

SHARE
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Don't be Scared by the New Dietary Guidelines

If you get as far as the first guideline and say “NINE servings of fruits and vegetables - NO WAY!”, you haven't read far enough. That does not mean however that you have to read all 71 pages of the report either! Actually these guidelines probably give us the more leeway than the previous ones, and yet are a little more specific than the others as well.

For example, the recommendation is to eat 2 cups of fruit a day, fresh, frozen or canned. Vegetables should be 2 ½ cups a day, fresh, canned or frozen. And they suggest we get some from each of the vegetable subgroups - the dark greens, orange, legumes, starchy ones, and the others category. Cooked or raw, snacks or meals, any way is fine. It's not that you need every group every day, but aim for a balance of them throughout the whole week.

The grain recommendation is that we should aim for 3 servings, one ounce each, of whole grain products per day. That means that bread should list “whole wheat flour” as the first item on the ingredient list. However, if sugar or high-fructose corn syrup is number two on the list, that's still not a very good product choice. Don't worry about figuring out how many grams of fiber until you're getting the 3 whole grains a day on a regular basis.

Three is also the number to aim for with dairy. And all of them should be low fat or fat free products. A glass of milk with each meal will do the trick, but so will yogurt, cheese, even pudding made with non-fat milk. If you don't like the flavor, add powdered milk to your soup, pancake or biscuit mix, or other dishes. The calcium and potassium are still there, whether you taste them or not!

The other major guideline covers potassium and sodium. Keep the potassium up (give

me a call if you want a list of potassium sources), and the sodium as low as you can go. The recommended limit is no more than 2300 mg a day. Meeting that will probably mean some diet changes for most of us, lots more fresh products, not much processed. But, the closer we can get to meeting that goal, and all the rest, the healthier we will be.