

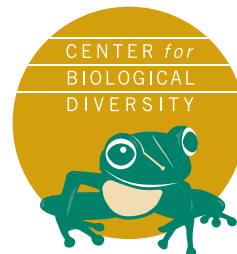


Photos: stock.adobe.com: Stefan (pear), diegograndi (Capitol).

The Uncompromised Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030



CENTER FOR
Science IN THE
Public Interest
Your Food and Health Watchdog



| Background

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) are intended to provide “science-based advice on what to eat and drink to promote health, help reduce risk of chronic disease, and meet nutrient needs.”¹ Published every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), referred to throughout this document as “the Departments,” the DGA is mandated to reflect the “preponderance of scientific and medical knowledge”² and therefore relies heavily on the work of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC), a panel of experts tasked with reviewing the latest evidence and drafting a Scientific Report to inform the DGA.^{3,4} USDA and HHS then finalize the final DGA, which is typically based on the Scientific Report.⁵ While the DGA is written primarily for a professional audience, including healthcare professionals, nutrition educators, and policy makers, it is also adapted for consumer-friendly messaging and educational resources to help promote healthy dietary patterns aligned with the DGA.⁶ All federal nutrition programs are required to promote the DGA, meaning at least 1 in 4 Americans are directly affected by the recommendations.^{7,8}

The **2020–2025 DGA**, released in December 2020,⁹ includes four **overarching Guidelines**¹⁰:

- ❶ Follow a healthy dietary pattern at every life stage
- ❷ Customize and enjoy nutrient-dense food and beverage choices to reflect personal preferences, cultural traditions, and budgetary considerations
- ❸ Focus on meeting food group needs with nutrient-dense foods and beverages, and stay within calorie limits
- ❹ Limit foods and beverages higher in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, and limit alcoholic beverages

The full **2020–2025 DGA** includes more detail on each of these Guidelines.

In 2022, the 2025 DGAC was formed to review the latest nutrition evidence and make recommendations to inform the new **2025–2030 DGA**.¹¹ In December 2024, the 2025 DGAC submitted its Scientific Report to USDA and HHS and published it for public review and comment,¹² after hosting seven public meetings¹³ to show their process and preliminary findings. In an unprecedented move, HHS and USDA have now published a **2025–2030 DGA** that diverges drastically from the science-based recommendations of the DGAC.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) is a non-profit consumer education and advocacy organization that since 1971 has been working to improve the public’s health through better nutrition and food safety. CSPI advocates for evidence-based and community informed policies on nutrition, food safety and health, holds government agencies and corporations to account, and empowers consumers with independent, unbiased information to live healthier lives.

The Center for Biological Diversity (the Center), founded in 1989, is a national non-profit conservation organization dedicated to securing a future for all species on Earth, based on the belief that human health and wellbeing is intrinsically linked to nature and its diversity of plants and animals. Through its Population and Sustainability Program, the Center works to build a more just, healthy, and sustainable food system that supports people and the planet.

CSPI and the Center have been closely following the process to develop the **2025–2030 DGA**, participating in public meetings, and engaging in public comments, along with our partner organizations across the country, to ensure that the DGA adheres to best practices for scientific evidence review and guideline development. CSPI and the Center trust the recommendations of the 2025 DGAC because the DGAC provided a rigorous, transparent, and evidence-based review of the latest nutrition science. We believe that aligning the DGA with the 2025 DGAC recommendations would ensure that U.S. dietary guidance is grounded in the best available research and designed to improve the health of all Americans.

| Purpose of the Uncompromised DGA

The purpose of the **Uncompromised 2025–2030 DGA** is to demonstrate what the federal government’s overarching Guidelines for healthy dietary patterns could have looked like if the Trump administration had not strayed from its mandate, from the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act, to publish Guidelines based on the preponderance of the evidence. Policymakers, advocates, health professionals, and consumers can use this integration of the 2025 DGAC’s science-based recommendations to guide public health policy and individual decisions.

| Our Methods

Just as the **2020–2025 DGA** builds on the **2015–2020 DGA**, the 2025 DGAC provided specific recommendations to USDA and HHS for producing a **2025–2030 DGA** that builds on the **2020–2025 DGA**. This document shows what the four overarching Guidelines in the **2025–2030 DGA** could have looked like if USDA and HHS had fully adopted the proposed recommendations in the Scientific Report of the 2025 DGAC.¹⁴

