

FOOD PATTERNS

How to determine whether they're nutritionally adequate

Research:

The USDA asserts, "The USDA Food Patterns are intended to represent the types and amounts of foods that will provide nutrients sufficient to meet IOM nutrient recommendations and Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommendations. They are updated every five years during the deliberations of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, and are presented to the Committee for their assessment of the Patterns' adequacy. As part of the update, amounts recommended from each food group may be modified to reach all or most of the specified goals. In addition, the amounts from each food group are compared to usual dietary intake patterns of the U.S. population, and kept within the normal range of consumption."

Nutrient Levels:

What you see here is excerpted from Appendix E of the latest edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. It is titled "Range of nutrient levels in USDA Food Patterns across all age/sex groups, expressed as a percent of nutritional goal for each group. Bars show the lowest to highest percentage of the RDA or AI met by the USDA Food Patterns for each nutrient for any age/sex group."

As you can see, eating from food groups is a fantastic way to ensure that you get all the nutrients you need in a day or week. This research is what informs and shapes the food groups, ensuring nutrient adequacy in the diet.

