According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 17 million people have at least one preventable chronic condition such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes. To promote a healthy weight, reduce chronic disease, and maintain overall good health the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issue the Dietary Guidelines for Americans every 5 years. They are updated based on the most current evidence-based research and help inform federal food programs such as the USDA’s National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and HHS programs including the Older Americans Act Nutrition Services programs.

There are five overarching topics the new Dietary Guidelines address. These include:

1. Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan.
2. Focus on variety, nutrient density, and amount of food.
3. Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake.
4. Choose healthier food and beverage choices.
5. Support healthy eating patterns for all.

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Reviewed by: Alexandra Hyman, MPH
2015-2020 Guidelines
At-A-Glance

• A lifetime of healthy eating helps prevent chronic diseases.
• Consume less than 2,300 mg/day of sodium across all populations.
• Coffee (up to 5 cups/day) is considered to be part of a healthy diet.
• Consume low-fat or skim milk.
• Eat more fruits and vegetables!
• Consume less than 10% of daily calories from added sugars – this does not include naturally occurring sugars found in foods such as fruit and milk.
• There is no longer a limit on cholesterol intake.
• Consume a variety of lean meats and limit those high in saturated fats.
• Alcohol, in moderation, is part of a healthy diet – up to one glass/day for women and two glasses/day for men.
• Limit saturated and trans fats. Less than 10% of daily calories should come from saturated fats. Sources of saturated fats include butter, whole milk, high fat meats, etc.
• Physical activity is key to a healthy lifestyle!
• Everyone at home, schools, workplaces, communities, and food retail stores have a role to play in creating healthier environments that support healthy choices.

For more information on the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, please visit: http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/

The USDA creates great resources ECE providers can use to help parents/guardians create balanced meals throughout the day. The USDA MyPlate Daily Checklist can help providers and parents track a child’s food intake! Recommended daily portion sizes for each food group (fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy) are listed based on the child’s age, sex, and activity level. Use the chart below to determine a child’s average calorie needs*, and click on the calorie levels to start using the MyPlate Daily Checklist!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</th>
<th>CALORIE LEVEL OF FOOD PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 yrs</td>
<td>Boys and Girls</td>
<td>Any level</td>
<td>1000 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Less than 30 minutes</td>
<td>1200 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>30-60 minutes. More than 60 minutes</td>
<td>1400 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Less than 30 minutes</td>
<td>1000 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>30-60 minutes</td>
<td>1200 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 60 minutes</td>
<td>1400 calories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 yrs</td>
<td>Boys and Girls</td>
<td>Less than 30 minutes</td>
<td>1200 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>30-60 minutes</td>
<td>1400 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>More than 60 minutes</td>
<td>1400 calories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample MyPlate Daily Checklist

*Please note that the recommended calorie needs are simply an estimate. A child does not need to consume this exact amount every day, but should include a variety of foods in their diet and aim for these food group targets over the course of a few days or week. For more information, please visit: http://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate-daily-checklist