The **Uncompromised 2025–2030 DGA** primarily draws from a section titled “The Committee’s Advice to the Departments for overarching Guidelines”¹⁵ (see pages 12–18 of Part E. Chapter 1: Overarching Advice to the Departments, found on pages 373–378 of the **full report**) which provides recommended updates for each of the four overarching Guidelines from the 2020–2025 DGA. In this document, we have incorporated 2025 DGAC’s consumer-facing suggestions to update each relevant

2020–2025 Guideline, as written on pages 3–4 in the **Executive Summary** of the 2020–2025 DGA. This document incorporates the DGAC’s advice to the Departments on updates to the healthy dietary pattern in the overarching Guidelines. We included all recommended changes to the dietary pattern, from each “Committee’s Advice to the Departments” section, whether the recommendation was phrased as a direct change (e.g. “Increase emphasis on Whole Grains”) or something for the Departments to consider (e.g. “Consider directional language”). However, we did not incorporate recommendations that were requests for the Departments to take on additional research or material development (e.g. “Conduct consumer research on the dietary pattern and food group and subgroup names” or “develop interactive tools to make conversions intuitive and easy”), rather than direct updates to the Guidelines themselves, though we support the 2025 DGAC’s recommendations for future research.

Additionally, although CSPI and the Center have previously provided recommendations in public comments to HHS and USDA regarding updates to the **2025–2030 DGA**, we did not include any content in Guidelines 1–4 below that was not included in the 2025 DGAC Scientific Report, except in the case of alcohol.

In order to update the existing alcohol guidance from the 2020–2025 DGA, the alcohol-related recommendations in Guideline 4 were developed following the methods in Appendix B, since the 2025 DGAC did not conduct their own review on alcohol.

All updates based on the 2025 DGAC report are denoted by **bold and underlined text**; all other text is directly from the existing 2020 guidelines.

| The Uncompromised Guidelines

EAT HEALTHY YOUR WAY^a WITH THE *DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS*. HERE'S HOW:

GUIDELINE 1. FOLLOW A HEALTHY DIETARY PATTERN AT EVERY LIFE STAGE.

At every life stage—infancy, toddlerhood, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, pregnancy, lactation, and older adulthood—it is never too early or too late to eat healthfully, choosing foods that align with your cultural practices and dietary preferences.

- For about the first 6 months of life, exclusively feed infants human milk **if possible**. Continue to feed infants human milk through at least the first year of life, and longer if desired. Feed infants iron-fortified infant formula during the first year of life when human milk is unavailable. Provide infants with supplemental vitamin D beginning soon after birth.
- At about 6 months **and based on developmental signs of readiness**, introduce infants to nutrient-dense complementary foods that align with your cultural practices, economic circumstances, and dietary preferences. Introduce infants to potentially allergenic foods along with other complementary foods. Encourage infants and toddlers to consume a variety of foods from all food groups. Include foods rich in iron and zinc, particularly for infants fed human milk.
 - Introduce nutrient-dense foods like fruits, vegetables, and grains of varying flavors and textures in child-appropriate portions to ensure adequate nutrition and to promote acceptance of a variety of foods.
 - Avoid food and beverages with added sugars and limit foods and beverages high in sodium.
- From 12 months through older adulthood, follow a healthy **and enjoyable** dietary pattern across the lifespan to meet nutrient needs, help achieve a healthy body weight, and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

GUIDELINE 2. CUSTOMIZE AND ENJOY NUTRIENT-DENSE FOOD AND BEVERAGE CHOICES TO REFLECT PERSONAL PREFERENCES, CULTURAL TRADITIONS, AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS.

