

2011 Year In Review

2010 Dietary Guidelines

Highlights include:

REDUCE: daily sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) and further reduce intake to 1,500 mg if you are 51 and older and if you are African American or have hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease. Reduce the intake of SOFAS, which are calories from solid fats and added sugars. Limit the consumption of foods that contain refined grains.

INCREASE: fruits and vegetables, especially dark-green and red and orange vegetables and beans and peas, whole grains, skim milk and get more potassium, fiber, calcium and vitamin D

MyPlate

MyPlate, the newest incarnation of the USDA's food icons was introduced as a replacement for MyPyramid in June, 2011. It has five main food groups: vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy and protein. Directions are simple: fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables. Make the other half lean protein and whole grains. There's a website for MyPlate at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>

Salt Research

Dementia: 1262 healthy older people in Canada were divided into 3 groups based on their sodium intake. They found those with the highest sodium intake were more significantly more likely to lose cognitive function over the next 3 years than those with lowest sodium intake.

Heart failure: A prospective study followed a group of 123 systolic heart failure patients whose condition was stable for at least 3 months at home. Patients were divided into 3 groups based on their average sodium intake, which was 1400,

2400 and 3800 mg per day. After 3 years of follow-up, hospitalization for heart failure occurred in 12%, 15%, and 46% of patients in the low, moderate, and high-sodium groups, respectively. The authors concluded, "These data provide support for more stringent sodium intake guidelines than those currently recommended for HF patients."

Mortality: A recent study found increasing dietary sodium by 1000 mg/day increased total mortality by 20% whereas an increase of 1000 mg of potassium/day reduced total mortality by about 20%.

Supplements

Mortality from many: The Iowa Women's Health Study found a modest but statistically significant increased risk of dying in those that took a multivitamin supplement. They also found that those women taking supplements of folic acid, vitamin b-6, copper, zinc, magnesium, and especially iron were significantly more likely to die than those not taking those supplements.

Omega 3 good for the heart: A study found that omega 3 fatty acid supplements helped prevent the build up of scar tissue in the heart. Another study found that patients receiving an Omega 3 supplement had a 10% increase in heart function. Omega-3-rich seafood should be part of a heart healthy diet and those who consume little or no fish may well benefit from a daily 0.5 to 2g Omega-3 supplement.

Vitamin D benefits: Vitamin D supplements may help lower the risk for vision loss. Researchers found women with the highest levels of Vitamin D 25-OH-D actually had a significantly reduced risk of developing age-related macular degeneration (AMD) compared with women

with low levels. Given the known harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation in promoting AMD, this result is a bit perplexing although it is consistent with one earlier study that found AMD was associated with poorer vitamin D status. Dr. Millen's data did show that increased vitamin D from dietary sources was associated with a reduced risk of developing early AMD.

Calcium risk: Taking calcium supplements seems to reduce risk for osteoporosis only slightly while at the same time it appears to significantly increase the risk of having a heart attack by 30%. Vitamin D supplements will help lower that risk but they won't prevent the adverse risks of the calcium.

Soy is Safe

Two recent studies of women who survived breast cancer both found consuming more soy food appears if anything to decrease the risk of breast cancer recurrence or death among survivors of breast cancer taking estrogen blocking drugs.

Great Fat Debate

Harvard researchers found from a study analysis that the consumption of some foods was correlated with weight gain: potato chips (1.69 pounds), potatoes (1.28 pounds), sugar-sweetened beverages (1.00 pounds), unprocessed red meats (0.95 pounds), and processed meats (0.93 pounds). Other food items associated with weight gain included butter, refined grains, sugar-containing drinks, and sweets and desserts. By contrast, each serving of nuts, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and yogurt consumed were all associated with a modest reduction in body weight. And those who exercised were less likely to gain.