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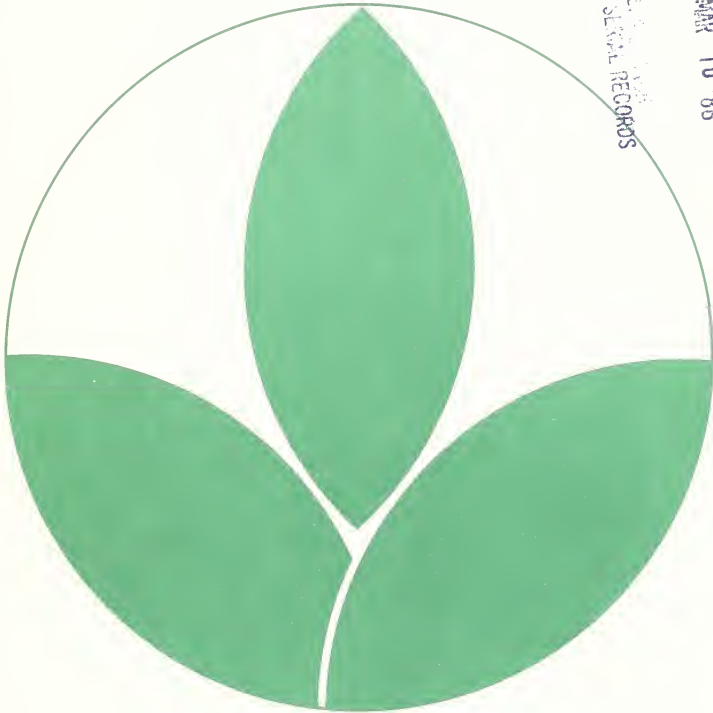
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The Federal Government's Role

Dietary guidance is not a new topic for USDA. Recommendations about what you should eat to be healthy date back to 1894 when W.O. Atwater suggested diets in USDA bulletins based on content of protein, fat, and mineral matter.

Our message has changed as scientific knowledge has increased and our food supply and lifestyles have changed. In 1980, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) published "Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans." These guidelines and the accompanying text, which gave the reasons for them and some tips on how to follow them, have been revised and the second edition of the Dietary Guidelines was released on September 24, 1985. The guidelines are:

- Eat a Variety of Foods
- Maintain Desirable Weight
- Avoid Too Much Fat, Saturated Fat, and Cholesterol
- Eat Foods with Adequate Starch and Fiber
- Avoid Too Much Sugar
- Avoid Too Much Sodium
- If You Drink Alcoholic Beverages, Do So in Moderation

These guidelines are typical of earlier USDA guidance in that they are straightforward and simple in presentation. In addition, they are for healthy people who want to reduce risks of nutritional deficiency diseases and of certain chronic diseases. They do not replace prescribed diets. The guidelines are meant to be applied together to form a good diet. Because the guidelines refer to the total diet, they do not suggest that any single food or group of foods be eliminated. They emphasize variety, balance, and moderation. And they are not quantitative, but general and directional in approach.

On November 20, 1980, the Senate Appropriations Committee stipulated that a Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee be established to review the original USDA/DHHS Dietary Guidelines. The Committee was to make any recommendations deemed appropriate. Such a review was desirable because of the intense interest in the information and because of continued advances in nutrition knowledge.

The Committee was composed of nine members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture--three representatives of DHHS, three representatives for USDA and three selected from a list of nominees recommended by the National Academy of Sciences. The Committee was chaired by a member appointed by the Secretary of

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Agriculture, and the Administrator of the Human Nutrition Information Service was the Executive Secretary.

The Committee members were: Dr. Bernard Schweigert of the University of California at Davis, Chairman; Dr. Henry Kamin, Duke University; Dr. David Kritchevsky, Wistar Institute; Dr. Robert Levy, Columbia University; Dr. Sanford Miller, U.S. Food and Drug Administration; Dr. Robert Olson, University of Pittsburgh; Dr. Lester Salans, National Institutes of Health; Dr. Fredrick Stare, Harvard University; and Dr. Judith Stern, University of California at Davis.

The Committee held 4 public meetings over its 2 year existence. The Committee reviewed and discussed new research findings since the 1980 guidelines. They also considered all public comments the Departments had received on the Guidelines. They made recommendations in a report to the Secretaries of USDA and DHHS on April 10, 1985, that included specific revised wording for the Dietary Guidelines bulletin.

They suggested that USDA and DHHS revise the Guidelines according to the Committee recommendations and that they publish and widely distribute them; the guidelines be used in nutrition education programs for the public; the guidelines provide the basis for developing food guidance that reflects available food supplies and food habits of Americans; and the guidelines be reviewed by Advisory Committees convened every 5-10 years.