A healthy dietary pattern can benefit all individuals, regardless of age, race, or ethnicity, or health status. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* provides a **flexible** framework intended to be customized to individual needs and preferences, as well as foodways of the diverse cultures in the United States. **Healthy eating is flexible and can be shaped to fit your lifestyle. Food should bring joy and comfort as well as nourishment.**

GUIDELINE 3. FOCUS ON MEETING FOOD GROUP NEEDS WITH NUTRIENT-DENSE FOODS AND BEVERAGES AND UNDER-CONSUMED FOOD GROUPS, AND STAY WITHIN CALORIE LIMITS.^b

An underlying premise of the Dietary Guidelines is that nutritional needs should be met primarily from foods and beverages—specifically, nutrient-dense foods and beverages. Nutrient-dense foods provide vitamins, minerals, and other health-promoting components and have no or little added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. A healthy dietary pattern consists of nutrient-dense forms of foods and beverages across all food groups, in recommended amounts, and within calorie limits **for all meals and snacks throughout the day. Children and adults should consume smaller portions of energy-**

^a CSPI note: This is the name the 2025 DGAC recommended for the healthy dietary pattern, but “the Committee recommends the Departments conduct research with consumers and/or health professionals to finalize the dietary pattern name.”

^b CSPI note: The DGAC did not directly recommend action on ultra-processed foods, concluding that, due to inconsistent definitions and study methods, there was only limited evidence of greater health risks for their review of the question “What is the relationship between consumption of dietary patterns with varying amounts of ultraprocessed foods and growth, body composition, and risk of obesity?” However, the collective recommendations in this section suggest that healthy dietary patterns should largely include whole, minimally processed foods, leaving limited room for highly processed foods high in calories, added sugar, sodium, and saturated fat.

dense foods to stay within energy requirements. The core elements that make up a healthy dietary pattern include:

- Vegetables of all types—dark green; red and orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other vegetables
- Fruits, especially whole fruit
- Grains, mostly whole grains
 - Within the grains food group, most people should increase their intake of whole grain foods like whole wheat bread, brown rice, quinoa, corn tortillas, and oatmeal, and decrease intake of refined grains like bread, pasta, and tortillas made from refined flour.
- Dairy and Fortified Soy Alternatives, including fat-free or low-fat milk for people ages 2 and older, yogurt, and cheese, and/or lactose-free versions and fortified soy beverages and yogurt.
 - Before the age of 2, plain cow milk (whole milk) or fortified unsweetened soy beverage can be offered beginning around 12 months of age.
- Protein foods, including beans, peas, and lentils; nuts, seeds, and soy products; seafood; and meats, poultry, and eggs
 - Within the protein food group, most people should increase intake of beans, peas, lentils, nuts, seeds, and soy products and decrease intake of red and processed meat to meet protein and underconsumed nutrient needs while staying within calorie and overconsumed nutrient limits (like sodium and saturated fat).
- Oils, including vegetable oils higher in unsaturated fats and oils in food, such as seafood and nuts
- Underconsumed nutrients like vitamin D, calcium, potassium, and dietary fiber¹⁶ should also be emphasized in a healthy dietary pattern.

This dietary pattern can be promoted in children by making healthy foods, like fruits and vegetables, available at home, providing repeated exposures to new foods, and modeling healthy eating behaviors. Regular breakfast consumption is a part of a healthy dietary pattern, particularly for children and adolescents.

GUIDELINE 4. LIMIT FOODS AND BEVERAGES HIGHER IN ADDED SUGARS, SATURATED FAT, AND SODIUM, AND LIMIT ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.

At every life stage, meeting food group recommendations—even with nutrient-dense choices—requires most of a person’s daily calorie needs. A healthy dietary pattern doesn’t have much room for extra added sugars, saturated fat, sodium, or alcoholic beverages. Our food supply is particularly high in sodium, making it difficult to stay within sodium recommendations; check nutrition labels and choose lower-sodium options whenever possible. A small amount of added sugars, saturated fat, or sodium can

* CSPI note: The DGAC did not directly recommend action on ultra-processed foods, concluding that, due to inconsistent definitions and study methods, there was only limited evidence of greater health risks for their review of the question “What is the relationship between consumption of dietary patterns with varying amounts of ultraprocessed foods and growth, body composition, and risk of obesity?” However, the collective recommendations in this section suggest that healthy dietary patterns should largely include whole, minimally processed foods, leaving limited room for highly processed foods high in calories, added sugar, sodium, and saturated fat.

be added to the nutrient-dense foods and beverages **listed under Guideline 3** to help meet food group recommendations, but foods and beverages high in these components should be limited. Limits are:

