

Dietary Guidelines

Dietary guidelines are necessary to promote adequate energy and nutrient intake to support physical, emotional, psychological, and cognitive development. A number of new dietary guidelines have been developed to address the issue of childhood obesity, sedentary lifestyles, and increase in cardiovascular disease mortality in the United States.

The [Institute of Medicine \(2005\)](#) has developed guidelines for nutritional intake that encompass the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) yet extend their scope to include additional parameters related to nutritional intake. The Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs)* are composed of four categories. These include Estimated Average Requirements (EARs) for age and gender categories, tolerable upper-limit (UL) nutrient intakes that are associated with a low risk of adverse effects, Adequate Intakes (AIs) of nutrients, and new standard RDAs. The guidelines present information about lifestyle factors that may affect nutrient function, such as caffeine intake and exercise, and about how the nutrient may be related to chronic disease. An important factor in the development of the DRIs that affects children, particularly infants from birth to 6 months old, is that the AIs are based on the nutrient intake of full-term, healthy, breastfed infants (by well-nourished mothers), which now represents the gold standard for infant nutrition in this age group. In 2010, new DRIs for vitamin D and calcium were released by the Institute of Medicine.

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans may also be used to encourage healthy dietary intakes and regular exercise designed to decrease obesity, cardiovascular risk factors, and subsequent cardiovascular disease, which is now known to occur in both young children and adults. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines recommend a caloric intake for a moderately active boy, ages 2 to 3 years, of 1000 to 1400 calories per day. The emphasis in the Dietary Guidelines is in decreasing overall fat and sodium intakes and increasing the amount of daily exercise to reduce the incidence of obesity and cardiovascular disease. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines* are for children ages 2 years and older. They encourage a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy and nonfat dairy products in addition to fish, beans, and lean meat.

Additional resources for dietary counseling include MyPlate⁺,