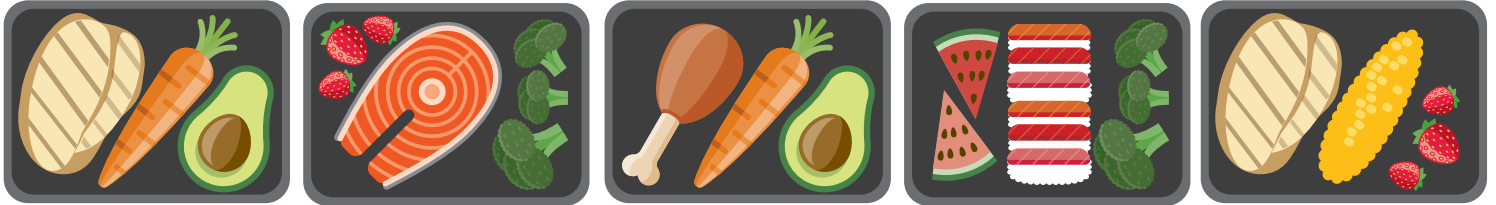


DIETARY ASSESSMENT

3 PRINCIPLES OF HEALTHY EATING PATTERNS

1. AN EATING PATTERN REPRESENTS THE TOTALITY OF ALL FOODS AND BEVERAGES CONSUMED

The Guidelines emphasize the importance of following a healthy eating pattern. Simply put, an eating pattern is the regular food and beverage intake of an individual over time. Although specific food and beverage choices can vary substantially day-to-day, the eating pattern represents the typical intake of an individual when all days are taken into account.



2. NUTRITIONAL NEEDS SHOULD BE MET PRIMARILY FROM NUTRIENT-DENSE FOODS

Many healthy eating patterns emphasize the importance of nutrient-dense foods. These foods provide a large amount of nutrients per calorie, and the term nutrient-dense is most often used when describing foods that specifically provide a large amount of vitamins, minerals and other beneficial compounds. Additionally, these foods are usually low in added sugars, solid fats and sodium. Classic examples of nutrient-dense foods are vegetables and fruits, which often provide ample amounts of vitamins and minerals without a large number of calories.

Seafood, eggs, nuts and seeds, lean meats and fat-free or low-fat dairy products are also included in this category. In contrast, foods in which the vitamins, minerals and other beneficial substances have been lost in processing or in which fats, sugars and starches are added are not considered nutrient-dense. Ultra-processed “junk” foods are a notable example – they provide limited amounts of vitamins and minerals but a large number of calories due to fats, starches and sugar. The recommendation to meet nutritional needs from nutrient-dense foods is particularly important because it helps individuals consume all of their required nutrients without consuming too many calories.



3. HEALTHY EATING PATTERNS ARE ADAPTABLE

While there are some common aspects among most healthy eating patterns, it is important to recognize that there is not one “best” pattern. Meaning, there is room for personal preference within the context of following guidelines for a healthy eating pattern. When working with clients from diverse backgrounds, and considering the substantial variation in preferences between individuals, it is important to tailor nutritional recommendations to your individual client.

