

TOTAL DIET APPROACH TO HEALTHY EATING

The foundation of a healthy lifestyle includes physical activity and consuming a balanced variety of nutrient-rich foods and beverages in moderation. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics refers to this as the total diet approach to healthy eating.

DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS (DGA)

DGA defines “total diet” as everything a person eats averaged out over time – it’s the combination of all foods and beverages that give people energy and nutrients. Most adult Americans do **not** meet the DGA recommendations.



82% DON'T WANT TO GIVE UP FOODS THEY LIKE in order to eat healthier

68% DON'T EAT FRUITS OR VEGETABLES at least twice per day

62% HAVE NO TIME TO TRACK THEIR DIET in order to eat healthier

60% JUGGLE BOTH WORK & FAMILY; PREFER to prep meals in 15 min.

36% HAVE NO LEISURE-TIME PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE EATING PRACTICES:

- Taste and food preferences
- Weight concerns
- Physiology
- Time and convenience
- Environment (home, school, workplace)
- Abundance of foods
- Demographic factors (age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity)
- Media and marketing
- Perceived product safety
- Culture (heritage, religion, body image)

SUPPORT FOR THE TOTAL DIET APPROACH

DASH

- Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)
- Eating plan consists of healthful food choices over time
- Endorsed by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

USDA

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- MyPlate Food Guidance System features a SuperTracker that creates a personalized plan with total diet and physical activity

LET'S MOVE

- Campaign launched by the White House
- Aims to reduce child obesity by improving the overall quality of children's diets and increasing physical activity

These programs encourage Americans to choose nutrient-dense foods and beverages, and reduce intake of saturated and *trans* fats, added sugars, sodium and alcohol.

It boils down to making wise food choices in the context of the total diet. Registered dietitian nutritionists can help establish a healthy lifestyle by teaching people to focus on variety, moderation and portion sizes.