

## How we can make dietary guidelines work in our lives

Asheville Citizen - Times - Asheville, N.C.

Author: Alan S Baumgarten

Date: Jun 14, 2011

Start Page: n/a

Section: LIVING

Text Word Count: 508

---

### Document Text

---

Every five years the U.S. departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services are required to update the dietary guidelines for Americans.

The latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans take a much sharper aim on the dietary issues that actually affect the health and well-being of Americans.

For the first time since the departments began issuing these guidelines more than 100 years ago, the recommendations focus more on the pressing health issues of Americans than the concerns of special-interest groups.

The overall message in the new guidelines is not new: A healthier lifestyle is the cornerstone of better health. What is new is that our nation is facing a national epidemic of obesity and a looming health care crisis due to the rising costs of care.

The crisis is made worse by the declining health status of obese Americans. The rapid rise of obesity has resulted in increases of several chronic diseases -- particularly hypertension and diabetes -- and the consequences related to these problems, such as heart disease and chronic kidney disease.

The new dietary guidelines better reflect the changes that individual Americans must make to address the national health crisis related to obesity and related chronic diseases that cost us so many billions of precious health care dollars.

The guidelines recommend that the American diet include a more varied balance of healthy foods, with specific recommendations to:

- \* Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains and other fiber rich foods.
- \* Eat more seafood. Eat less poultry and choose lean meats.
- \* Eat less refined grains, sugars, fats and salt.
- \* Select mostly nonfat or low-fat milk.
- \* Use vegetable oils like olive and canola instead of solid fats such as butter and margarine.
- \* Drink more water and less alcohol.

The guidelines encourage more than a simple balancing of calories and physical activity. The challenge is how we use this information to make the necessary changes that will substantially improve our individual health and well-being.

How do you best make these changes to your diet or exercise routine?

\*

Pick one specific behavior that you want to change and focus on that. It is almost impossible to make more than one change at a time and be successful.

\*

Set a single small goal that you think you can achieve and focus on that. For instance, "I will walk for 30 minutes three days a week" or "I will not eat fried foods."

\*

Once the first goal is achieved, you can work on another until it too has been mastered. Then move on to the next. Setting a sequence of small, achievable goals is a sure formula for success.

The message of the new guidelines is simple: Enjoy your food but eat less, make better choices and get more exercise. We have heard it before, but we need to follow these guidelines now more than ever.

Dr. Alan S. Baumgarten is a family physician and nutritionist in private practice at Asheville Family Health Center and a

member of the WNC/Buncombe County Medical Society, [www.bcmsonline.org](http://www.bcmsonline.org).

ID\_Code: B0201110306140015

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

---

**Abstract** (Document Summary)

---

Eat less poultry and choose lean meats. \* Eat less refined grains, sugars, fats and salt. \* Select mostly nonfat or low-fat milk. \* Use vegetable oils like olive and canola instead of solid fats such as butter and margarine. \* Drink more water and less alcohol.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.