The Committee recommended that the guidelines be retained much as published in 1980. They introduced a statement about the general excellence of our food supplies and the nutritional health of Americans. In addition, they suggested that the text describing the guidelines be revised in the following ways:

- Highlight the first two guidelines on variety and weight maintenance as the framework for a good diet; and show that the other five guidelines describe special characteristics of a good diet;
- Suggest that megadoses (large dose supplements) of any nutrient be avoided;
- Note the special problems of drug/nutrient interaction;
- Discontinue use of the term "ideal weight" because "ideal" weight is difficult to define;
- Revise height-weight and energy-activity tables;
- Discuss hazards of inducing vomiting and other extreme means of losing weight.

They recommended that the guidelines--

- Add excess calories as a factor in increasing blood cholesterol;
- Suggest moderation in the use of egg yolks, not eggs;
- Define dietary fiber and recommend a variety of food sources of fiber;
- Make clear that sugar as referred to in the guidelines isn't only "sucrose" but other kinds of caloric sweeteners as well;
- Note that starch, as well as sugar, appears to increase dental caries;
- Note usefulness of salt as a preservative;
- Revise the estimate of the prevalence of elevated blood pressure to "one in four adults;"
- Change "If you drink alcohol" to "If you drink alcoholic beverages;"
- Emphasize need for pregnant women to refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages;
- Insert the caution: "If you drink, do not drive."

Both USDA and DHHS support the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. The second edition of the guidelines reflects the recommendations of the Committee and review by nutrition scientists in both Departments. The guidelines will provide the basis for dietary guidance information for the public from both Departments.

USDA and DHHS have printed over 2 million copies of the Dietary Guidelines. Also, copies for reproduction in full color and in black and white are available through USDA's Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, Washington, D.C. 20250. Food industry groups and others are encouraged to print and distribute copies.

USDA is providing copies free while supplies last through the Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colorado. The bulletin is being translated into Spanish. Copies of the Spanish version will be available in early 1986.

Already the second edition of the Dietary Guidelines publication has received a lot of interest and support from the general public, the food industry, and professional societies. For example, the publication was enthusiastically received at our exhibit at the 1985 American Dietetic Association annual meeting in New Orleans. The Society for Nutrition Education has issued a statement in support of the Dietary Guidelines. They were pleased to see that

the second edition of the Guidelines retained the general format of the first edition. The Society believes that the Dietary Guidelines include the basic principles that people need to consider in dietary planning.

Because the same seven guidelines have been retained in the second edition, we can continue to use many of the dietary guidance materials and nutrition education approaches we have used in the past. Most of USDA's dietary guidance emphasizes the importance of the whole diet.

Food published by USDA in 1979 is a colorful example of dietary guidance featuring balance and moderation as characteristics of a nutritious diet. This was a "new look" bulletin for USDA. It presents the "Hassle-Free Guide to a Better Diet," very similar to the basic four which had been used since the 1950's. It illustrated the first guideline--Eat a variety of foods.

Ideas for Better Eating, published in 1981, gives specific information on implementing the guidelines. It provides recipes which incorporate the guideline principles, giving special consideration to calories, sugar, fat, sodium, and fiber.

The USDA family food plans, which were revised in 1983, control fat, cholesterol, sugars and sodium at moderate levels and provide recommended amounts of vitamins and minerals. The least costly of these food plans is the thrifty food plan used by the Department as the basis for benefits in the Food Stamp Program. It was the focus of a Making Food Dollars Count Campaign in 1983 targeted to community leaders who work with low-income people. A new bulletin, in press, helps a "mature" couple to plan, buy for, and prepare low cost meals. It's called, "Thrifty Meals for Two: Making Food Dollars Count," Home and Garden Bulletin No. 244.

In another activity, our staff cooperated with the American Red Cross in developing a six-session nutrition course that focuses on implementing the Dietary Guidelines and other timely nutrition messages. This course, "Better Eating for Better Health," is being offered by Red Cross chapters across the country. The course provides information and activities that help participants put the guidelines into practice. A comprehensive evaluation of a sample of over 1,000 participants showed improved nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.

In conjunction with a Food and Fitness Campaign of 1983, we developed a 1/2-hour videotape entitled "Inside/Out (This is Your Body Talking)." This tape, which stresses the importance of food and fitness to the health of the general public, has been used nationwide by Extension leaders and others. It is also being used internationally.

