

Optimizing Nutritional Intake within Budgetary Constraints: A Personal Dietary Linear
Programming Approach

Northwestern University, MSDS 460: Decision Analytics
Homework Assignment 1: Linear Programming --The Diet Problem
Janvier 14, 2024

Methods

Linear Programming Model Formulation:

In this section, I constructed a linear programming model to determine the most cost-effective weekly diet that satisfies my nutritional requirements. The decision variables represented the servings per week of five food items: almonds, brown rice, Greek yogurt, pizza, and tofu vegetables & hash brown. The objective was to minimize the total cost of these items while adhering to nutritional constraints on calories, protein, and essential vitamins and minerals.

Constraints Implementation:

I incorporated constraints to reflect the minimum and maximum nutritional requirements based on current dietary guidelines. These constraints ensured my diet would not exceed sodium limits while meeting my needs for energy, protein, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium.

Results

Initial Solution Analysis:

The initial solution to my diet problem highlighted a reliance on a single food item—pizza—due to its cost-effectiveness in meeting the set nutritional parameters. The total cost for my weekly diet plan was calculated to be \$143.625.

Dietary Variety Constraints:

Recognizing the importance of dietary variety, I revised the model to include at least one serving of each food item. This adjustment aimed to promote a more balanced nutrient intake, even if it increased the overall cost.

Revised Solution and Cost Implications:

Upon solving the updated linear programming problem, the new diet plan included a variety of food items, as intended by the adjusted constraints. The cost implications of this dietary diversity will be discussed, reflecting the trade-off between nutritional adequacy and budget considerations.

Appendix

Part 1. Provide documentation for the five packaged food items you have selected for the assignment. Photographs of the Nutrition Facts labels are sufficient. Show your price calculations for serving sizes.

The calculated costs per serving for each of the selected food items:

For example, if a package of almonds costs \$7.49 and contains 12 servings, the price per serving is $\$7.49 / 12$. These values are calculated based on the total price of each item divided by the number of servings per container. For Brown Rice, the number of servings was estimated based on the total weight and the weight per serving.

1. Almonds

- Total Price: \$7.49
- Servings per Container: 12
- Cost per Serving Calculation: $\$7.49 / 12$ servings
- Result: \$0.6242 per serving (approx.)

2. Brown Rice

- Total Price: \$3.69
- Weight per Container: 8.8 OZ
- Serving Size: 140g per cup (Approximately equivalent to 4.94 OZ)
- Total Servings in Container: $8.8 \text{ OZ} / 4.94 \text{ OZ per serving}$
- Cost per Serving Calculation: $\$3.69 / (8.8 \text{ OZ} / 4.94 \text{ OZ})$
- Result: \$0.7488 per serving (approx.)

3. Chobani Blueberry Greek Yogurt

- Total Price: \$1.49
- Servings per Container: 1 (as serving size is 1 container)
- Cost per Serving Calculation: $\$1.49 / 1$ serving
- Result: \$1.49 per serving

4. Roasted Vegetable Goat Cheese with Balsamic Glaze Pizza

- Total Price: \$11.49
- Servings per Container: 4
- Cost per Serving Calculation: $\$11.49 / 4$ servings
- Result: \$2.8725 per serving (approx.)

5. Tofu Vegetables & Hash Brown

- Total Price: \$6.99
- Servings per Container: 1 (as serving size is 1 tray)
- Cost per Serving Calculation: $\$6.99 / 1 \text{ serving}$
- Result: \$6.99 per serving

Part 2. Specify the linear programming problem in standard form, showing decision variables, objective function with cost coefficients, and weekly nutritional constraints. Describe the pr Linear Programming Model with Updated Data

Decision Variables:

I have defined the decision variables as the number of servings of each food item per week:

- x_1 : Servings of Almonds
- x_2 : Servings of Brown Rice
- x_3 : Servings of Greek Yogurt
- x_4 : Servings of Pizza
- x_5 : Servings of Tofu Vegetables & Hash Brown

These variables can take any non-negative value, including fractional values.

Objective Function:

My objective is to minimize the total cost of the diet. The cost coefficients are based on the cost per serving of each food item. The objective function is:

$$\text{Minimize } Z = 0.6242x_1 + 0.7488x_2 + 1.49x_3 + 2.8725x_4 + 6.99x_5$$

Constraints:

My diet plan is constrained by the weekly nutritional requirements:

1. Sodium (Maximum): The total sodium intake from all food items should be less than or equal to 35,000 mg.
2. Energy (Minimum): The total calorie intake from all food items should be at least 14,000 kcal.
3. Protein (Minimum): The total protein intake from all food items should be at least 350 g.
4. Vitamin D (Minimum): The total vitamin D intake from all food items should be at least 140 mcg.
5. Calcium (Minimum): The total calcium intake from all food items should be at least 9,100 mg.
6. Iron (Minimum): The total iron intake from all food items should be at least 126 mg.

