



## Lose weight with new Dietary Guidelines

### I understand the new Dietary Guidelines focus a lot on weight loss, but nothing seems to work for me. Are there any new ideas?

Unfortunately, there's no magic bullet. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines, released Jan. 31, 2011, recognize that, but they do try to help. Why? America's weight problem has reached epic proportions: Compared with the early 1970s, obesity in U.S. adults has increased from 15 to 34 percent.

There are a lot of reasons. Portion sizes have increased substantially, and people tend to eat more when there's more in front of them. Plus, the number of fast-food restaurants has doubled since the 1970s; just one fast-food meal a week increases your risk of obesity. Also, technological advances allow most of us expend fewer calories in everyday tasks and activities.

Despite these trends, weight gain or loss still depends on the age-old formula of calories in and calories out. However, many Americans have no idea how many calories they should be consuming. That's the first step: Find out what's right for you, based on your age and activity level, by going to <http://www.mypyramid.gov> and click on "Get a personalized plan." Then, you need to actually count the calories you consume, using Nutrition Facts labels and nutrition information available in books and online. Do this for just a few days or a week, and you'll get a very good idea of your normal intake, as well as ideas on where you can cut back.

Other recommendations include:

- Focus on the total number of calories consumed. To reduce them, choose foods low in "calorie density" — that is, those that provide a lot of volume for relatively fewer calories. Such foods include soups, vegetables, fruit, and high-fiber foods.
- Monitor your food intake, body weight and physical activity. Actually writing these things down increases your chances of successful weight loss.
- When eating out, order a smaller meal (often offered for children or seniors) or a lower-calorie option. Or, share your meal, or immediately ask for take-home container and put half your meal in it when it's served.
- At home, prepare, serve and eat smaller portions of food and beverages. Pay special attention to foods that contribute a lot of calories without adding many nutrients, such as cakes, cookies, pastries and other starchy sweets; sodas and energy or sports drinks; alcoholic beverages; pizza, tacos, burritos and tortillas; and potato chips and corn chips.
- Eat a healthy breakfast. Whole grain cereals, low-fat yogurt, fruit and lean meats are good choices.
- Limit "screen" time, particularly watching television, to no more than one or two hours a day, and avoid eating while watching TV. Instead, focus on your food.

The new guidelines are online at <http://www.dietaryguidelines.gov>.

*Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or [filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu).*



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH  
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

---

For the week of  
Feb. 13, 2011

---

By Martha Filipic  
614-292-9833  
[filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu)

**Editor:**  
This column was reviewed by Julie Kennel, nutrition program manager for Ohio State University Extension in the Department of Human Nutrition in the College of Education and Human Ecology.

---

**Communications and Technology News and Marketing**  
2021 Coffey Road  
Columbus, OH 43210-1044  
614-292-2011

208 Research Services Building  
1680 Madison Ave.  
Wooster, OH 44691-4096  
330-263-3780

Ohio State University Extension embraces human diversity and is committed to ensuring that all research and related educational programs are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or veteran status. This statement is in accordance with United States Civil Rights Laws and the USDA. *Keith L. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension*  
TDD No. 800-589-8292 (Ohio only) or 614-292-1868