeat as needed.*

Healthy Snacking



Whether you are binge watching the latest show, sitting down to watch your favorite football team, or catching a late-night movie, more than likely snack foods are involved. Food in general seems to be a social staple in many cultures and unhealthy habits can form quickly if not controlled. Instead of cutting yourself off from snacking completely, try replacing them with healthy choices!

Ask yourself what you are craving and try the healthy option!

If you are craving something salty...

- Low sodium nuts and seeds
- Low sodium popcorn tossed in a teaspoon of olive oil
- Roasted edamame or chickpeas (these come in tasty flavors!)
- Carrot chips (many vegetables can be sliced and baked into chips!)
- Hummus with raw veggies
- Baked green pea crisps or crunchy lentils

If you are craving something sweet/savory...

- Rice cakes topped with a tablespoon of almond butter
- Plain Greek yogurt topped with berries or dark chocolate bits
- Frozen banana slices with drizzled dark chocolate
- Celery sticks topped with almond butter
- Dried or dehydrated fruits (in moderation, some fruits have lots of sugar)
- Baked apples with cinnamon

When it comes to healthy snacking, the options are endless! You can even create your own healthy trail mix to conquer both a sweet and salty craving. Use healthy nuts such as almonds, and add something crunchy like chickpeas, with dried berries and dark chocolate bits. A healthy trail mix to take on the go!

Happy Snacking!

CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER



In Oregon, Nicki makes weekly phone calls to her sister Rebecca, who has Alzheimer's. Rebecca lives 3,000 miles away in New York City.

Stephanie and Doug share a New Jersey home with Stephanie's frail mother. They give her round-the-clock aid.

And Ruth, who lives in Maryland, does the food shopping and cooking for her neighbor Scott, 93.

These people have one thing in common: They're family caregivers.

"Family caregiving is the fastest-growing unpaid and often unacknowledged occupation in this country," says Lorraine Sailor, operations coordinator at Children of Aging Parents, a nonprofit charitable organization based in Levittown, Pa.

A recent survey by the National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA) found more than 54 million people give care each year. About 56 percent are women, according to the survey.

Caregivers come in all shapes and sizes. They can be adult children, spouses, siblings, friends, or neighbors, who help with daily activities such as bathing, feeding, and clothing. The caregiver may be the only person who can take a loved one to doctors' appointments. The long-distance caregiver may call weekly, help with expenses, or support the main caregiver.

More than one relative helps out in some families, but most caregivers go it alone. The NFCA survey found three out of four caregivers don't get consistent family help.

"Caregiving can be a truly rewarding experience," says NFCA co-founder and President Suzanne Mintz. It can be a time to heal old wounds, end conflicts, and improve relationships. It can be a chance to serve a loved one.

But caregiving also can be demanding and time-consuming. It may even raise your risk of stress-related disorders.

"Many of us believe in honoring our parents and take our marriage vows seriously," Ms. Mintz says. "But the work of caregiving goes well beyond what we can do. Asking for help is a sign of your love and caring, not of weakness and shame. It is much more than a one-person job."

How to Succeed

These tips are drawn from professional, government, and charitable groups: the American Society on Aging, the Federal Administration on Aging, the Family Caregiver Alliance, Children of Aging Parents, and the National Family Caregivers Association.

Don't Go It Alone

- Ask others for help. Start with family and friends. Keep less engaged family members informed. Set up a family conference, seek suggestions, and talk about disagreements.
- Ask families with similar problems how they handled them.
- Involve the person you're caring for. If possible, help the person take responsibility and join in decisions.
- Learn about your loved one's condition. Find specialists for information and guidance.
- Tap local, state, and national resources. They can offer help with transportation, nutrition, or day care.



