



Food Day Fact Sheet

Promote Healthier Diets for the General Population

THE FACTS

- Two out of three adults and one out of three children and adolescents in the United States are either overweight or obese.
- Since 1980, the percentage of American children aged 6 to 19 who are obese has tripled, while the percentage of adults who are obese has doubled.
- More than 60 percent of U.S. adults currently have hypertension (high blood pressure) or pre-hypertension, caused in part by consuming too much sodium from packaged foods and too little potassium from fruits and vegetables, and being overweight. Ultimately, 90 percent of adults will develop high blood pressure.
- Obesity is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, and premature death.
- The annual medical cost for obesity is about \$150 billion, plus another \$73 billion in reduced productivity.
- The top sources of calories for children aged 2 to 18 are grain desserts (cakes, cookies, donuts, etc.), pizza, and sugar drinks (regular soda, sports drinks, fruit drinks, etc.).
- Consuming too much fructose from sugar or high-fructose corn syrup raises blood levels of uric acid, which can cause gout.
- On average, American adults consume well over 3,300 milligrams of sodium per day, which is more than twice the amount recommended by the American Heart Association for middle-aged or older adults, people with hypertension, or African Americans (less than 1,500 milligrams per day). In addition to hypertension, too much sodium increases the risk of stroke, heart failure, osteoporosis, and kidney disease.
- Added sugars (sucrose, high-fructose corn syrup, etc.) provide about 14 percent of total calories for the average American, 21 percent of calories for teens, and 25 percent or more of calories for over 36 million Americans.
- Americans spend about 17 percent of their food budget on refined grains, but only 1.5 percent on whole grains, while the USDA recommends spending one-fourth as much on refined grains and seven times as much on whole grains. USDA recommends that Americans spend 14 times as much of their food budget on legumes, dark green and orange vegetables as they do.
- About one-third of Americans' calories comes from foods prepared outside the home (restaurants, vending machines, schools, etc.). On average, those foods have more saturated fat and sodium and less dietary fiber than foods prepared at home.
- People should limit red meat (beef, pork, lamb) to no more than 18 ounces per week and minimize processed meats (deli meats, bacon, sausage, hot dogs, etc.) to lower the risk of colorectal cancer.
- Vegetarians, most of whom consume eggs and dairy products, have a 29 percent lower death rate from heart disease and an 18 percent lower risk of cancer than meat-eaters.

Center for Science in the Public Interest

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