

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The New Government Recommended Dietary Guidelines

Much has been written and talked about with the new dietary guidelines. The intent is certainly noteworthy and full of good intentions. Greater emphasis on increased intake of vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains and nuts is recommended. Moderation in the consumption of meats and poultry and significant reduction of foods with added sodium, sugars and solid fats is applauded. All of this is to help control body weight.

If you read the article entitled “2010 Dietary Guidelines” in the March issue of *Food Technology*, you may get a different slant on what some food technologists think of the new “Guidelines”. We have been media educated to except that red meats and solid fats are bad for you, that all fruits and vegetables are good for you and that breads, cookies and cakes are going to make you obese.

Roger Clemens, President-Elect of IFT, who served on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, had an interesting comment about the new Guidelines. If Americans were to embrace the new Guidelines, he doesn’t believe our farmers could produce enough fruits and vegetables to satisfy the demand.

Joanne Slavin from the University of Minnesota goes deeper into the discussion of the new Guidelines in her IFT article “Dissecting the Dietary Guidelines”. In 1977 these Dietary Goals were proposed: 1) Increase carbohydrate intake to 55-60% of energy needs; 2) Reduce fat consumption to 30% of energy; 3) Modify fat intake to equal proportions of saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids; 4) Reduce cholesterol consumption to

300 mg/day; 5) Reduce sugar consumption by 40%; 6) Reduce salt to 3 g/day.

Interestingly, Professor Slavin writes that the amount of dietary carbohydrates that promotes optimal health is unknown. Historically, certain fruits and vegetables were thought to have magical properties preventing or curing ailments ranging from headaches to heart disease.

Studies using 2004 data conclude that increased intake of fruit and vegetables were associated with modest, but not statistically significant reduction of major chronic disease. A Smith-Warner study examining eight breast cancer studies found no association with the intake of total fruits and vegetables. Also, no association was found for green leafy vegetables with reduced risk of breast cancer. A 2009 study shows little evidence that increased consumption of fruits and vegetables reduces the risk of cardio vascular disease. A conflicting report from The Netherlands supports the association of higher fruit and vegetable intake with lower risk of heart disease. Six studies to determine a relationship between consumption of green leafy vegetables, fruits and type 2 diabetes found no significant benefits.

Although the dietary guidelines support a near vegetarian eating pattern, there appears to be little scientific evidence that it provides any protection from chronic disease. In my opinion, the value in increased fruit and vegetable consumption is that hopefully such action would reduce food intake of higher caloric value.

The article points out that fresh fruits and vegetables are not high in fiber content. One also needs protein in their diet.

The long and short is simply, calories in and calories out. If you eat more calories than you expend on a daily basis, you will gain weight.

Interestingly most dieticians realize we eat food, not nutrients. We eat what we like to eat. Moderation is the key.

In 1941 the National Academy of Sciences issued "Recommended Dietary Allowances" (RDA's). In 1977 the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs proposed Dietary Goals. Today we the have the "2010 Dietary Guidelines" and we have a more obese population than ever before. I think I'll put down my pen and sit down, have my scotch and a prime steak with fries!

Did you know that the Center for Sciences in the Public Interest wants warning labels on all food containing synthetic colors? Warning labels for Blue #1, yellow #5 and #6 already exist in Europe.

Did you know that cocoa powder has more antioxidants than super fruit powders? It has more than blueberry, cranberry and pomegranate powders. Just thought you'd like to know!

I don't know if anyone with FIDA buys food items from the area in Japan affected by the earthquake and nuclear disaster, but be sure items are not contaminated with radioactivity. Samples show as much as 27 times the allowable limit set by Japanese laws.

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