Watch for Problems

Mental and physical signs of caregiver stress:

- A lot of anger or fear
- A tendency to overreact
- Feeling depressed, isolated, or overburdened
- Thoughts of guilt, shame, or inadequacy
- Taking on more than you can handle
- Headaches
- Digestive upsets
- Weight loss or gain
- Trouble sleeping
- Fatigue
- Illness

Take Time Out

Be good to yourself. Take time away from caregiving and don't neglect your personal and professional needs:

- Get lots of rest and exercise
- Enjoy relaxing music
- Eat nutritious meals
- Visit with friends and plan leisure activities
- Do deep breathing
- Read a magazine
- Don't abuse alcohol or drugs, or overeat
- Keep a sense of humor
- Write your feelings in a journal
- Do spiritual meditation
- Set limits on what you can and cannot do
- Realize you're doing the best you can
- Join a support group
- Use community resources for help

Get Help

It's OK not to have all the answers. Seek help when you need it most:

- Call a support hotline. Just having someone listen may help.
- Speak with a counselor. A professional can help you understand your situation.
- Talk with your religious adviser.
- Attend a support group. Groups can explain your loved one's condition, ease tension, and provide a sense of what's important.

General Assistance

- [AARP](#): Advocacy group with publications on aging, including recent legislation.
- [Children of Aging Parents](#): Information on caregiving and referrals to support groups, care managers, and other resources.
- [Family Caregiver Alliance](#): Covers medical, social, public policy, and caregiving issues linked to brain impairments.
- [National Council on Aging](#): Information and advocacy.
- [National Family Caregivers Association](#): Dedicated to aiding caregivers through education, research, and support.
- [National Institute on Aging](#): Conducts and supports research, training, and information on aging.
- [Well Spouse Foundation](#): Offers support to people caring for a sick spouse who need emotional care themselves.
- Religious organizations often provide additional assistance.

Specific Ailments

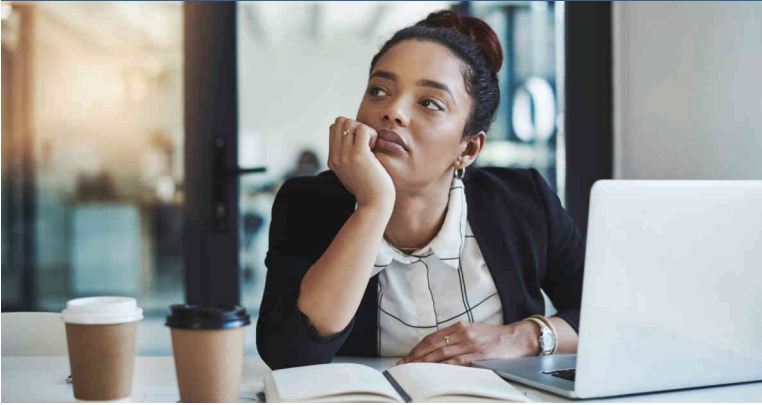
- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#): Fellowship and self-help group.
- [Alzheimer's Association](#)
- [American Cancer Society](#)
- [American Heart Association](#)
- [National Parkinson Foundation](#)
- [National Stroke Association](#)



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EMPLOYEE BURNOUT: HOW IT HAPPENS & WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP



Employee burnout happens in every workplace. Workers may start the job as enthusiastic employees, and then turn into problem people who show up late or don't show up at all. If you know of workers who have lost motivation for their jobs and show signs of apathy, they may be experiencing employee burnout.

A worker can experience burnout due to a great amount of stress; this stress can be job-related, but it can also be a result of great levels of stress at home. The important thing to remember is that employee

burnout can be reversed and there are things managers and employers can do to help an employee get back on track.

How Does Burnout Happen?

Burnout occurs when a person is placed under stress for a long time. Oftentimes, the person is physically and/or emotionally exhausted, and no longer functions like he or she used to. If an employee has been placed in a demanding situation at work or at home, the person may suffer symptoms of burnout as a result, especially if the stress is persistent and ongoing.

An employee may experience burnout if he or she was passed over for a promotion or overworked without recognition, or if there is continual change in a department. An internal inability to set appropriate boundaries may also contribute to burnout. For instance, employees might bring too much work home with them.

