

The Nutrition Guidelines for Good Health

Target Audience: Adults in general and adults with diabetes

Objectives: Participants will:

1. Understand the importance of individualizing their eating habits.
2. Be able to list at least three of the nutrition guidelines for good health.
3. Be able to apply at least one of these nutrition guidelines to their own eating habits.

Time Required: 30 minutes; for a 15-minute presentation, discuss only the following props—bathroom scale, sugar, roast beef (use for saturated fat and cholesterol), green pepper and orange, skim milk, salt shaker, beer, and oatmeal. Use only one map to discuss how the pyramid is a road map; limit alcohol discussion

Equipment: Overhead projector and overheads

Props: Four road maps; magic marker; individual cardboard food models from the Dairy Council—roast beef, sugar, peanuts, green pepper, orange, fried egg, skim milk, beer; an empty box of artificial sweetener; a bottle of vitamin-mineral supplements; a salt shaker; bathroom scale; shot glass; wine glass; lite beer can; bottle of iced tea to represent distilled liquor; bottle of grape juice to represent wine

Handouts: “Dietary Guidelines for Americans” (available online at www.health.gov/); USDA Food Guide Pyramid (available online at www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/food/food-pyramid/main.htm); “The First Step for Diabetes Meal Planning” (not available online, order from the American Diabetes Association, 800-342-2383 or at www.diabetes.org/); Nutrition Guidelines Action Sheet

Lesson Plan

Before the class begins, place the props under some of the participants’ chairs. As the class begins, tell the participants to look under their chairs for the props that will be used later in the lesson. Tell each of the participants who has a prop to look at it carefully and make a general recommendation for good nutrition based on a nutrient that is present in that particular food. They will be asked to share the recommendations with the group later. If anyone cannot think of a recommendation, tell him or her not to worry, that the group will help think of one.

Pretend you are planning cross-country trip. You’ve never done this before, so you ask for directions from several different sources. First, you write your automobile club and ask for maps with two routes marked, the scenic route and the quickest route. You also ask a friend who lived at your destination in the past how she would go. And finally, you ask your Uncle Bob, a cross-country truck driver for 30 years, which route he would take.

You study all these directions. (*Show the first map.*) The auto club map with the quickest route follows only interstates, with no special sights in between. (*Show the second map.*) The scenic route mainly follows two-lane highways. You’ll see a lot of

interesting places, but it will take 2 months to make the trip. *(Show the third map.)* The directions from your friend include interstates and some two-lane highways, but it will take a month to drive across country. *(Show the fourth map.)* And your Uncle's route goes through some large cities that you would like to bypass. Which route do you choose?

(Show magic marker and one of the maps.) Most likely you'll start mapping out your own route, including bits and pieces from all the other directions. Your final route won't exactly follow any of the original routes, but will combine parts of all of them. The new map will meet your time frame and allow you to visit many of the places you want to see.

You "individualized" the map to meet your needs. It would not have been as good as it is without input from the other directions, but it's your own map and satisfies your own needs.

Similarly, the Food Guide Pyramid and the Dietary Guidelines—or, for those with diabetes, First Step in Diabetes Meal Planning—*(refer to handouts)* are road maps to help guide your food selection for good health.

(Similarly, people with diabetes are encouraged to individualize their own diabetes meal plans. You probably already are doing this to some degree, but you may not have gotten much help from your medical team. In the past, and even now, people with diabetes are often just handed a sheet with a set meal plan to follow, with little effort made to ensure that the patterns fit their lifestyles or eating habits.)

Depending on your health, you may have different nutritional goals at different times in your life. While these goals may vary depending on whether you just want to lose weight or lower your blood glucose or control your high blood pressure, there are some general nutrition guidelines that apply to most people. People get the most successful results when they focus on one or two of these guidelines at a time.

People can't follow a starvation diet or exercise for 2 hours at a time for the rest of their lives. Working with a dietitian to decide on the right meal plan for you and becoming more active gradually will help you to succeed.

Activity

Now let's talk about some specific nutrition recommendations. Will those of you who have the food and nutrition props please come forward?

(Line up the participants with props in front of the room in no particular order. Have them take turns showing their food and nutrition props and explaining what general nutrition recommendations they would make, based on the props. Listed below are some likely recommendations and some extra facts you may wish to add. The audience can help if someone is stumped. You may also have to ask leading questions to get complete recommendations from the participants, or you may need to add to the recommendations if they are not very complete.)

1. Roast beef. Many people should limit their intake of animal products in order to limit their intake of saturated fat and cholesterol. In order to reduce our risk for heart disease and stroke, saturated fat should make up less than 10 percent of our total caloric intake.

For most people, total fat intake should average 30 percent or less. Too much protein can stress the kidneys. (*People with diabetes are at high risk for kidney disease, so eating only 4 to 6 ounces or less of meat, poultry, or fish per day may help preserve kidney function.*)

2. Fried egg. An egg is high in cholesterol. A person should limit the intake of cholesterol to an average of less than 300 milligrams per day. An egg has 213–218 milligrams, so eating whole eggs should be limited to two to three times per week or less. Egg substitutes are a good option; also, you might substitute two egg whites for each egg.