- Added sugars – Less than 10 percent of calories per day starting at age 2. Avoid foods and beverages with added sugars for those younger than age 2.
- Saturated fat – less than 10 percent of calories per day starting at age 2.
 - Food sources of saturated fat should be replaced with food sources of unsaturated fat, particularly polyunsaturated fat and monounsaturated fat from plant-based sources, such as plant sources of protein like nuts, whole grains, vegetables, and vegetable oils higher in unsaturated fat, such as olive, soybean, corn, safflower, and sunflower oils.¹⁷
- Sodium – less than 2,300 milligrams per day—and even less for children younger than age 14.
- Alcoholic beverages – adults of legal drinking age can choose not to drink, or to drink in moderation.
 - Do not begin to drink alcohol or purposefully continue to drink because you think it will make you healthier.
 - If you drink alcohol, at all levels of consumption, drinking less is generally better for health than drinking more.
 - For those who drink alcohol, recommended limits are up to 1 drink per day for both women and men.^c

^c CSPI note: The 2025 DGAC’s guidance on alcohol was to “Consider the findings of 2 other expert committees that are addressing alcoholic beverages and health outcomes.” See Appendix B for more information about the guidelines above.

The 2020–2025 DGA presented three distinct healthy dietary patterns (Healthy U.S.–Style (HUSS), Healthy Mediterranean–Style, and Healthy Vegetarian). The 2025 DGAC recommends consolidating these into a single, flexible dietary pattern called “*Eat Healthy Your Way*.” This unified approach reflects strong evidence that healthy dietary patterns share core features—such as emphasizing fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes (beans, peas, and lentils), nuts, and seeds, and limiting added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium—while allowing for cultural, personal, and economic adaptation. The shift aims to simplify guidance while promoting flexibility.

This table shows the 2025 DGAC’s recommended *Eat Healthy Your Way* dietary pattern for a 2,000-calorie diet. To see the recommended dietary pattern for other calorie levels, see the full table: Table E.1.2 in the Scientific Report. The *Eat Healthy Your Way* dietary pattern for individuals ages 2 years and older is: (1) higher in vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, whole grains, fish/seafood, and vegetable oils higher in unsaturated fat; and (2) lower in red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened foods and beverages, refined grains, and saturated fat.

Table 1. The Eat Healthy Your Way 2,000-calorie level dietary pattern for individuals 2 years and older, with daily or weekly amounts from food groups, subgroups, and components*

| Food Groups and Subgroups | 2,000 Calories |
|--|----------------|
| Vegetables (cup eq/day) | 2¼ |
| Dark-Green Vegetables (cup eq/week) | 1½ |
| Red and Orange Vegetables (cup eq/week) | 5½ |
| Starchy Vegetables (cup eq/week) | 4 |
| Other Vegetables (cup eq/week) | 4 |
| Fruits (cup eq/day) | 2 |
| Grains (ounce eq/day) | 6 |
| Whole Grains (ounce eq/day) | ≥ 3 |
| Refined Grains (ounce eq/day) | < 3 |
| Dairy and Fortified Soy Alternatives (cup eq/day) | 3 |
| Protein Foods (ounce eq/day) | 7 |
| Beans, Peas, and Lentils (ounce eq/week) [^] | 10 |
| Nuts, Seeds, and Soy Products (ounce eq/week) | 4½ |
| Seafood (ounce eq/week) | 8 |
| Meats, Poultry, and Eggs (ounce eq/week) | 26 |
| Oils (grams/day) | 27 |

* The table presents the modeled values that have been rounded for public use. Due to rounding, the daily quantities for Vegetables and Protein Foods may not align with the weekly quantities listed for each subgroup.

[^] When Beans, Peas, and Lentils are counted within Vegetables, they are quantified using cup eq. To convert to ounce eq for counting in Protein Foods, the Vegetables quantities can be multiplied by 4 (i.e., 1 cup eq Beans, Peas, and Lentils equals 4 ounce equivalents).

