



DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS

2025-2030

CITATIONS: The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030

Overview

- Key messages from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030
- Changes and similarities between the 2025-2030 and 2020-2025
- Highlights from the Scientific Justification



2025-2030 Priority Message - Eat Real Food

The guidance prioritizes whole, healthy, and nutritious foods and limits highly processed foods, added sugars, and refined carbohydrates.



What is “real food”?



- No single, legal definition for “real food”
- Not a regulated labeling claim
- Key aspects in the DGAs:
 - a. Whole foods:** whole unprocessed or minimally processed foods
 - b. Ingredients:** short ingredient list, lack added sugar, artificial flavors, petroleum-based dyes, or artificial preservatives
 - c. Nutrient dense:** focus on quality, nutrient-rich foods



What is “real food”?



- **Unprocessed foods** include the natural edible food parts of plants and animals
- **Minimally processed foods** have been slightly altered for ease of storage, preparation, or consumption.
 - a. No substantial change to the nutritional content of the food
 - b. Washing/cleaning, removing unwanted parts of food, grinding, freezing, fermentation, pasteurization, fermentation, and vacuum-packaging.



Defining Highly Processed Foods

- There is no single definition for highly processed or ultra-processed foods

CITATION: The Scientific Foundation for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030

Highly Processed Foods

- DGAs refer to processed foods as any food, beverage, or engineered food-like item made primarily from substances extracted from foods (such as refined sugars, refined grains/starches, and refined oils) and/or containing industrially manufactured chemical additives.
- Moves beyond the incorporation of sugar, salt, and fat, to include artificial colors and flavors, preservatives, thickeners, emulsifiers, and artificial sweeteners to enhance shelf-stability, preservation, and palatability.
- NOVA System not recognized by the FDA

Highly Processed Foods

- Typically “ready-to-eat” with minimal additional preparation.
- Some foods are low in fiber and nutrients
- Long, complicated ingredient list including chemical additives.
- These foods **may partially or completely replace minimally processed foods** in one’s diet.
- Examples: sugary drinks, cookies, crackers, chips, cereals, frozen meals, luncheon meats




Unprocessed	Minimally Processed	Processed	Highly Processed	Highly Processed/ Low Nutritional Value
Whole apple	Sliced apples, prepackaged without additives	Unsweet applesauce, made with apples, water, and ascorbic acid to prevent browning	Sweetened applesauce, made w/ prior ingredients, and high fructose corn syrup	Apple juice drink made w/ high fructose corn syrup and added coloring
Whole oat groats	Steel cut oats, rolled oats	Instant oats w/ added sugar and preservatives only to enhance freshness	Instant flavored oatmeal w/ added sugar, artificial flavorings, and other additives to improve texture and freshness	Low-fiber packaged oat-containing cookie (mostly made of refined flour and sugar)
Dried chickpeas	Chickpea flour made from dried, ground chickpeas; chickpea pasta	Canned chickpeas; Store-bought hummus made with chickpeas, spices, oils, without preservatives	Store-bought hummus made with chickpeas, salt, spices, and artificial flavors	“Chickpea” chips that are made with mostly rice or potato flour and are high in added salt and oils
Peanuts	Shelled plain peanuts	Natural peanut butter made with only peanuts and salt	Peanut butter with added sugar, salt, and emulsifiers	Peanut butter candy with artificial flavors and colors
Yogurt	Homemade or store-bought plain yogurt/pasteurized	Store-bought plain yogurt/pasteurized, live active cultures, and food starch (thickener)	Yogurt w/ small amount of added sugar, pectins, gums to thicken/emulsify; good source protein/calcium	Yogurts higher in added sugars/fruit concentrates, artificial flavors, gums, not high in protein/calcium

- ❑ Avoid highly processed packaged, prepared, ready-to-eat, or other foods (salty or sweet).
- ❑ Prioritize nutrient-dense foods and cook at home. Choose nutrient-dense options when dining out.
- ❑ Limit/avoid artificial flavors, petroleum-based dyes, artificial preservatives, and low-calorie non-nutritive sweeteners.
- ❑ Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages - sodas, fruit drinks, and energy drinks.
- ❑ No amount of added sugars or non-nutritive sweeteners is recommended, but one meal should contain no more than 10 grams of added sugars.