A major project is underway to prepare additional interpretative materials relating to the revised Dietary Guidelines. HNIS staff, with advice from the Extension Service, is developing a series of 14 minibulletins in support of the Dietary Guidelines. The bulletins will provide specific information to help the public put the Guidelines into practice.

The bulletins will be issued in two sets of seven each. Each of the seven bulletins in the first set focuses on one of the seven guidelines. Each includes an introduction reminding readers that the bulletin provides in-depth information on just one guideline and that all guidelines should be considered to select a healthful diet. Each bulletin provides food composition information and specific suggestions on implementing the guideline in food planning and preparation; recipe ideas considering all the guidelines issues (lower fat, lower sugar, lower sodium, increased starch and fiber); and a self-assessment activity or knowledge quiz to involve readers with the information and encourage them to apply it to their own food practices. The first set of bulletins has been widely reviewed by professionals in USDA's Extension Service, Agricultural Marketing Service, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Food and Nutrition Service and in the Department of Health and Human Services and universities. Design work is currently underway.

The second set of seven bulletins will provide suggestions for using the guidelines together in specific activities such as shopping for food, planning meals, preparing food, eating out, making bag lunches, making quick meals and choosing desserts and snacks. They will include sample menus, recipes and references specific to each topic.

The target audience for these publications is the household food manager--the person who plans, purchases, and prepares food for the household. Educators, such as Extension Agents, may use the material in group settings, or household food managers may use them individually.

Each bulletin will be 4 to 12 pages long. The text of the bulletins will be enhanced by color and line drawings, simple tables, and stylized type for key headings. A graphic logo will relate the bulletins to the Dietary Guidelines publication. The bulletins will feature a "centerspread" symbol that emphasizes the need to use all of the Guidelines in selecting a diet.

In developing the bulletins, particular attention is being given to the type and format of information, based on results of our research on effective strategies for communicating nutrition information to household food managers. Research with the Department of Communications at Stanford University, and at the Pennsylvania State University, the evaluation of the American Red Cross nutrition course, and other research provide the rationale for the communication style of these publications. To illustrate, these researchers showed self-assessment activities to be helpful in providing a basis for making a decision to change food practices. Thus, self-assessment measures were used in the bulletins.

We expect the first seven minibulletins to be published within 2-3 months and the next seven later in 1986. Information copies of these will be available for Extension agents and other food and nutrition educators. They will be available for sale as two packets (the first seven and the second seven) by the Government Printing Office. Copies for reproduction will also be available.

In the past, USDA has published some nutrition education materials that have featured particular aspects of diet. In the 1960's, we addressed the problem of maintaining desirable weight, in a bulletin for consumers, Food and Your Weight. In 1968, we published a pocket calorie guide. This guide has been revised twice and is in the process of being revised again. It is one of our most frequently requested publications.

USDA also prepared "Food 2: A Dieter's Guide," which was published by the American Dietetic Association in 1982. It covers these points for consumers:

- How you know if you are overweight and/or overfat
- What happens to your body when you lose weight
- Tips on adjusting eating and activity habits
- How to get a balanced diet
- Low calorie ideas for meals, snacks, and special occasions
- Over 40 recipes
- Comments about weight-loss diets.

Most of the guidance USDA provides is general and directional rather than quantitative in nature, like the Dietary Guidelines. Food guides suggest groups of foods to select from to provide a good diet. They do not suggest exclusion of any foods from the diet, but indicate the types of foods to emphasize and de-emphasize. An example of this type of information is Food 3: Eating the Moderate Fat and Cholesterol Way, prepared by USDA and published by the American Dietetic Association.

There is one notable exception: The USDA family food plans at four cost levels. These food plans suggest specific quantities of all foods needed for nutritious diets for men, women, and children of different ages. It is important that all foods, including fats and sugars be included here because the cost of food in the food plan is used as a national standard of reasonable food cost for families of different compositions. For purposes of revising these food plans in 1983 (and not necessarily for other purposes) we defined moderate levels of fat as no more than 35 percent of calories. Cholesterol was limited to 350 mg per person. These levels are considered to be moderate. They are a little higher than some authorities suggest, but lower than Americans ordinarily consume. Their implementation would be expected to represent improved, if not optimum, levels.

In 1982, FDA and Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service sponsored a consumer education campaign about sodium. A booklet, "Sodium--Think About It," was published and distributed free. The "Sodium Content of Your Food" published by HNIS in 1980 is a good source of information for consumers. Revised HG 72, Nutritive Value of Foods, has just been released. This publication now contains values for sodium and cholesterol, as well as updated

information on fat, fatty acids, carbohydrate, and selected vitamins and minerals.