The full report also includes the Eat Healthy Your Way Dietary Pattern for 12 through 23 months: “This pattern reflects the 2020 HUSS including a lacto-ovo variation from the 2020 H-VEG. The Committee did not recommend modifications to the existing USDA Dietary Patterns for this age group (only a change in the name of the pattern). Children’s nutrients needs are high relative to low energy needs, and careful consideration of food group and subgroup quantities are needed to meet nutrient needs.”¹⁸

| CSPI and Center Recommended Guideline for a Sustainable Diet

The recommendations above are based on the 2025 DGAC's Overarching Advice to the Departments, which was solely intended to promote human health and prevent disease. However, the healthy dietary pattern recommended by the 2025 DGAC — which includes higher intakes of vegetables, fruits, legumes (beans, peas, and lentils), nuts, whole grains, and unsaturated fat and lower intakes of red and processed meat, refined grains, and sugar-sweetened foods and beverages — is also more sustainable than the average American diet.¹⁹ The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and World Health Organization define sustainable healthy diets as: “dietary patterns that promote all dimensions of individuals’ health and wellbeing; have low environmental pressure and impact; are accessible, affordable, safe and equitable; and are culturally acceptable.”²⁰ⁱ

In addition to the recommended updates from the 2025 DGAC, **CSPI and the Center recommend an additional science-based guideline to promote sustainable healthy diets and further highlight the connection between human health and environmental health.**

More information on the rationale and scientific backing for this proposed guideline can be found in [A Model for Healthy and Sustainable Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). A proposed guideline for sustainable diets is below:

GUIDELINE 5: PRIORITIZE FOODS AND HEALTHY HABITS THAT SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE HEALTHY DIETS.

An environmentally sustainable dietary pattern is consistent with and supports the goals of the other guidelines:²¹ healthy diets can support planetary health; plant-based proteins and dishes are often part of traditional diets in many cultures and are preferred by many people for religious, ethical, or other reasons; and many nutrient-dense foods have a lower environmental impact compared to energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods.²² Sustainable, healthy diets are critical to protecting and promoting human health, food security, the environment, and our global food system.^{23,24} As part of a healthy and sustainable diet, and in addition to the 2025 DGAC updates, CSPI and the Center recommend incorporating the following practices to whatever extent possible in your everyday diet:

- ▶ **Prioritize plant-based proteins.** Protein intake should come from predominantly plant-based foods, including beans, peas, and lentils, and nuts, seeds, and soy products.
- ▶ **If you eat meat, limit intake of red and processed meat.** Meat, particularly beef, production has a large environmental impact.^{25,26} Limiting red meat consumption can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, land use, and water consumption.
- ▶ **Make tap water your primary beverage if safe and appealing tap water is available.** Drinking tap water rather than bottled water and other beverages bottled in plastic decreases the production and need for disposal of plastic bottles.²⁷
- ▶ **Minimize food waste.** Follow [USDA's steps to prevent food waste](#) at home: plan your meals before shopping so you buy only what you need, serve reasonable portions to cut down on plate waste, save and enjoy leftovers, and compost what's left instead of throwing it away.²⁸ Learn more about food loss and waste prevention at www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste.
- ▶ **Choose unpackaged, whole foods whenever possible** to reduce buying [single-use plastics](#).²⁹ Single-use plastics from disposable packaging contribute to plastic pollution and exposure to potentially harmful chemicals found in plastics.³⁰

| Appendix A. Glossary

These definitions are adapted from the DGA.gov website^{31,32} and the 2025 DGAC's Scientific Report.³³

CUP EQUIVALENT (CUP EQ): The amount of a food product that is considered equal to 1 cup from the vegetable, fruit, or milk food group. A cup eq for some foods may differ from a measured cup in volume because: (1) the foods have been concentrated (such as raisins or tomato paste), (2) the foods are airy in their raw form and do not compress well into a cup (such as salad greens), or (3) the foods are measured in a different form (such as cheese)

THE DEPARTMENTS: The United States Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (HHS) publish the Dietary Guidelines for Americans every five years, alternating their leadership on the project.

DGA: The **Dietary Guidelines for Americans** (DGA) provides advice on what to eat and drink to meet nutrient needs, promote health, and prevent disease. Each edition of the DGA is legally mandated to reflect the “preponderance of scientific and medical knowledge.” This is typically achieved by incorporating recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee’s review of the current body of nutrition science. The DGA provides a customizable framework for healthy eating that can be tailored and adapted to meet personal, cultural and traditional preferences. Since 1980, the DGA has been developed every five years and written for a professional audience, including policymakers, healthcare providers, nutrition educators, and Federal nutrition program operators; these groups rely on the DGA to develop and update nutrition standards and to provide information on diet and health to the general public.