Eat the Right Amount for You

- ❑ The calories you need depend on your age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity level.
 - ❑ Pay attention to portion sizes, particularly for foods and beverages higher in calories.
 - ❑ Hydration is a key factor in overall health.
 - Choose water (still or sparkling)
 - Choose unsweetened beverages
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Daily Servings by Calorie Level

	Calorie Level of Pattern	1000	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	2400	2600	2800	3000	3200
Food Group	Serving Size Examples	Daily Servings											
Protein Foods	3 oz cooked meat, poultry, or seafood; 1 egg; ½ cup beans, peas, or lentils; 1 oz nuts or seeds; 2 tbsp nut or seed butter; 3 oz soy	1–1 ½	1 ½–2	2–2 ½	2 ½–3 ½	2 ½–3 ½	3–4	3 ½–4 ½	3 ½–4 ½	3 ½–4 ½	4–5	4–5	4–5
Dairy	1 cup milk; ¾ cup yogurt; 1 oz cheese	2	2 ½	2 ½	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Vegetables	1 cup raw or cooked; 2 cups leafy greens	1 ¼	1 ¾	1 ¾	2 ½	3	3	3 ½	3 ½	4 ¼	4 ¼	4 ¾	4 ¾
Fruits	1 cup raw; ½ cup dried	1	1	1 ½	1 ½	1 ½	2	2	2	2	2 ½	2 ½	2 ½
Whole Grains	½ cup cooked oats, brown rice, barley, quinoa, or buckwheat; 1 slice bread; 1 tortilla	1–2	1 ½–2 ¾	1 ¾–3 ¼	1 ¾–3 ¼	2–4	2–4	2 ¼–4 ½	2 ¾–5 ¼	3–6	3 ¼–6 ½	3 ¼–6 ½	3 ¼–6 ½
Healthy Fats	1 tsp olive oil or butter	2 ½	2 ½	2 ½	3 ½	4	4 ½	4 ½	5	5 ½	6	7	8

- These serving sizes should align with the recommendations in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030*; therefore, a variety of foods should be selected from each food group. Foods are assumed to be nutrient-dense, with no or limited added sugars, refined carbohydrates, or chemical additives. Individual food choices within each food group vary in calorie and nutrient content per serving, so attention to portion sizes is important. Smaller portions may be appropriate for individuals with lower calorie needs, such as young children or some older adults. Healthy fats are naturally present in many whole foods, and small amounts may also be used when cooking with or adding fats to meals.
 - **Protein Foods:** Animal- and plant-based protein foods, including meat, poultry, eggs, seafood, beans, peas, lentils, legumes, nuts, seeds, and soy.
 - **Dairy:** Whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or nonfat dairy products, including fluid, dry, or evaporated milk; yogurt; and cheeses. Lactose-free and lactose-reduced products, as well as fortified dairy alternatives, are also options.
 - **Vegetables:** Vegetables of all types—dark green; red and orange; beans, peas, lentils, and legumes; starchy; and other vegetables, including fresh, frozen, and canned, cooked, or raw vegetables.
 - **Fruits:** Fruits of all types, including fresh, frozen, canned, juiced, and dried fruits.
 - **Whole Grains:** All whole-grain foods and products made with whole grains as ingredients.
- The calories you need depend on your age, sex, height, weight, and level of physical activity.

(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Daily Servings By Calorie Level, 2026)



Prioritize Protein Foods at Every Meal

Key Messages

- Consume a variety of high-quality protein sources.
 - Eggs, poultry, seafood, red meat
 - Beans, peas, lentils, legumes, nuts, seeds, and soy
- Recommended cooking methods
 - Bake, broil, roast, stir-fry, or grill
 - Avoid deep frying

New Intake Recommendation

- 3 – 4 Servings (1.2-1.6 grams of protein/kg of body weight)
 - 3 oz of cooked meat, poultry, seafood, or soy (deck of cards)
 - 1 egg
 - ½ cup beans, peas, or lentils (cupped hand)
 - 1 oz nuts or seeds (small handful, ~ ¼ cup)
 - 2 tbsp nut or seed butter (top part of your thumb)



Consume Dairy

Key Messages

- Dairy is an excellent source of protein, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals.
- Consume full-fat dairy with no added sugar.
- Dairy includes whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or nonfat dairy products, as well as fortified dairy alternatives.

