

SMRC Initial Guidance on the New US Dietary Guidelines

New guidelines were released on January 7 2026. <https://cdn.realfood.gov/DGA.pdf>

These appear to differ from the old guidelines in four areas.

- More emphasis on animal protein and protein in general (both animal and plant sources)
- Emphasis on full fat dairy products (remember that milk, cheese and yogurt are also protein sources)
- No specific recommendations for alcohol use although the guidelines state “consume less alcohol for better overall health”
- Limitations or elimination of processed foods

There is a statement for Older Adults

“Some older adults need fewer calories but still require equal or greater amounts of key nutrients such as protein, vitamin B12, vitamin D, and calcium.

To meet these needs, they should prioritize nutrient-dense foods such as dairy, meats, seafood, eggs, legumes, and whole plant foods (vegetables and fruits, whole grains, nuts, and seeds). When dietary intake or absorption is insufficient, fortified foods or supplements may be needed under medical supervision.”

And another statement for Individuals with Chronic Disease

“Following the Dietary Guidelines can help prevent the onset or slow the rate of progression of chronic disease, especially cardiovascular disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. If you have a chronic disease, talk with your health care professional to see if you need to adapt the Dietary Guidelines to meet your specific needs.”

“Individuals with certain chronic diseases may experience improved health outcomes when following a lower carbohydrate diet. Work with your health care professional to identify and adopt a diet that is appropriate for you and your health condition.”

SMRC GUIDANCE

Present the workshops as you have been. Neither the plate method, nor a replacement, is in the 2026 guidance. This new guidance does not contradict the plate.

What we say about cholesterol and carbohydrates is for ***the prevention and care of chronic illness***. There is nothing in the guidelines that contradict this. Sodium and salt restrictions have not changed. There is little in the guidelines about portion size and nothing that contradicts what we teach. Food labels have not changed.

If asked about the 2026 guidelines, refer participants to the US government document <https://cdn.realfood.gov/DGA.pdf>. In the end, eating decisions are individual. If participants have questions, suggest, as does the 2026 guidance, that they take their questions to their health care provider.

If you have questions or concerns, let us know and we will update as the picture becomes clearer.