To aid in assessment of diets and in the development of food selection guidance materials, USDA develops extensive information on the nutrient content of foods. This is available in machine readable form and in Agriculture Handbook No. 8, which is being revised in sections by food group.

The Nutrient Data Base for Standard Reference, available from the National Technical Information Service in machine readable form, is our most up-to-date and comprehensive food composition data base. It incorporates the changes made in the revised sections of AH-8. This tape contains imputed values where values are not available from analytical data for publication in AH-8 and its revised sections.

We are concerned about the needs and problems of nutrient data users. For the past 9 years, annual Nutrient Data Bank Conferences have helped us to understand these needs and accommodate in the best way possible. The 1985 conference was held in San Francisco and the 1986 conference is planned for Athens, Georgia, next summer.

To help people implement the Dietary Guidelines, we need to know what dietary changes will move people in the right direction. The changes suggested should be worth making; and they should be practical or they will not be accepted. To develop this type of guidance information for the public, we need to know what people are eating. Through our nutrition monitoring efforts we collect information about the dietary and nutritional well-being of the population. HNIS monitors the dietary status of the population at three levels--food in the U.S. food supply, food brought into and used by the household, and food eaten by individuals.

This past April, the Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals (CSFII) was initiated by HNIS. This survey will provide continuous data on food eating practices and dietary adequacy of the general population and groups at nutritional risk and up-to-date information on food consumption practices. It will help us monitor eating behavior relative to the guidelines. The primary focus of this survey is a nationally representative sample of women 19-50 years of age and children of those women who are 1-5 years of age. Over a one year period, we will collect six 24 hour recalls of food intake for each participant in order to measure usual intake. Results from the first day's recalls in Spring 1985 are compared with a day's recalls in Spring 1977 (collected as part of the Nationwide Food Consumption Survey 1977-78). These are presented in the first Continuing Survey report, which will be out within a month. We plan to present some of this information as it relates to the Dietary Guidelines at the Society for Nutrition Education meeting which will be here in Washington next summer.

We are presently making plans for the more comprehensive decennial Nationwide Food Consumption Survey (NFCS) in 1987 which will provide data on food used in households and food eaten by individuals. These measures will give us further insight into ways in which the American diet is changing. We look forward to

studying the changes in nutrient intake since the 1977-78 NFCS relative to the guidelines.

Other Federal agencies are involved in activities related to the Dietary Guidelines. For example, the Department of Health and Human Services is currently evaluating uses of the first edition of the Dietary Guidelines, of which over 7 1/2 million copies have been distributed since 1980. The study describes how the Dietary Guidelines have been used and the perceived influence they have had in the public and private sectors based on questionnaires to about 1,200 individuals--1,000 from the public sector and 200 from the private sector. The information will provide documentation for program administrators on the uses of the Dietary Guidelines. Also, this information will provide technical assistance for potential revisions, and will be useful in improving the distribution of the guidelines, and other nutrition education materials.

Elizabeth Brannon presented some of the preliminary findings of the study at the annual meeting of the American Dietetic Association. The Dietary Guidelines were found to be used most often with the general adult population and with the elderly. In addition to use with clients of public sector food, nutrition, and health programs, the Dietary Guidelines were used widely in educating other personnel including classroom teachers, food service workers, and allied health professionals. The public sector was more likely to disseminate the publication by handing out copies, whereas the private sector was more likely to incorporate the content into other materials/media. Additional results from the study will be forthcoming, but these results indicate that the Dietary Guidelines have become an important reference and resource for both the public and private sectors. They have been used extensively in nutrition education and have had an impact on food available to us.

Another Government activity is the National Cholesterol Education Program of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) which is in the planning stages. The mission of this program is the reduction of coronary heart disease morbidity and mortality attributed to elevated blood cholesterol. It is a national educational effort of NHLBI in cooperation with other Government agencies and selected professional groups in the private sector. Several planning workshops have been held to identify program elements and develop implementation strategies to reach defined target audiences or settings. These workshops addressed professional and patient education, public education, worksite programs, and school and youth. Results of the workshops have been released and planning of program efforts is continuing.

As you can see, there are a number of projects either presently underway or planned for the future that relate to spreading the word about the Dietary Guidelines. But Federal promotion is not sufficient. Nutrition educators, other health professionals, the food industry, and the media play a vital role in communicating the Dietary Guidelines messages to the public. We believe the Guidelines provide a solid basis for dietary advice to the general public that we can all support wholeheartedly. We hope you will help in spreading the word by promoting the nutrition messages of the "Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans."