

Background

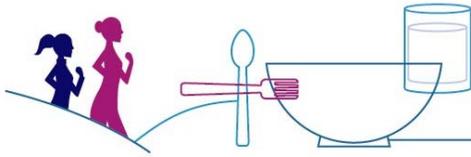
The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, first released in 1980 and revised in 1985, 1990, 1995, and 2000, is published jointly by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Section 301 of the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5341) requires the Secretaries of USDA and HHS to publish jointly at least every 5 years a report entitled *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

Beginning with the 1985 edition, HHS and USDA have appointed a Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee of nationally recognized experts in the field of nutrition and health to review the scientific and medical knowledge current at the time, and to recommend to the Secretaries any revisions to the *Dietary Guidelines* that are warranted. The Committees produced reports of their recommendations and rationales for revision to the Secretaries. The Departments then jointly reviewed and published the revised *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

The *Dietary Guidelines*, based on the latest scientific information including medical knowledge, provides authoritative advice for people two years and older about how proper dietary habits can promote health and reduce risk for major chronic diseases. The 2005 *Dietary Guidelines* were prepared in three stages. In the first, a 13-member Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee prepared a report based on the best available science. Minutes of each Committee meeting and the Committee Report are available via the Internet at www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines. In the second stage, government scientists and officials developed the *Dietary Guidelines* after reviewing the advisory committee's report and agency and public comments. In the third stage, experts worked to translate the *Dietary Guidelines* into meaningful messages for the public and educators.

The *Dietary Guidelines* identifies 41 key recommendations, of which 23 are for the general public and 18 for special populations. They are grouped into nine general topics:

- Adequate Nutrients Within Calorie Needs
- Weight Management
- Physical Activity
- Food Groups to Encourage
- Fats
- Carbohydrates
- Sodium and Potassium
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Food Safety



The *Dietary Guidelines* provides health education experts, such as doctors and nutritionists, with a compilation of the latest science-based nutrition and physical activity recommendations. Consumer-friendly materials such as brochures and Web sites will assist the general public in understanding the scientific language of the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines* and the key points that they can apply in their lives. To highlight those points, a consumer-oriented brochure, *Finding Your Way to a Healthier You: Based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans* accompanies the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines*.