DGAC: The Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) is a group of nationally recognized scientific experts in nutrition and medicine who volunteer their time to the DGA process. The DGAC is asked to look at nutrition science collectively to inform its report, rather than using individual scientific studies or personal testimonies. The DGAC uses tools, such as systematic reviews, data analysis, and food pattern modeling to carry out its work. The product of the DGAC’s work is a scientific report that is provided to the Secretaries of USDA and HHS. To promote transparency, the DGAC discusses all of its work in public meetings, and supporting materials are provided to the public through DietaryGuidelines.gov. The 2025 DGAC held seven public meetings before publishing its report for public comment.

DIETARY PATTERN:³⁴ The combination of foods and beverages that constitutes an individual’s complete dietary intake over time. This may be a description of a customary way of eating or a description of a combination of foods recommended for consumption.

NUTRIENT-DENSE:³⁵ Nutrient-dense foods and beverages provide vitamins, minerals, and other health-promoting components and have no or little added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans, peas, and lentils, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and lean meats and poultry—when prepared with no or little added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium—are nutrient-dense foods.

OUNCE EQUIVALENT (OZ EQ): The amount of a food product that is considered equal to 1 ounce from the Grains or Protein Foods food group. An oz eq for some foods may be less than a measured ounce in weight if the food is concentrated or low in water content (nuts, peanut butter, dried meats, flour) or more than a measured ounce in weight if the food contains a large amount of water (tofu, cooked beans, cooked rice or pasta).

OVERARCHING GUIDELINES: The overarching Guidelines provide a user-friendly summary of the key recommendations in the DGA, as seen in the **Executive Summary** of the **2020–2025 DGA**.³⁶

- The 2025 DGAC’s Scientific Report includes a chapter titled “Overarching Advice to the Departments” that “integrates the Committee’s findings and conclusions across the 3 approaches it took to examine evidence—data analysis, systematic reviews, and food pattern modeling”³⁷ and includes specific recommendations for USDA and HHS to consider as they update the overarching Guidelines from the **2020–2025 DGA** for the next edition.

PROCESSED MEAT: Meat, poultry, or seafood products preserved by smoking, curing, or salting, or addition of chemical preservatives. Examples of processed meat include bacon, sausage, hot dogs, sandwich meat, packaged ham, pepperoni, and salami.

RED MEAT: All mammalian muscle meat from adult and juvenile animals, including cows, pigs, sheep, and goats.

SCIENTIFIC REPORT: The DGAC releases their final results and recommendations to HHS and USDA in a document called the **Scientific Report**. The *Scientific Report of the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee* was submitted in December 2024 and the public was able to provide comments from December 11, 2024 to February 10, 2025. The Scientific Report provides a detailed summary of each of the DGAC’s reviews and then a final section with their Overarching Advice to the Departments for updating the DGA.

Appendix B. Alcohol Guidelines

In its final report, the 2025 DGAC recommended that the Departments consider the findings of two expert committees conducting reviews on alcohol when developing guidelines for the **2025–2030 DGA**.³⁸ However, as is explained in more detail below, that is not possible because one of those committee’s findings were never finalized. Therefore, we have included in the **Uncompromised 2025–2030 DGA** the most recent uncompromised, evidence-based recommendations, which come from the 2020 DGAC.

The **2015–2020 DGA** included the following recommendation on alcohol consumption:

“If alcohol is consumed, it should be consumed in moderation—up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men—and only by adults of legal drinking age,” and a footnote stating: “It is not recommended that individuals begin drinking or drink more for any reason. The amount of alcohol and calories in beverages varies and should be accounted for within the limits of healthy eating patterns. Alcohol should be consumed only by adults of legal drinking age. There are many circumstances in which individuals should not drink, such as during pregnancy. See Appendix 9. Alcohol for additional information.”³⁹

When the 2020 DGAC was tasked with reviewing and revising the **2015–2020 DGA**’s recommendation on alcohol consumption, it concluded that the recommendation should be updated as follows:⁴⁰

- *“Do not begin to drink alcohol or purposefully continue to drink because you think it will make you healthier.”*
- *“If you drink alcohol, at all levels of consumption, drinking less is generally better for health than drinking more.”*
- *“For those who drink alcohol, recommended limits are up to 1 drink per day for both women and men.”*

