

2015 Dietary Guidelines and Boston Heart's Personalized Nutrition Plan

The 2015 Dietary Guidelines include three main updates to the 2010 guidelines: the removal of a limit on dietary cholesterol, the addition of a specific limit on added sugars to less than 10% of calories, and an emphasis on achieving an overall healthy dietary pattern rather than focusing on individual nutrients. All of the recommendations made in the 2015 guidelines align nicely with the Boston Heart Lifestyle Program. In particular, the shift in focus away from individual nutrients towards a focus on an overall healthy eating strategy is one of the core principles of the Lifestyle Program.

Removal of a cholesterol limit

Of the three updates, the removal of the dietary cholesterol limit may prompt the most questions from patients and could lead to a more liberal intake of higher fat meats and eggs.

*"The Key Recommendation from the 2010 Dietary Guidelines to limit consumption of dietary cholesterol to 300 mg per day is not included in the 2015 edition, but this change does not suggest that dietary cholesterol is no longer important to consider when building healthy eating patterns. As recommended by the IOM,^[24] individuals should eat as little dietary cholesterol as possible while consuming a healthy eating pattern."*¹

The removal of the dietary cholesterol limit was a result of the lack of scientific evidence supporting the relationship between dietary cholesterol and increased cholesterol levels in the blood. In addition, as most Americans currently consume on average less than 300 mg of dietary cholesterol per day, dietary cholesterol is less of a concern for many people.

The recommendation on dietary cholesterol for people with existing cardiovascular disease (CVD) or who are at a high risk of developing CVD is less clear. According to the National Lipid Association (NLA), there are hyper- and hypo-absorbers of cholesterol, meaning certain individuals have increases in atherogenic cholesterol levels in response to a greater intake of dietary cholesterol.² Those people who have higher absorption could benefit from a more restrictive guideline for daily dietary cholesterol consumption.

The Boston Heart Cholesterol Balance® test can be used to identify those patients with elevated LDL cholesterol who are hyper- absorbers of cholesterol. This test result along with other lab results, medical history and food preferences are utilized in our proprietary algorithm to create a personalized and scientifically designed eating strategy for patients.

Limit added sugars and other nutrient guidelines

Boston Heart continues to recommend overall eating patterns that are low in saturated fat, low in added sugar and refined carbohydrates and that include lean proteins, low-fat dairy or dairy alternatives, vegetables, fresh fruits, whole grains, legumes, and heart healthy fats like avocado, nuts,

and seeds. Also, in agreement with the revised Dietary Guidelines is our recommendation to replace saturated fats with unsaturated fats rather than carbohydrates. The Boston Heart Personalized Nutrition and Life Plan includes evidence based recommendations for the major nutrients of concern in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans—fiber, sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars.

Emphasis on an overall healthy dietary pattern

Because the Boston Heart Personalized Nutrition and Life Plan focuses on nutrition education and an eating strategy, it is well aligned with the revised Dietary Guidelines' primary focus which deemphasizes "good" and "bad" singular nutrients and instead places emphasis on eating a healthy balance of nutrient-rich foods. We believe, and research supports that for any dietary pattern to be successful, it must be personalized to the patient such that it incorporates the patient's preferences for proteins, fats and carbohydrates as well as individual healthy food choices. Research indicates that a dietary approach that allows for patient preference leads to better adherence and thus improved outcomes. Combined with telephonic sessions with Boston Heart Registered Dietitians, patients are better equipped to understand the evolving world of dietary guidelines and follow a nutrition plan that is both scientifically sound as well as highly individualized.

¹ <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/2015-2020-dietary-guidelines-americans>

² http://www.lipidjournal.com/pb/assets/raw/Health%20Advance/journals/jacl/NLA_Recommendations_manuscript.pdf