


Leyla Weighs In: Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* was established as a tool “for professionals to help Americans make healthy choices in their daily lives to help prevent chronic disease and enjoy a healthy diet.” I’m not a fan of general guidelines because they do not take into consideration each individual’s unique biochemistry, genomics and health conditions.

Having said that, let me be clear: If you’re currently on a junk food diet, you will *definitely* benefit from the Dietary Guidelines. And please note that: 

“The *Dietary Guidelines* is not intended to be used to treat disease. Regardless of an individual’s current health status, almost all people in the United States could benefit from shifting choices to better support healthy eating patterns. Thus, the *Dietary Guidelines* may be used or adapted by medical and nutrition professionals to encourage healthy eating patterns to patients.”

While general guidelines on what to eat may be fine for those already in good health *without* metabolic syndrome, blood sugar issues or dyslipidemia, they’re not appropriate for everybody. For example, the focus on “healthy” whole grains is problematic for anyone with hyperinsulinism and insulin resistance. That, unfortunately, is the majority of American adults.

The importance of individualized nutritional guidance is more critical today than ever with 69 percent of adults being overweight or obese (35 percent of the 69 are obese).

The utility of the *Dietary Guidelines* should be limited to broad-based public nutrition programs, not one-on-one care because most health professionals—who are *not* qualified nutritionists (i.e., your primary care physician or internist)—simply advise their patients to “follow a Mediterranean-style diet” without any further instruction and send them on their way. A nutrition consult is necessary, and, in my opinion, should be mandatory to help ensure a successful health outcome for every patient.

To your health!