Intake Recommendation (Unchanged)

- 3 Servings (for a 2,000-calorie diet)
 - 1 cup of milk (size of a fist or baseball)
 - 3/4 cup of yogurt
 - 1 oz of cheese (top part of your thumb)

Plain Yogurt - 1 cup

Whole Milk

8 g of fat = 2 teaspoons

5 g of saturated fat = 1.25 teaspoons

Low Fat

4 g of fat = 1 teaspoons

2.5 g of saturated fat = 0.6 teaspoons



Eat Vegetables & Fruits Throughout the Day

Key Messages

- Eat a variety of colorful, nutrient-dense vegetables and fruits.
- Eat whole vegetables and fruits in their original form.
- Wash thoroughly prior to eating raw or cooking.
- Frozen, dried, or canned vegetables or fruits with no or limited added sugar and salt.
- Limit 100% fruit or vegetable juice

Intake Recommendation (Moderate Increase)

- 3 Servings of vegetables (for a 2,000-calorie diet)
 - 1 cup raw or cooked (size of a fist or baseball)
 - 2 cups of leafy greens (softball size)
- 2 Servings of fruit (for a 2,000-calorie diet)
 - 1 cup raw (size of a fist or a baseball)
 - ½ cup dried (the size of a cupped hand)



Focus on Whole Grains

Key Messages

- Encourage fiber-rich whole grains.
- Significantly reduce the consumption of highly processed, refined carbohydrates, such as white bread, packaged breakfast options, crackers

Intake Recommendation (Reduced)

- 2-4 Servings per day (for a 2,000-calorie diet)
 - ½ cup of cooked oats, brown rice, barley, quinoa, or buckwheat (the size of a cupped hand)
 - 1 slice of bread
 - 1 tortilla



Incorporate Healthy Fats

Key Messages

- Healthy fats are plentiful in many whole foods, such as meats, poultry, eggs, omega-3-rich seafood, nuts, seeds, full-fat dairy, olives, and avocados.
- Prioritize oils with essential fatty acids, such as olive oil, for cooking.
- Significantly reduce the consumption of highly processed foods.

Intake Recommendation (Slightly Reduced)

- 4.5 Servings per day (for a 2,000-calorie diet)
 - 1 teaspoon
 - <10% of total daily calories of saturated fat



Continued Messaging

- The recommendation to limit saturated fat to less than 10% of total calories remains unchanged.
- Focus on food choices, preparation methods, and balance rather than elimination of entire food groups.

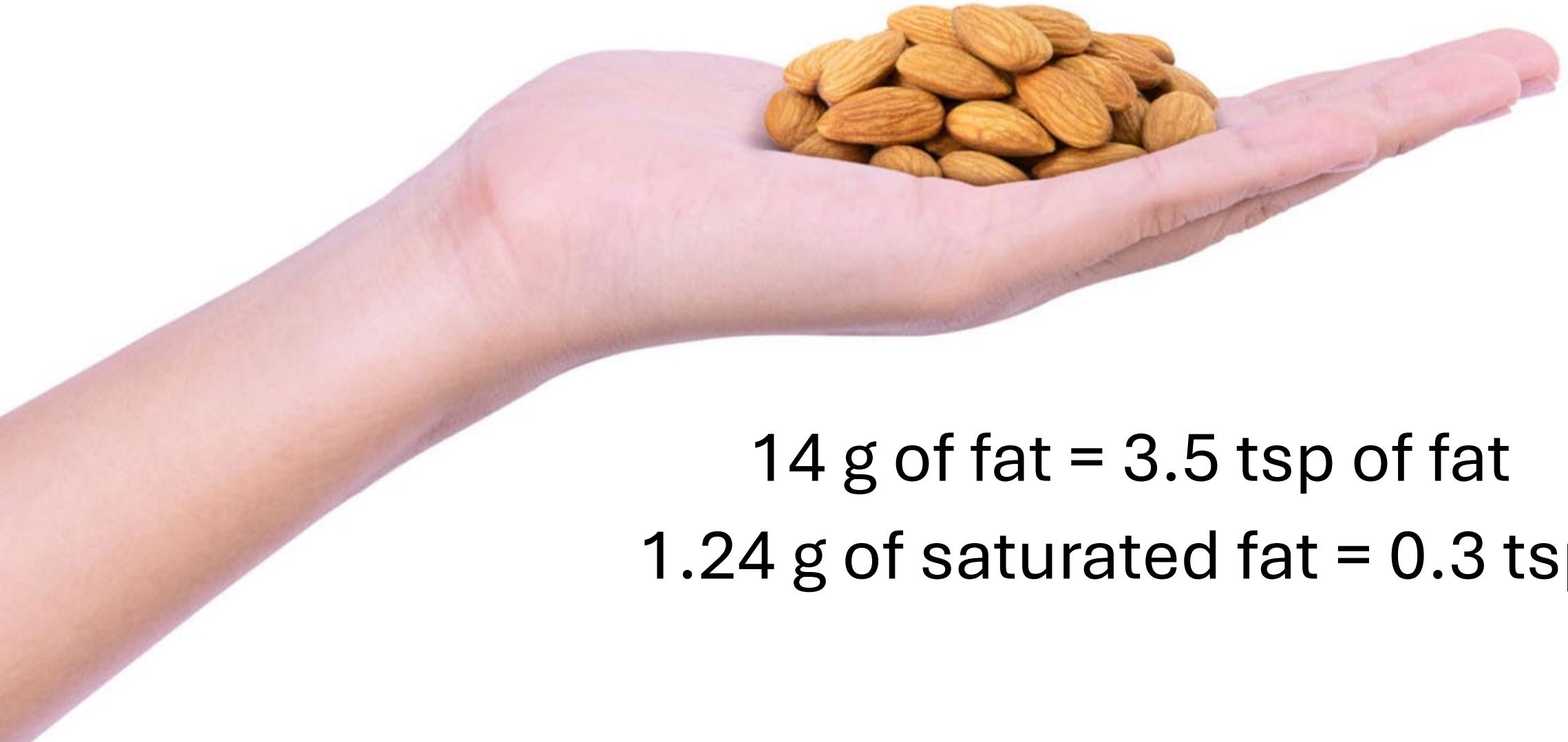
New Emphasis on Fat Quality

- A balanced plate includes a variety of fats, emphasizing unsaturated sources while moderating saturated fat intake.
- Reduce the consumption of calorically dense, nutrient deficient foods.

