

FEBRUARY 2021

MALNUTRITION CONNECTION

Providing Malnutrition Awareness and Advocacy Information to Share

Malnutrition Recommendations and Health Goals – Dietary Guidelines for Americans and Healthy People 2030

US Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs)

The latest DGA's released by the U.S. departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services urge Americans to "[make every bite count](#)." The DGAs are updated every five years and this latest edition highlights the importance of a healthy diet at every life stage. For the first time ever, the DGAs include mention of older adults and malnutrition. Highlights of the updated Dietary Guidelines include:

Healthy Dietary Patterns

- The DGAs note that "Older adults should follow a healthy dietary pattern because of the changing dietary needs and the heightened risk of malnutrition that occurs with age."
- Older adults are encouraged to follow a balanced dietary pattern that includes vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, protein foods and oils. The pattern provides a variety of food and beverage options for older adults to customize their choices within each food group, based on lifestyle, traditions, culture and/or other individual needs.

Current Intake

- Older adults can improve their diets by eating more vegetables, fruits, whole grains and dairy, while ensuring adequate protein and eating foods with fewer added sugars, saturated fats and sodium.

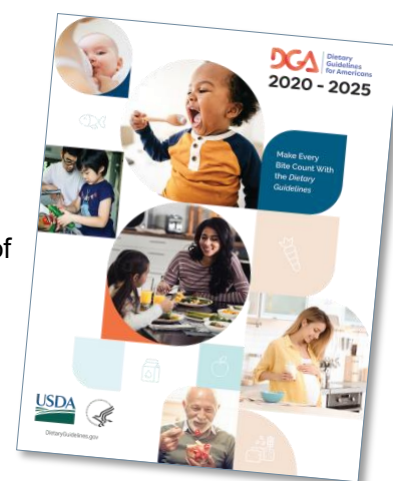
Special Considerations

- The DGAs note a number of health and social changes that can affect older adults' nutrition. "Compared to younger adults, older adults are at greater risk of chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and cancer, as well as health conditions related to changes in bone and muscle mass, such as osteoporosis and sarcopenia." Older adults often do not eat enough protein, which is important to prevent the loss of lean muscle mass that occurs naturally with age.

Supporting Healthy Living

- The DGA highlighted many governmental nutrition resources that are available to older adults.

You can learn more about the DGA recommendations on the [American Society on Aging's Generations](#) blog that was authored by Meredith Ponder Whitmire from [Defeat Malnutrition Today](#).



Healthy People 2030 The United States Department of Health and Human

Services (HHS) recently released [Healthy People 2030](#), which sets "data-driven national objectives to improve health and well-being over the next decade."

Many of the [Healthy People 2030 objectives for older adults](#) target preventive care that can be linked to physical inactivity as well as to malnutrition, particularly because malnutrition can diminish immune response, delay wound healing and increase rates of infection, chronic disease, functional disability, frailty and falling.

The Healthy People 2030 objectives can also be linked to broader policy opportunities focused on older adult nutrition. You can learn more about these policy objectives and Healthy People 2030 on [International Council on Active Aging's \(ICAA's\) recent blog](#) that was authored by Meredith Ponder Whitmire from [Defeat Malnutrition Today](#).

COVID-19, Nutrition, and Meeting the Needs of the Most Vulnerable

Virtual Webinar

Mar. 03, 2021 | 2:00 p.m. ET

Vulnerable populations are at risk for the significant immediate and long-term impacts of COVID-19. Compounding this risk is lack of proper nutrition, both before and as a result of the pandemic. This session will cover the interplay of COVID-19 and nutrition and will highlight programs to protect vulnerable populations.

[Register Here](#)

Speakers:

Moderator: Eleanor Perfetto, PhD, MS, Executive Vice President, Strategic Initiatives, NHC
C. Grace Whiting, JD, President and CEO, National Alliance for Caregiving
Shirley Y. Chao, PhD, RD, LDN, FAND, Director of Nutrition, Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs