

Creating Your Own Dietary Guidelines

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Dietary guidelines are everywhere about what you should and shouldn't eat. Over how much or how little of something that you should eat. The Department of Agriculture is the department that offers these guidelines.

These guidelines have changed over the years because the department updates them. If you want to eat healthy and have a long life, like many people, you've probably paid careful attention to all of the scientific studies that come out about certain foods.

Because of those studies, you might change the way that you eat. Despite what you may have heard, you shouldn't rely only on the studies that come about to determine what you should be consuming.

Scientific Research About Dietary Guidelines Are Wrong

You would think that something that's been scientifically "proven" means that it's infallible and that the research is accurate. But unfortunately, that's not the truth. The results are flawed.

The results of some dietary guideline studies should be ignored by the public. They should be ignored because these studies are based on patterns. A group of people are studied for the way that they eat in relation to the types of diseases and health problems that they have.

Studies that are performed this way are called epidemiological and what they cover in the study isn't based on evidence that's completely reliable. That means that the studies are faulty.

But rather than share the details of how these conclusions were reached, many of these studies go ahead and publish their findings. Then what

happens is they come back later and say that they were wrong, but they do it in a roundabout way.

For example, many studies will claim that a food is bad for you one year, then the next thing you know, suddenly that food isn't bad for you. Eggs are an example of this. For years studies warned everyone to avoid eating a lot of eggs.

The claim was that eggs were high in cholesterol and should be limited because dietary cholesterol was a big no-no in your daily menu planning. A new study, however, disproved that.

So then you have to ask yourself, "Which study was correct?" Can you eat eggs the way that you've always done or do you have to limit them? If you look up some of the studies that are done on certain foods that the public was warned about - coffee for example - you'll see that all of a sudden, new information has come out.

As it turns out, coffee isn't bad for you like you were told. The biggest reason that some of these food studies were wrong is that the control group of people used in the study were already at high risk for developing certain health issues.

When people who are already at high risk of having a heart attack because of their lifestyle or genetic factors are used in a study concerning the effects of certain food on the body's health, it skews the results.

That's not fair to you. If you're going to follow certain dietary guidelines, then you deserve to know the entire truth about the food rather than a view that's not accurate. The good news is that you already have exactly what you need to eat healthy and avoid many of the long term health problems that can develop from eating foods that aren't that good for you.

Using Common Sense to Create Dietary Guidelines

No one has to tell anyone that sitting down to two or three plates full of potato chips isn't the best move for good health. You don't have to be told that because common sense tells you that eating that many potato chips is too much.

In health and science classes, you learned about the abilities your stomach has. Although the size of your stomach does depend on your gender and age, one thing that's common with the stomach in everyone is that it has the ability to stretch.

Your stomach has a fill level and if you eat to the very max of your fill level, you end up with a stomachache. Your stomach can't do its job the way that it was meant to if you overfeed it.

The reason for this is because your stomach works to contract and when it's overloaded, there's not a lot of room left for the stomach to work. When you pack it full of food or liquid, you'll retain that full feeling until the stomach has worked with your other organs to digest what you've eaten.

There are some simple basic principles that go hand in hand with a common sense approach to dietary guidelines. For example, it's wiser to pick foods that give you more for the calorie intake.

If you can eat something that's good for you for the same amount of calories that you'll get in food that's not as good for you, then obviously, the common sense approach would be to choose the food that's good for you.

An example of this would be an apple versus cookies. You can eat one or two cookies and feel hungrier faster than you would if you ate an apple for the same amount of calories.

If you have a problem with always feeling like you want to snack, then your best bet for maintaining a healthy weight and long term body health is to choose foods that will allow you to snack freely but won't pack on the calories.

Another common sense approach is to make sure that you're not drinking your calories. Beverages that are high in calories will give you a momentary fullness, but it won't stay. So you'll end up increasing your caloric intake because you'll feel hungry not long after you drink a high calorie drink.

A couple of examples of this would be a fast food soda or flavored water. While it might be surprising to think of flavored water as containing a lot of calories, many of them do - and they're also loaded with sugar.

Listen to Your Biological Instincts

No one was born eating more than they should eat. If you watch a baby, he'll turn away from food when he's no longer hungry. As we grow up, we drown out those biological instincts.

They get drowned out by emotional eating, eating when we're not hungry because we're bored, and eating because the food tastes good. Eating when you're not hungry happens because many people will eat because it's "time" to eat.

So when the evening meal is on the table, we'll pick up a fork and start digging in just because the food is there and we're supposed to have a meal. You don't need to do that.

Mentally throw out the "eating because it's time" clock. Eat only when you're hungry. If you're not hungry when you first wake up, then don't eat just because some scientific study told you that you're supposed to.

Your body is a wonderful tool that, if you'll tune into it, will help you learn healthy eating habits. When your body needs something that it's lacking, it will drive up a craving within you to have that food so that it gets the vitamins and minerals that it needs.

Pay attention to what your body is trying to tell you. One of the best things that you can do for your body is to practice mindful eating. When you practice mindful eating, you'll eat slower.

If you've ever eaten and then suddenly realized that the food was gone, it means that you were eating mindlessly, not paying attention. The reason that eating mindlessly is bad is because you don't get the enjoyment from food that you should and you overindulge.

Mindless eating can often lead to consuming large quantities of food that you never meant to eat because you weren't even hungry to start with. This is something that can often be a problem when you're sitting down to watch television.

It's easy to pay attention to what you're watching and not the food. When you practice mindful eating, it means that you will have learned to eat only when your body tells you that it needs food.

This will prevent you from overeating, which is a by-product of mindless eating. It will also prevent you from consuming calories to the point that you begin to gain weight. You may have pushed aside your biological instinct for so long that it might be difficult at first to get back into the habit of listening to it.

One way that you can do this is to stop before you eat and ask yourself, "Am I eating because I'm hungry?" and if the answer is no, then you can walk away from the food and come back when you are truly hungry.

Making Choices with Your Own Dietary Guidelines

When you decide to create your own guidelines, it can feel strange - especially if you're someone who always paid attention to what others said you should and shouldn't eat. The choices that you'll make when you're following your own guidelines will fall in line with common sense steps that you take.

One of the best choices that you can make is to know what's healthy to eat and what's not. Common sense will tell you that processed foods aren't healthy. A lot of people label processed food as junk food.

They'll name chips and cookies, cakes and fatty deserts as processed foods – and they're right! But processed foods aren't simply limited to junk food. It's any food that's gone through a mechanical process to add chemicals in order to extend the shelf life of the food or to make it taste better or look more appealing.

Food has a limited time that it tastes good and looks good enough to eat. You can try this out for yourself. Cut an apple or a banana in half and leave it on the kitchen counter for several hours.

What happens is that the fruit turns brown. Certainly doesn't look appealing when that happens. If you continue to leave the fruit there, it will start to shrivel and then it will spoil.

There's nothing added to or injected into natural foods to prevent this spoilage process. But in processed foods, you get additives to prevent the appearance and taste from spoiling and what gets added in is what can take a toll on your health.

Many processed foods contain phosphates. These are what can make you look old, feel old, harm your organs and steal the strength from your bones. You'll find that there are a lot of processed foods that are ripe with phosphate.

This can be found in any convenience frozen dishes. From the single serving to the family serving frozen meals, these are loaded with this health robbing preservative. Phosphates are carcinogens and we all know the risks that causes – cancer!

The meat that you buy for lunch is loaded with phosphate. Whether you get processed lunch meats from the deli counter or from a package in the meat section, it's just as bad for you.

If it's a baked sweet, you can bet it contains phosphate. Foods that are touted as quick and easy convenience foods are loaded with phosphate. These are foods like those quick-make pasta foods such as macaroni and cheese.

Pay attention to boxes that say "fortified" because sometimes those foods are fortified with one form of phosphate or another. Remember that processed food isn't completely food.

It's food that's made with chemicals to give it long shelf life, things added to make the food taste better through the processing, coloring and even texture chemicals. In other words, manufacturers work hard to make this chemical laden food look natural. When you use processed foods, you're exchanging convenience for your health.

Denial Shouldn't Be Part of Your Dietary Guidelines

Regardless of knowing that something is good or bad for you, - regardless of whether or not you have a food that's your weakness - you shouldn't deny yourself from having it. That surprises people.

Because if something is bad for you, then it needs to be avoided at all costs, right? The best case scenario would be to eat 100% healthy foods 100% of the time. But we're all human and sometimes the way that we should eat doesn't always work out.

Deciding that a food is off limits is a bad idea. The reason for this is that the minute that you decide that a food is banned from your body, it's going to create a desire for that food.

The more you deny it, the more that your body (and mind) will crave it. You'll begin to think about the food, how much you miss it, how much you want it. Sometimes this happens because we associate certain foods with pleasant memories, things that raise our endorphin levels.

What we're seeking is that same rise in endorphins to feel good. And if the food gives you that, you're going to want it. It's always best to never determine that a food is completely off your radar.

It's best to stick with the mindset that if you want something, whatever it is, then you're allowed to have it. When you limit or erase a food from your dietary intake, then what happens when you do get it is that you'll end up bingeing on the food.

Denying yourself any food can create a preoccupation with the food. So don't fall into the "can never have" mindset. Often, by giving yourself permission to have something, you'll end up not wanting it as much.

Creating your own dietary guidelines means you begin living a life of common sense and better choices. You aren't too strict on yourself, or too lenient. If you want to, you can make your own food chart and work on making better choices and cutting back on some of the foods you're prone to abuse in your dietary habits.

Whenever you read scientific news about a certain food, take it with a grain of salt. It might be what researchers honestly believe at that moment, but it might be something that's reversed a few years later.



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