Recognizing Employee Burnout

Burnout symptoms are:

- A change in work habit or attitude
- Loss of enthusiasm or motivation
- Absenteeism or tardiness
- Negative reactions or comments
- Emotional outbursts
- Health problems
- Drug or alcohol use

Additionally, as an employer or supervisor, there are steps that can be taken to help avoid employee burnout affecting the workplace:

- If your company is downsizing, readjust workloads in creative ways. Ask employees for input, and see which tasks they would prefer to do and which tasks they would like to avoid.
- Give ample notice about changes in positions or tasks. If downsizing has occurred, firm up schedules to give a sense of routine and continuity.
- Redistribute workloads if employees seem overwhelmed.
- Listen to employees and try to counsel them the best you can.
- Pay attention to what motivates each individual employee and utilize that when assigning projects.
- Understand your personality style and be aware of how that can play a role with individual employee communication.
- Schedule after-work events to boost employees' spirits.
- Refer employees to resources provided by your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Written by Life Advantages - Author Delvina Miremadi ©2021

At this point in your career, you have probably been exposed to many different kinds of people with different types of personalities. Some people you may have found easy to deal with and developed friendships with them that will last the whole of your life. Others may have been a bit too difficult to connect with, abrasive, or aggressive in ways that kept you from feeling comfortable or interested in developing a relationship. In your personal life, it can be easy to determine who you want to spend your time with. In the workplace, you may not have a control over who you work with, are partnered with on projects, or find yourself overseeing your work in ways that can help or hurt your success.



Managing someone with a difficult personality or who exhibits behaviors that are erratic or frustrating is a skill that can be developed over time. By taking a moment to identify the kinds of interactions you're having with someone and what steps you can take to reduce or negate the impact those interactions have on your life, you can feel more in control and comfortable when dealing with a difficult person.

Let's explore the process of addressing a frustrating interaction that you can apply to your time in the classroom, at work, or in your personal life.

Keep Your Cool

A difficult or frustrating person may be going through something that you're unaware of and may be a source of personal discomfort or conflict. Whenever possible, remind yourself to stay calm, take a deep breath, and focus on addressing whatever needs to be addressed with the individual.

Consider the History

Have you had interactions with an individual in the past? What happened? What would you have done differently to resolve the situation in a better way? Use that information to help you navigate future interactions.

Be Prepared

If you know you're going to interact with someone, ready yourself mentally and emotionally for the experience. Remind yourself that you are in control and consider what you can do to make the interaction easier for everyone involved.

Limit Your Exposure

If you have a history of problematic interactions with someone, do what you can to limit future interactions. Consider changing your schedule, where you sit in the classroom, or how often you have to interact with the individual. You may not be able to avoid the experience but you can find ways to reduce its impact.

Address the Problems

If you feel it is appropriate and safe to do so, consider addressing the difficulties you feel with the individual. If you are concerned that the discussion might escalate tensions, alert your professor, manager, or someone who can intervene on your behalf. Someone else who is aware of the issue might be able to step in to help reduce or resolve the difficulties you're experiencing.

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On-the-Job Accident Prevention: “Law of Large Numbers”



The federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) requires fall protection at different elevations—from as little as four feet in

construction to greater than eight feet for those who load and unload ships. If you resist using fall protection because you aren’t nervous working at great heights, consider the mathematical construct called the “Law of Large Numbers.” It states that the likelihood of an undesired event increases the larger the number of instances that occur relative to it. Translation: The odds of your falling increase! The 16th-century math genius who conceptualized the principle never proved it, but insurance companies rely upon it. And so should you. Protect yourself from falls (and other injuries) by following all your employer’s safety rules.

Thinking about Quitting Your Job?



Hold your horses! Before you quit a job, consider the issues prompting the desire to leave. Two-thirds of workers cite conflicts with bosses and coworkers

as leading reasons they left. The commonality of these problems means that EAPs have extensive experience with them. That’s good news. Discussing the issues may lead to a decision to retain your job and finally resolve problems you were convinced had no solutions.

Do You Live with a Problem Gambler?

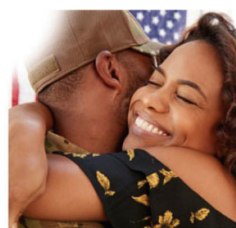


If you live with someone who gambles, does a gambling disorder disrupt your life?