3. Oatmeal. Whole grain breads and cereals are excellent sources of fiber. A person should try to consume 20–35 grams of fiber each day. This is twice the amount most of us currently eat. Soluble-fiber oatmeal and dried beans and peas may help to control blood cholesterol (*and blood glucose levels*).

4. Skim milk. There is an epidemic of osteoporosis in older women in this country, and older men can get osteoporosis as well. Consuming more nonfat and low-fat dairy products may help slow this trend. Eating at least three to four servings of nonfat or low-fat dairy products each day is important. Also, you should take the equivalent amount of calcium and Vitamin D in supplements, if necessary.

5. Peanuts. While most people should eat a low-fat diet (less than 30 percent of calories per day from fat), some people have a special problem with triglycerides when they eat too many carbohydrates. These people may need to work with a dietitian on a special diet that is high in monounsaturated fats, such as are found in nuts, peanut oil, olive oil, and canola oil. People should substitute unsaturated oils whenever they can for the saturated fats they use. Peanuts are high in fat and sometimes high in salt, so they should be used very carefully.

6. Salt shaker. Many people who have high blood pressure need to limit their salt intake. (*People with diabetes often also have high blood pressure.*) Controlling your salt intake, losing some weight, eating more fruits and vegetables, not drinking alcohol, and becoming more active will help lower blood pressure.

7. Alcohol. While we do not recommend that people start drinking, those who do drink should take these precautions:

- (a) A man should have no more than 2 drinks a day, and a woman no more than 1 drink a day. One drink equals 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1-1/2 ounces of distilled liquor. (*Show alcohol equivalents.*)
- (b) Never drink and drive or drink and use any heavy equipment.
- (c) Excessive drinking raises blood pressure.

Extra precautions for those with diabetes:

- (d) Drink only after getting your doctor's permission and when your blood glucose is under good control.

- (e) Never drink alone. Always make sure that whomever you drink with knows that you have diabetes.
- f) Always eat something when you drink if you are on diabetic medication. Alcohol initially may raise the blood glucose level, but then it blocks the liver's ability to convert glycogen (stored glucose) to blood glucose. If a person does not eat, he or she will suffer low blood glucose (hypoglycemia). The symptoms of hypoglycemia are slurred speech, incoherence or unconsciousness, shakiness, poor vision, poor coordination—the same symptoms for drunkenness.
- g) Always wear visible identification—a bracelet or necklace—that says you have diabetes.

8. Vitamin-Mineral Supplements. If you eat a variety of foods and follow the general nutrition recommendations, vitamin-mineral supplements should rarely be needed. If people get the number of servings of each food group listed on the food guide pyramid, they should not need a vitamin-mineral supplement. If you do take a supplement, do not take more than 100 percent of the Daily Value unless your doctor or dietitian recommends more. *(Some people believe that chromium helps control blood glucose levels, but this is still controversial. Also, some people who have poorly controlled diabetes may have low magnesium levels, but only a doctor can detect this and recommend the correct amount of magnesium.)*

9. Green pepper. A person should consume at least three to five vegetables each day. Many studies have found that those who eat the most vegetables and fruits have the lowest risk for heart disease, stroke, and many cancers.

10. Orange. A person should consume at least two to four fruits a day. Ideally, you should consume whole pieces of fruit in order to get the most fiber. *(People with diabetes who drink too much fruit juice may consume too much carbohydrate.)*

11. Sugar. Sugar is a food with little nutritional value other than calories. In recipes, it often is combined with very-high-fat, high-cholesterol ingredients. It contains no fiber. Like all carbohydrates, it can cause dental decay. Brushing and flossing regularly can reduce this risk. *(For people with diabetes, sugar can be substituted in small amounts for other sources of carbohydrate in the meal plan. This must be done carefully. Only blood glucose monitoring can show how a particular type and amount of carbohydrate affects your blood glucose level.)*

12. Artificial sweetener. Everyone, even children, can use artificial sweeteners safely. If you are concerned about overusing one type, use a variety of sweeteners instead of just one.

13. Bathroom scale. Obesity is a real problem in this country, and most of it is due to the fact that we are eating bigger portions and performing less physical activity. Becoming more physically active and eating fewer calories will significantly reduce the risk for all chronic diseases. Just a 10–20 pound weight loss and 30 minutes of regular physical activity every day can have a big effect on blood pressure, blood glucose, cholesterol, and triglyceride levels. It can also reduce the risk for developing diabetes.

Now you know the basic nutrition guidelines. As you can see, most of them are just common sense.

(Show overhead entitled “Summary of the Dietary Guidelines” and refer to “Dietary Guidelines for Americans” handout.) To summarize what we have learned today:

1. Aim for a healthy weight. Be physically active every day.
2. Use the Food Guide Pyramid to guide food choices.
3. Choose a variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products every day.
4. Select foods that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat intake, including nonfat and low-fat dairy products.
5. Choose food and beverages to moderate your sugar intake. Artificial sweeteners are safe.
6. Choose and prepare food with less salt.
7. If you drink, do so in moderation.

Now choose one of the guidelines you want to incorporate into your lifestyle in the next week. Write it down on the “Nutrition Guideline Action Sheet” and list two things you will do to implement these guidelines. Share your plans with the person next to you.