Saturated Fat: What Hasn't Changed

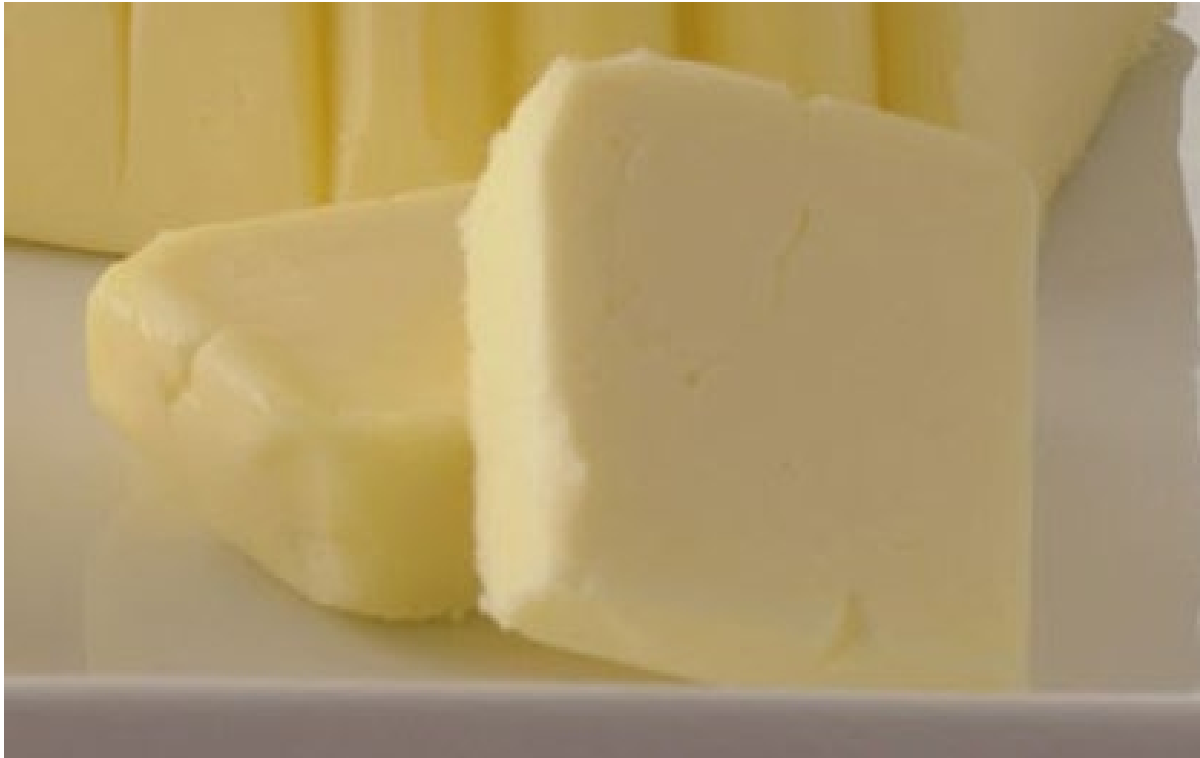


Almonds - 1 oz. serving



14 g of fat = 3.5 tsp of fat
1.24 g of saturated fat = 0.3 tsp.

Butter - 1 tbsp. serving



1 tbsp. =
2.5 tsp. of fat

7 g of saturated fat
= 1.75 tsp.

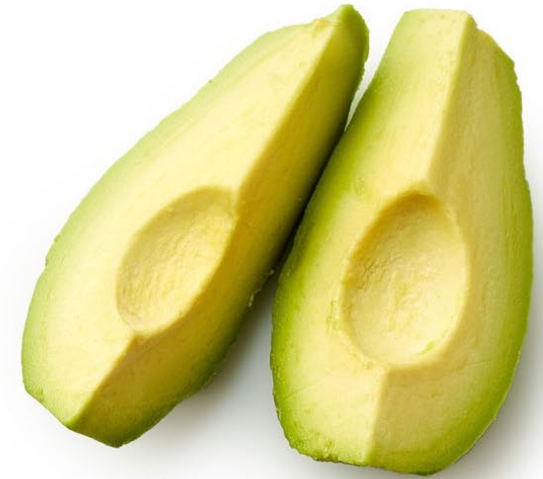
Beef Tallow - 1 tbsp.

13 g of fat =
3.25 tsp. of fat

6 g of saturated fat = 1.5
tsp.



Avocado - $\frac{1}{3}$ of a fruit



8 g of fat = 2
tsp. of fat



1 g of
saturated fat =
0.25 tsp.





80% Lean Ground Beef - 3 oz. serving, cooked

15 g fat = 5-5.5 tsp. of
fat

5.75 g saturated fat =
1.4 tsp.





- Limit Alcoholic Beverages
- Sodium
- Water
- Limit Highly Processed Foods, Added Sugars, & Refined Carbohydrates
- Dietary guidance for different age groups has been reduced to key talking points.
 - Consult the 2020-2025 DGA for more in depth information about age-specific nutritional needs.

Other Key Messages

- Consume less alcohol for better overall health.
- People who should completely avoid alcohol include pregnant women, people who are recovering from alcohol use disorder or are unable to control the amount they drink, and people taking medications or with medical conditions that can interact with alcohol.
- For those with a family history of alcoholism, be mindful of alcohol consumption and associated addictive behaviors.

Limit Alcoholic Beverages

- Sodium and electrolytes are essential for hydration.
- The general population, ages 14 and above, should consume less than 2,300 mg per day of sodium.
- Highly active individuals may benefit from increased sodium intake to offset sweat losses.
- For children, the recommendations vary by age:
 - Ages 1–3: less than 1,200 mg per day
 - Ages 4–8: less than 1,500 mg per day
 - Ages 9–13: less than 1,800 mg per day
- Highly processed foods that are high in sodium should be avoided.

Sodium



Questions??