However, for the final **2020–2025 DGA**, the Departments decided not to implement these recommendations from the DGAC and largely maintained the recommendations on alcohol consumption from 2015. The **2020–2025 DGA** include the following advice:

“Alcoholic beverages—Adults of legal drinking age can choose not to drink or to drink in moderation by limiting intake to 2 drinks or less in a day for men and 1 drink or less in a day for women, when alcohol is consumed. Drinking less is better for health than drinking more. There are some adults who should not drink alcohol, such as women who are pregnant.”⁴¹

In 2021, at the beginning of the next update cycle, the Departments proposed the list of scientific questions to be considered by the 2025 DGAC and determined that the DGAC would not include a review of the evidence on alcohol and health.⁴² Instead, two other expert committees—one convened by HHS⁴³ and another convened by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) — were charged with conducting evidence reviews. The NASEM report⁴⁴ was published in December 2024 but did not include any recommendations regarding alcohol consumption. A draft of the HHS report (authored by a committee convened by the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking, or ICCPUD) was published in January 2025,⁴⁵ but the report was never finalized due to substantial industry lobbying and interference from Congress.^{46,47,48}

The NASEM report found that moderate alcohol consumption is associated with lower all-cause mortality but higher risk of breast cancer. The draft ICCPUD report found that the risk of alcohol-attributable death increases linearly with alcohol consumption and found that alcohol use is associated with increased mortality from seven types of cancer.

References

- ¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*. December 2020:vii. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf. Accessed November 11, 2025.
- ² National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990, Pub L No. 101-445, § 301, 104 Stat 1034, 1042-1043 (Oct 22, 1990). <https://www.congress.gov/101/statute/STATUTE-104/STATUTE-104-Pg1034.pdf>. Accessed November 13, 2025.
- ³ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *About the Dietary Guidelines: Who's Involved in Updating the Dietary Guidelines*. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. n.d. <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/about-dietary-guidelines/process>. Accessed November 11, 2025.
- ⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *History of the Dietary Guidelines*. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. n.d. <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/about-dietary-guidelines/history-dietary-guidelines>. Accessed November 11, 2025.
- ⁵ Seiler J. *How are the Dietary Guidelines developed?* Center for Science in the Public Interest. July 30, 2025. <https://www.cspi.org/article/how-are-dietary-guidelines-developed>. Accessed November 11, 2025.
- ⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *History of the Dietary Guidelines*. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. n.d. <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/about-dietary-guidelines/history-dietary-guidelines>. Accessed November 11, 2025.
- ⁷ National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990, 1990.
- ⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. *About FNS*. September 26, 2025. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/about-fns>. Accessed November 11, 2025.
- ⁹ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*. December 2020. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf. Accessed November 11, 2025.
- ¹⁰ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. Executive Summary*. Updated March 2021. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/DGA_2020-2025_Executive_Summary_English.pdf. Accessed November 13, 2025.
- ¹¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Charter – 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee*. December 9, 2022. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2023-01/2025_DGAC_Charter_Final_12.09.2022.pdf. Accessed November 13, 2025.
- ¹² 89 FR 99883. Request for public comments on the Scientific Report of the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. December 11, 2024. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/12/11/2024-29100/request-for-public-comments-on-the-scientific-report-of-the-2025-dietary-guidelines-advisory>.
- ¹³ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Advisory Committee Resources*. <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/advisory-committee-resources>. Accessed November 13, 2025.
- ¹⁴ 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. *Scientific Report of the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee: Advisory Report to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and Secretary of Agriculture*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2024. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2024-12/Scientific_Report_of_the_2025_Dietary_Guidelines_Advisory_Committee_508c.pdf. Accessed November 13, 2025.
- ¹⁵ 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. *Part E: Chapter 1 — Overarching Advice to the Departments*. December 2024. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2024-12/Part%20E.%20Chapter%201_Overarching%20Advice_FINAL_508.pdf. Accessed November 13, 2025.
- ¹⁶ 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2024:15.
- ¹⁷ 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2024:Glossary of Terms —Fats.
- ¹⁸ 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2024:372
- ¹⁹ 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. *Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee: Advisory Report to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Agriculture*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service; 2015:5,23. <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2019-05/Scientific-Report-of-the-2015-Dietary-Guidelines-Advisory-Committee.pdf>.
- ²⁰ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Health Organization. *Sustainable Healthy Diets Guiding Principles*. 2019. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/03bf9cde-6189-4d84-8371-eb939311283f/content>. Accessed November 13, 2025.
- ²¹ 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2015:5,23.
- ²² Musicus AA, Wang DD, Janiszewski M, et al. Health and environmental impacts of plant-rich dietary patterns: a US prospective cohort study. *Lancet Planet Health*. 2022;6(11):e892-e900. doi:10.1016/S2542-5196(22)00243-1
- ²³ Rockström J, Haraksingh T, Willett WC, et al. The EAT Lancet Commission on healthy, sustainable, and just food systems. *Lancet*. 2025;406(10512):1625-1700. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(25\)01201-2/abstract](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(25)01201-2/abstract).
- ²⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Health Organization, 2019.
- ²⁵ Kozicka M, Havlik P, Valin H, et al. Feeding climate and biodiversity goals with novel plant based meat and milk alternatives. *Nat Commun*. 2023;14:5316. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-023-40899-2>.
- ²⁶ Poore J, Nemecek T. Reducing food's environmental impacts through producers and consumers. *Science*. 2018;360(6392):987-992. <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aag0216>.
- ²⁷ Patel AI, Hecht CE, Craddock AL, Edwards MA, Ritchie LD. Drinking water in the United States: implications of water safety, access, and consumption. *Annu Rev Nutr*. 2020;40:345-373. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-nutr-122319-035707>
- ²⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Easy Steps to Prevent Food Waste Infographic*. <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/easy-steps-prevent-food-waste-infographic.pdf>
- ²⁹ Liebman B. *Paper or plastic? How to pick your packaging*. Center for Science in the Public Interest. August 25, 2022. <https://www.cspi.org/article/paper-or-plastic-how-pick-your-packaging>. Accessed November 13, 2025.
- ³⁰ Dow C. *Why microplastics are a mega problem*. Center for Science in the Public Interest. March 23, 2021. <https://www.cspi.org/article/why-microplastics-are-mega-problem>. Accessed November 13, 2025.
- ³¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *About the Dietary Guidelines*. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/about-dietary-guidelines>
- ³² U.S. Department of Agriculture; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *History of the Dietary Guidelines*. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/about-dietary-guidelines/history-dietary-guidelines>
- ³³ 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2024.
- ³⁴ 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2024:395.
- ³⁵ 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2024:399.
- ³⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. Executive Summary*. 2021:3-4.
- ³⁷ 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2024:362.
- ³⁸ 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2024:378.

