How well do you follow the U.S. Dietary Guidelines? If your typical meal is mostly vegetables, fruit, whole-grain products and lean protein sources – good for you. The latest guidelines continue to rate this plan best for disease prevention.

Every 5 years scientists are tasked with generating the best, evidence-based dietary recommendations for more than 300 million Americans. Their ultimate goal: Help identify our nutrient needs to reduce trends in obesity and other chronic health problems related to diet.

Key findings from research by the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee:

1. We tend to under-consume several nutrients: vitamins A, C, D and E, folate, calcium, magnesium and potassium, as well as fiber – shortfalls are linked to several health disorders.

2. We can meet our nutrient needs with a diet high in plant foods, low-fat or nonfat dairy, seafood, legumes and nuts.

3. We over-consume saturated fat, sugars, refined starchy foods and sodium (primarily from processed foods).

4. We may resist chronic diseases by reducing saturated fat, trans fat, sugar-sweetened foods and drinks, and refined grains.

How do we foster this way of eating?
It will take a continued commitment to our future health and nutrition education in our homes, schools and society.

Fit 10-minute exercise breaks into everyday activities in place of or to supplement your exercise workout.
Grab a few active minutes at home, during work breaks or while traveling: Stretch legs, back and shoulders, do bicep curls or yoga moves, or ride a bike to the store. Keep weights and exercise bands handy. Every minute counts.

Tip: Choose fresh, whole fruit instead of fruit juice. Whole fruits contain desirable heart-friendly fiber, but have less sugar and fewer calories than juice.
QuikRisk™ Assessment: Are You Ready to Lose Weight?

If you’re reading this, you probably want to lose some extra weight.

Check the statements that apply to you:

☐ I will target losing no more than 1 to 2 pounds a week.
☐ I will choose meals that provide balanced nutrition from each food group.
☐ I won’t rely on fad diets, products (e.g., pills) or rigid, very low-calorie plans.
☐ I will do my best to resolve emotional eating triggers.
☐ I will aim for 30 to 60 minutes of exercise on most days of the week.
☐ I believe losing weight will improve my health.
☐ I am most inspired to lose weight by __________________________.
☐ I know my biggest obstacle to losing weight is _________________________.
☐ I know that weight control is a lifetime commitment.

Protect Your Smile

Your teeth are meant to last a lifetime. Besides visiting your dentist regularly for checkups and cleanings, take these steps for healthy teeth and gums:

☐ Keep your mouth plaque-free. Plaque is the sticky bacterial substance that forms on your teeth. If you don’t remove it daily, it can cause tooth decay and gum disease.

☐ Brush teeth 2 to 3 minutes at least twice a day. Always use a soft-bristled toothbrush and gently brush along the gumline. Brushing too hard can damage your teeth. Replace your brush once the bristles show wear.

☐ Floss thoroughly at least once a day to remove plaque and any particles between teeth that your toothbrush misses.

☐ Other dental health tools include toothpaste, power toothbrushes, flossing picks, oral irrigators and mouth rinses; your dentist can advise you about these items.

☐ Know the signs of gum disease (gingivitis): Visit your dentist when you notice swollen, tender gums; receding gums; signs of bleeding when you brush or floss; gums that have turned from healthy pink to red; and bad breath. With better cleaning, you can reverse gum disease.

☐ Choose nutritious, wholesome foods, essential for dental health and preventing gum inflammation.

☐ Sugary foods and drinks produce acids that erode tooth enamel and cause decay; carbonation increases acidity. Brush or rinse your mouth after eating.

☐ Using tobacco products stains teeth and raises the risk of gum disease and oral cancer.

Final note: Only use your teeth to chew food.