We have all heard the alarming report that during the past century in the United States, chronic disease has been on the rise affecting up to half of American adults. Diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and some cancer are related to poor nutrition and inactivity. The positive side is that evidence indicates that healthy eating patterns and regular physical activity can allow people to achieve and maintain good health while reducing the risk of diet-induced chronic disease throughout their lifespan. As a result of this growing body of research, the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines focus on eating patterns and their food and nutrient characteristics.

As you review the new guidelines it is important to understand that these guidelines are written to guide state and federal programs such as the school lunch program, food supplemental programs and programs that benefit women and children. These written recommendations are meant to nudge the country’s nutrition policy in a direction indicated by a scientific based approach to decrease obesity and diet-related disease through healthy eating. The guidelines should be a reminder of key concepts of healthy eating; however they do not serve as a customized individual eating plan.

Interestingly, planet health was discussed for the first time in conversations between the scientific panel and the USDA and Health and Human Services while devising the Dietary Guidelines. The scientific advisors suggested that adopting a diet with decreased animal protein and increased plant based foods, such as a Mediterranean diet, could achieve lower rates of disease while easing the pressure on the environment. Environmental stress may also be eased if we can begin shifting away from refined grains and eating grains in a more natural, less processed form.

Currently Americans are eating too many refined grains and not enough fruits and vegetables. Average sugar consumption is about 22 teaspoons per day excluding naturally occurring sugars such as those found in fruit and dairy. The new guidelines recommend that only 10% of our caloric intake be comprised of sugar which is about 12 teaspoons of sugar for a 2000 calorie diet. Although the restriction on cholesterol was lifted, the guidelines lacked any formal stance on limiting red meat and processed meat.

Here at the JCC there are many programs and opportunities to aid you in achieving and maintaining good health. Working with a trainer to engage in a good physical activity program in conjunction with modifying your eating patterns through nutritional consultation are great ways to align with the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines to achieve a healthier you in 2016.

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Determining Your Eating Pattern

Your eating pattern illustrates how you combine foods and beverage to make up your dietary intake. Evaluating individual eating patterns gives a realistic picture of overall nutrition consumption. Asking yourself the following questions can help access patterns.

Are you choosing nutrient dense foods?
Nutrient dense food and beverages are ones that retain their nutrients and have not been diluted by added calories from sugar, refined starches or fats. Including nutrient dense foods in your diet assures that you will be providing naturally occurring vitamins, minerals, and fiber into your eating patterns.

Do you work in weekly variety by choosing a diverse assortment of foods?
Varying your food choices within a particular food group provides the opportunity to gather an assortment of naturally occurring nutrients while keeping caloric intake in check. For grains, for example, you can select a variety of items like oats, brown rice, quinoa, barley, polenta, farro, and bulgur. Comprising your diet with a variety of foods offers an opportunity to welcome in an assortment of nutrients, as well as satisfaction in your dining experiences by adding a complexity of flavors and textures.

What is preventing you from adopting these healthy eating patterns?
What lifestyle factors (where you live, shop, work, etc.) are limiting you from achieving your goals? From whom do you gain support in choosing healthy alternatives? Making small shifts by examining and rearranging shopping, cooking, and eating habits can add up to a big difference. Take time for personal reflection and keep an open mind.

Dietary Guidelines For Americans

The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines contain 5 overarching goals and 13 key recommendations. Part of the Dietary Guidelines key recommendations also include meeting the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. These can be found online.

Overall Goals
1) Follow a healthy eating pattern across the life span.
2) Focus on variety, nutrient density, and proper amount.
3) Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake.
4) Shift to healthier food and beverage choices.
5) Support healthy eating patterns for all.

Key Recommendations
Follow a healthy eating pattern that accounts for all foods and beverages within an appropriate calorie level. A healthy eating pattern includes:

- A variety of vegetables from all of the subgroups—dark green, red and orange, legumes (beans and peas), starchy, and other
- A variety of protein foods, including seafood, lean meats, poultry, eggs, legumes (beans and peas), nuts, seeds, and soy products
- Fruits, especially whole fruits
- Grains, at least half of which are whole grains
- Fat-free or low-fat dairy, including milk, yogurt, cheese, and fortified soy beverages
- Healthy oils

A healthy eating pattern limits saturated fats, trans fats, added sugars, and sodium.

Key recommendations that are quantitative are provided for several components of the diet of particular public health concern that should be limited.

Consume less than 10% of daily calories from added sugars. Consume less than 10% of calories per day from saturated fats, and consume less than 2300 mg/d of sodium.

If alcohol is consumed, it should be consumed in moderation—up to 1 drink per day for women and up to 2 drinks per day for men—and only by adults of legal drinking age.

Additional information on the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines can be found at http://www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines.

Featured Recipe

Moroccan Farro & Lentil Soup

Dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach, kale, lettuce, collard greens, mustard greens, and swiss chard are excellent sources of fiber, folate, and a variety of antioxidants. Fiber seems to play a role in lowering cancer risk, and can increase satiety that can help weight control.

Ingredients
- ¾ cup red lentils, dry
- ½ cup red lentils, cooked
- ½ cup water
- ⅛ cup raisins
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ cup globe tomatoes, diced
- ½ cup red bell pepper, diced
- ½ cup yellow onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ cup fregola, dry
- ½ cup fresh spinach
- ¼ cup farro, dry
- 1 cup vegetable broth
- ½ cup coconut oil
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ¼ cup red bell pepper, diced
- 2 cups fresh spinach
- ¼ cup raisins
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ¼ cup red bell pepper, diced
- 2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- ½ cup lentils, cooked
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg

Preparation
1. In a 1½-quart pot, add dry lentils and water. Bring to a boil and reduce to medium-high heat. Cook for 10 minutes or until lentils are tender.
2. While lentils cook, heat oil, garlic, onion and ginger in a 3-quart pot over medium-high heat. Cook until onions are translucent, about 10 min.
3. Once lentils are cooked, drain excess water and add them to the 3-quart pot.
4. Add vegetable broth, farro, sweet potato, red pepper, tomato, cumin, cinnamon, turmeric, nutmeg, spinach and raisins. Cover and bring to a boil. Immediately reduce to medium heat. Cook for 30 minutes or until farro is tender.

Nutrition Information (Per serving)
Serves: 4 | Serving Size: 1 cup
Calories: 182, Total Fat: 2g, Saturated Fat: 2g, Protein: 7g, Carbohydrate: 36g, Sugar: 11g,
Dietary Fiber: 7g, Sodium: 96mg, Cholesterol: 0mg
Recipe by Brianna Casperson

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