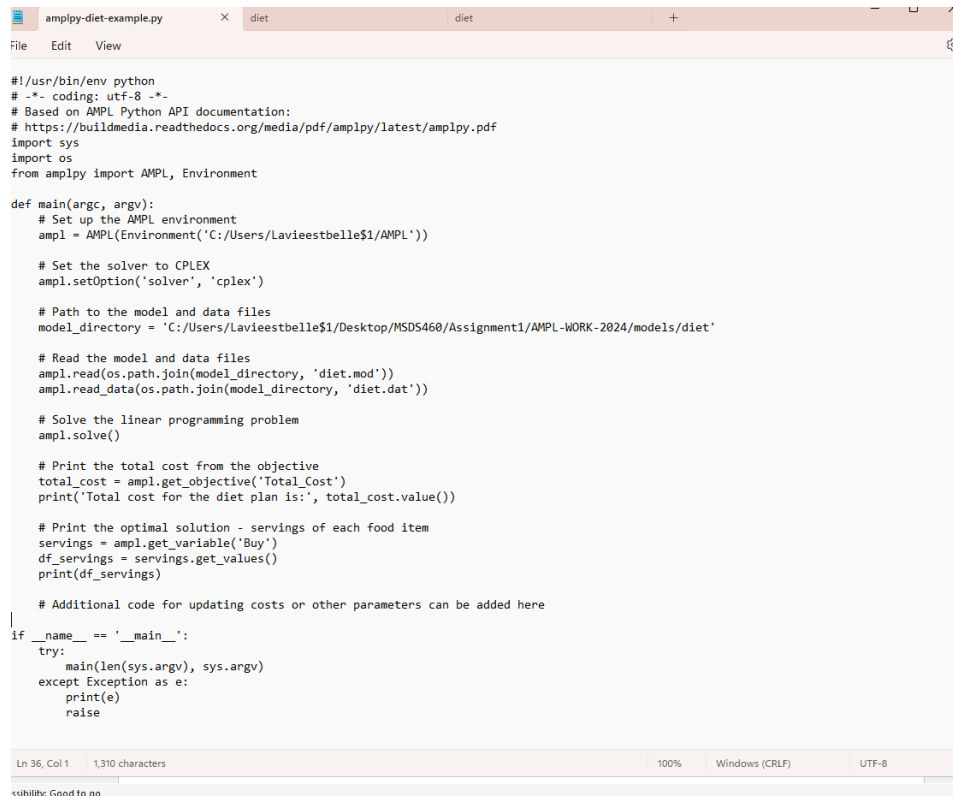
7. Potassium (Minimum): The total potassium intake from all food items should be at least 32,900 mg.

These constraints are based on the nutritional content per serving of each food item and the weekly nutritional goals.

Plain English Description:

In simple terms, my goal is to determine the optimal number of servings of almonds, brown rice, Greek yogurt, pizza, and tofu vegetables & hash brown to consume each week. This plan must meet my specific nutritional needs while minimizing the overall cost. The challenge lies in balancing cost efficiency with meeting my dietary requirements in terms of sodium, energy, protein, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium. The solution to this linear programming problem will provide me with a weekly diet plan that satisfies both cost-effectiveness and nutritional adequacy.

Part 3. Implement the linear programming problem using Python PuLP or AMPL. Provide the program code and output/listing as plain text files, posting within a GitHub repository dedicated to this assignment.



```

#!/usr/bin/env python
# -*- coding: utf-8 -*-
# Based on AMPL Python API documentation:
# https://buildmedia.readthedocs.org/media/pdf/amplpy/latest/amplpy.pdf
import sys
import os
from amplpy import AMPL, Environment

def main(argv):
    # Set up the AMPL environment
    ampl = AMPL(Environment('C:/Users/Lavieestbelle$1/AMPL'))

    # Set the solver to CPLEX
    ampl.setOption('solver', 'cplex')

    # Path to the model and data files
    model_directory = 'C:/Users/Lavieestbelle$1/Desktop/MSDS460/Assignment1/AMPL-WORK-2024/models/diet'

    # Read the model and data files
    ampl.read(os.path.join(model_directory, 'diet.mod'))
    ampl.read_data(os.path.join(model_directory, 'diet.dat'))

    # Solve the linear programming problem
    ampl.solve()

    # Print the total cost from the objective
    total_cost = ampl.get_objective('Total_Cost')
    print('Total cost for the diet plan is:', total_cost.value())

    # Print the optimal solution - servings of each food item
    servings = ampl.get_variable('Buy')
    df_servings = servings.get_values()
    print(df_servings)

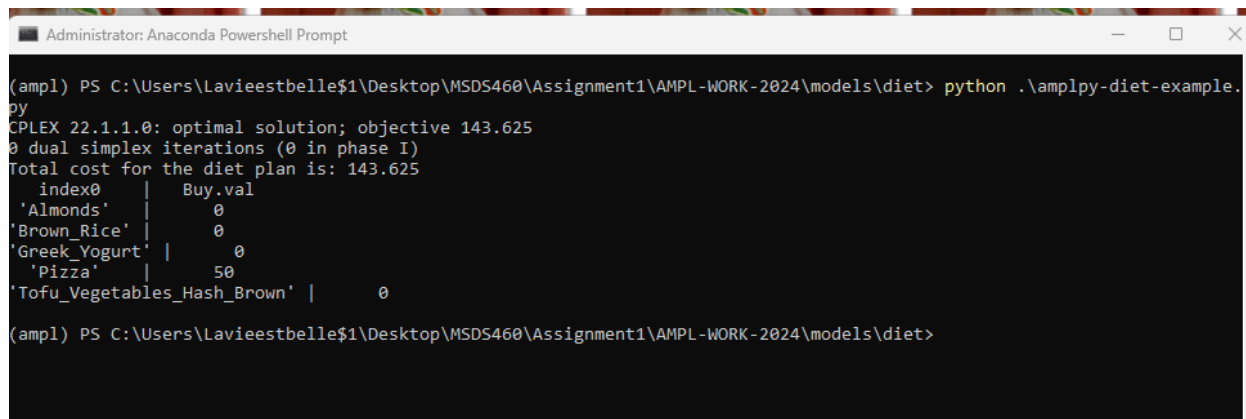
    # Additional code for updating costs or other parameters can be added here

if __name__ == '__main__':
    try:
        main(len(sys.argv), sys.argv)
    except Exception as e:
        print(e)
        raise

```

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ssibility: Good to go



```

Administrator: Anaconda Powershell Prompt

(amp1) PS C:\Users\Lavieestbelle$1\Desktop\MSDS460\Assignment1\AMPL-WORK-2024\models\diet> python .\amplpy-diet-example.py
CPLEX 22.1.1.0: optimal solution; objective 143.625
0 dual simplex iterations (0 in phase I)
Total cost for the diet plan is: 143.625
  index0 | Buy.val
  'Almonds' | 0
  'Brown_Rice' | 0
  'Greek_Yogurt' | 0
  'Pizza' | 50
  'Tofu_Vegetables_Hash_Brown' | 0

(amp1) PS C:\Users\Lavieestbelle$1\Desktop\MSDS460\Assignment1\AMPL-WORK-2024\models\diet>

```

Part 4. Describe the solution for the linear programming problem, showing units (serving sizes) for each of the five food items. What is the minimum cost solution? How much would you need to spend on food each week?

The solution to my linear programming problem, as displayed in the screenshot, indicates the optimal number of servings for each food item per week to minimize the total cost of my diet while satisfying the nutritional constraints.

Here's my solution:

- Almonds: 0 servings
- Brown Rice: 0 servings
- Greek Yogurt: 0 servings
- Pizza: 50 servings
- Tofu Vegetables & Hash Brown: 0 servings

The minimum total cost for my diet plan is \$143.625 per week.

This result suggests that, based on the model and its constraints, I should only consume pizza to achieve the lowest cost while meeting my nutritional requirements. However, this solution lacks variety, which is essential for a healthy and sustainable diet. It might not reflect a practical eating plan. I could consider adding additional constraints, like a minimum number of servings for each food item, to ensure dietary variety and lead to a more balanced and realistic diet plan.

Part 5. Solutions to the diet problem are notorious for their lack of variety. Suppose you require at least one serving of each food item or meal during the week, setting constraints in the diet problem accordingly. Solve the revised linear programming problem. How do these additional constraints change the solution? How much more would you have to spend on food each week?

In modifying my linear programming diet problem, I've introduced a new constraint that requires me to include at least one serving of each food item during the week. This change means that I'm setting a lower bound for the servings of almonds, brown rice, Greek yogurt, pizza, and tofu vegetables & hash brown to be at least one.

Here's how I updated the relevant section in my AMPL model:

```
param: cost f_min f_max :=
    Almonds          0.6242  1  100
    Brown_Rice       0.7488  1  100
    Greek_Yogurt     1.49    1  100
    Pizza            2.8725  1  100
    Tofu_Vegetables_Hash_Brown 6.99  1  100 ;
```

By making this adjustment and solving the problem again, I anticipate that the total cost of my diet will increase. This is because I'm ensuring a variety of food items in my diet rather than opting for the single most cost-effective option. The new solution will reflect a more varied and likely more nutritionally balanced diet, as it will include at least one serving of each food item.

To determine how much more I'll need to spend on food each week, I will rerun the linear programming model with these new constraints. The difference between the new total cost and the previous one will tell me the additional amount. I expect this approach to yield a diet plan that is not only cost-aware but also richer in nutrients, aligning better with a healthy dietary pattern.