

ASN Publications

The following reviews are published in the May 2016 issue of ***Advances in Nutrition***.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Scientific review published in Advances in Nutrition discusses key recommendations of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines, helping us make informed choices for diet and exercise

Dietary Guidelines for Americans are published every five years jointly by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The most recent Dietary Guidelines were published in 2015, providing a framework for current food and nutrition programs, health promotion and disease prevention initiatives, and research priorities.

The May 2016 issue of *Advances in Nutrition*, the international review journal of the American Society for Nutrition, includes "[The 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Scientific Report: Development and Major Conclusions](#)," a review and summary of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines. All the authors of this *Advances in Nutrition* review were members of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (2015 DGAC), appointed by the HHS and USDA to provide independent, science-based advice and recommendations for the development of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines.

Overall, the 2015 DGAC found that most American diets deviate from recommended healthy dietary patterns and overall nutrient quality. Consumption of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and dairy tends to be too low, whereas consumption of refined grains and added sugars is too high.

Reinforcing the need for better dietary and eating habits, the 2015 DGAC noted that some 117 million American adults have one or more preventable diet-related chronic diseases, including diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Two-thirds of American adults are overweight or obese, placing them at increased risk of chronic diseases. In addition, one in three children and youth are overweight or obese.

Reviewing the available evidence, the 2015 DGAC recommended higher intakes of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat and nonfat dairy, seafood, legumes, and nuts as well as moderate intake of alcohol. On the other hand, the 2015 DGAC recommended lower consumption of red and processed meats, sodium, sugar-sweetened foods and drinks, and refined grains.

Together, these recommendations have been linked to a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, and colorectal cancer as well as breast cancer in postmenopausal women.

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The 2015 Dietary Guidelines extended its evidence review to include research on activities that tend to be precursors to unhealthy diets, inadequate physical activity, and poor health outcomes. For example, they pointed to the association between frequent eating away from home among adults and a higher risk of obesity. In addition, they cited studies linking prolonged television viewing among youth to a higher obesity risk.

The 2015 Dietary Guidelines includes many more recommendations to help Americans choose a healthy, sustainable diet as well as get the exercise they need to optimize their health throughout their lifespan. Referring to the 2015 Dietary Guidelines, the Secretaries of the HHS and the USDA issued a joint statement, noting that "diet is one of the most powerful tools we have to reduce the onset of disease and the amount of money we spend on health care."

Can Skipping Breakfast Cause You to Gain Weight?

Scientific review published in Advances in Nutrition finds there isn't enough evidence to conclude that breakfast skipping leads to obesity

In the United States, some 167 million adults, or 67% of the adult population, are overweight or obese. Obesity, a major public health issue, results in an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, and certain types of cancer. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the annual medical costs for people who are obese average \$1,429 higher than for people in a healthy weight range. Thus, there is a great need to develop successful strategies to reverse the obesity epidemic and prevent or delay serious health complications associated with obesity.

Traditionally, breakfast has been considered a staple of the American diet; however, increasingly more and more Americans are skipping breakfast, with as many as 30% of young people skipping breakfast every day and up to 60% eating breakfast infrequently. The increased frequency of skipping breakfast has occurred concurrently with the rise in obesity, raising the question of whether breakfast skipping plays a causal role in the development of obesity.

A review article published in the May 2016 issue of *Advances in Nutrition*, the international review journal of the American Society for Nutrition, examines whether there is any scientific evidence linking breakfast skipping to weight gain. Moreover, the article, "[Evaluating the Intervention-Based Evidence Surrounding the Causal Role of Breakfast on Markers of Weight Management, with Specific Focus on Breakfast Composition and Size](#)," takes a look at how individual components of breakfast as well as the size of breakfast may affect weight management.

According to the article's authors, "overall, there is limited evidence supporting (or refuting) the daily consumption of breakfast for body weight management and daily food intake." The authors do note that there is growing evidence supporting the consumption of increased dietary protein and fiber content at breakfast in order to maintain healthy weight. Moreover, the consumption of a greater percentage of energy during the morning hours may also help support healthy weight.

The authors, however, cautioned that the majority of the studies that manipulated breakfast composition and content did not control for habitual breakfast behaviors. Nor did these studies control for breakfast-skipping, making it difficult to evaluate the impact on weight management of having breakfast in general or having particular nutrients at breakfast.

According to the authors, more research is needed before we can reach strong conclusions on the role of breakfast in weight management. In particular, the authors have called for large randomized control trials lasting six months or more with a focus on key dietary factors. The results of these trials should enable researchers "to begin to assess whether breakfast recommendations are appropriate for the prevention and/or treatment of obesity across the lifespan."

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