Gam-Anon is a

starting point for getting help. This free program is for family, friends, loved ones, and concerned persons affected by another person’s gambling. Gam-Anon offers support and answers. Fellowship members can offer their experience, which may also help you discover what to do, how to intervene, and how to take care of yourself in a relationship with a problem gambler. Learn more at GamblersAnonymous.org [click on the “Gam-Anon” tab]. You can join a regularly scheduled virtual meeting.

Supporting a Partner with Anxiety



If you are in a relationship with someone who suffers from anxiety, feeling helpless is a common experience you share. Still, your support is extremely valuable. To offer support,

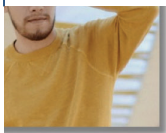
don’t dismiss their anxiety, worries, or fears. Don’t try to shorten the episode. Do ask how you can help, and offer reassurance—“This will pass,” “I’m here for you,” etc. Nearly 60% of people who suffer from anxiety haven’t explored getting treatment for it, so encouraging medical evaluation may be a key step if social and occupational functioning suffer. Do not allow the stigma of a mental health diagnosis to inhibit getting help. Most people with anxiety disorders don’t suffer continuously, so intermittent symptoms can lead you to delay treatment. Learn more from adaa.org, the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, or www.anxietycanada.com

Time Management: Finding Time Nuggets



Most of us have the same goal with time—to get more stuff done with the amount we have. To maximize the value of your time, first accept that you can't gain more time, but you can manage it better. You are already managing your time; it's just that you may not be maximizing the returns. Start by tracking what you do for four or five hours in a typical business day. That's long enough to gain significant insight. Note what you have been doing every 15 minutes. Use a kitchen timer to stick with the process. Did you discover any time nuggets? These are blocks of time that typically get burned up by nonproductive activity. If you were idle for a few minutes, did you feel a draw to your email or social media? Decide how you can exploit these blocks by using a to-do list, in which you record plans, steps to your goals, and dozens of tasks that take mere minutes but you never seem to get to throughout the year. Reach for this list when the urge to defocus strikes. Instead of social media or another email check, head for your list. Evaluate your progress after three days.

Presenteeism: Working While Sick



Presenteeism is what happens when workers who are ill, injured, or otherwise physically or mentally unwell feel obligated to show up and put their best face forward. Some workers have a mistaken belief that dedicated employees put everything else on the back burner to prioritize their jobs. When you engage in presenteeism, you are less likely to perform your duties well and are at risk for making costly, even deadly mistakes. If you feel pressured, in a jam, or caught in life circumstances that compel you to work even if you are ill, talk to your employee assistance program or other mental health counselor. You'll team with a professional to examine all the issues. Whether it is how to communicate needs to your supervisor, negotiate, delegate, find resources, think through options, or explore whatever works, it is likely that answers exist so you remain or become the productive and fully present employee you and employer want you to be.

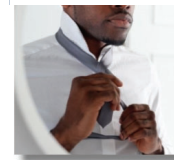
Overcoming the Impact of COVID-19



COVID-19 lockdowns have had a severe effect on mental health for millions of people this past year. Depression, isolation, and loads of adverse social consequences are as endemic as the virus itself. One key

keeping a list of projects and tasks for completion to fill one's free time. This strategy is not simply a way to help you stay distracted. The strategy helps you feel in control with an ability to direct your life. Gaining relief from this sense of entrapment is the goal of activities that give you more of a sense of control. Be balanced in how much you engage in social media. It may increase your sense of belonging and feeling engaged with friends and loved ones, but during this time, the "missing out syndrome" and the false "everyone seems better off than me" can have a more stark effect. So, stay aware.

How to Feel More Secure about Your Job



Feeling insecure about the ability to do your job, making a positive impression, and how you are perceived by others? To feel centered and more confident: 1) Set goals for the day, week, and near future. You will be motivated

by feeling directed. 2) Define the steps to how these goals will be achieved. This maintains the motivation you generated. 3) Engage. Feeling insecure can cause you to withdraw or delay communication with others, so be proactive with your team or others with whom you mutually depend to achieve results. 4) Talk to a professional counselor/EAP, and feel the relief that comes with sharing stress and processing fears. 5) Track your successes.

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach. Your EAP is here to help with family, work, health, & legal issues.

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