- ³⁹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 8th Edition. December 2015:xiii. Available at https://odphp.health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/2015-2020_Dietary_Guidelines.pdf.
- ⁴⁰ 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. *Scientific Report of the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee: Advisory Report to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service; 2020. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/ScientificReport_of_the_2020DietaryGuidelinesAdvisoryCommittee_first-print.pdf
- ⁴¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*. December 2020. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf. Accessed November 11, 2025.
- ⁴² 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2024:41.
- ⁴³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *The Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking (ICCPUD)*. Last updated May 16, 2025. <https://www.samhsa.gov/substance-use/prevention/iccpud>. Accessed November 13, 2025.
- ⁴⁴ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2025. *Review of Evidence on Alcohol and Health*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/28582>.
- ⁴⁵ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Draft Report: Scientific Findings of the Alcohol Intake & Health Study for Public Comment*. January 2025. <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-draft-public-comment-alcohol-intake-health-study.pdf>. Accessed November 13, 2025.
- ⁴⁶ Science Over Bias. *Home*. <https://www.scienceoverbias.com/>. Accessed November 13, 2025.
- ⁴⁷ Abbott B, Ulick J. Alcohol Is Driving a Debate in Washington. *Wall St J*. 2024 Jun 24. <https://www.wsj.com/health/alcohol-health-risks-lobbying-3bc78fed>.
- ⁴⁸ McGarvey M; Barr A; et al. Letter to George F. Koob, PhD, Director, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. July 12, 2024. <https://wineinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/McGarvey-Barr-DGA-Signed-Updated.pdf>.