

One Yogurt Every Day Fact Sheet



INTRODUCTION

Despite consistent recommendations from the **Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs)** and health and nutrition professionals for eating a healthful diet, few individuals in the United States meet current goals. Meanwhile, the national prevalence of nutrient deficiency and obesity persists, a paradox in which one in six people struggle to get enough to eat, yet more than two-thirds of U.S. adults are overweight or obese. Obesity and related diseases, such as diabetes, cost between \$147 and \$210 billion a year¹, or nearly 10 percent of all annual medical spending.²

However a collective effort to support healthy eating patterns and effect positive change is underway.³ All around the country, communities, organizations and leaders across public and private sectors are working together to create healthier environments. Today, more than ever, families have more options for convenient, great-tasting, affordable, nutrient-dense foods to choose from. Yogurt is one of those foods.



THE POWER OF YOGURT

The versatility and likeability of low-fat and nonfat yogurt, its practical usage in a variety of meal occasions, and appeal across age groups and cultures can make a difference in building healthy dietary patterns. Its many benefits are supported by sound nutrition guidance and research.

Most yogurts provide 3 out of the 4 nutrients of concern identified by the 2015 DGAs—calcium, potassium and vitamin D.³

Most yogurts also are an excellent source of high quality protein, and regular yogurt consumption can help Americans maintain a healthy weight over time. Consumption of yogurt, fruits, vegetables and whole grains is associated with less weight gain over time, with yogurt having the best effect.⁴

Regular consumption of yogurt is associated with a more balanced diet⁵ and has the practical benefit of helping build healthy dietary patterns in the context of today's lifestyles.

Yogurt is, for many consumers, a more easily digestible alternative to milk because, on average, it contains less lactose than milk and may allow lactose intolerant individuals to enjoy dairy products with fewer associated symptoms.

Yogurt pairs well with fruit and vegetables and can encourage their consumption when combined in smoothies, dips and dressings, supporting overall healthy dietary patterns like those recommended in the 2015 DGAs, and increasing dairy intake.

Regular or Greek plain nonfat yogurt with little or no added sugar can be a good choice for people with diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association.⁶

The American Heart Association and the DASH Diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) both recommend consumption of fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products for health. Fat-free and low-fat yogurts are suggested as low-sodium, low-fat dairy options.⁷

References: 1. <http://stateofobesity.org/facts-economic-costs-of-obesity/> 2. Finkelstein E, Trognon J, Cohen J, and Dietz W. Annual medical spending attributable to obesity: Payer- and service-specific estimates. Health Affairs, July 2009. 3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015 – 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 8th Edition. December 2015. Available at <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/> 4. Mozaffarian D, Hao T, Rimm EB, Willett WC, and Hu FB. Changes in diet and lifestyle and long-term weight gain in women and men. The New England Journal of Medicine, June 2011;364:2392-404. 5. Wang H, Livingston KA, Fox CS, Meigs JB, and Jacques PF. Yogurt consumption is associated with better diet quality and metabolic profile in American men and women. Nutrition Research, January 2013 Jan;33(1):18-26. 6. American Diabetes Association. Nutrition recommendations and interventions for diabetes. A position statement of the American Diabetes Association. Diabetes Care, January 2008;31:S61-S655. 7. Appel LJ, Brands MW, Daniels SR, Karanja N, Elmer PJ, et al. Dietary approaches to prevent and treat hypertension: A scientific statement from the American Heart Association. Hypertension 2006;47:296-308.



YOGURT IN NUTRITION POLICY



- **DGAs** – With the release of the **2015 DGAs**, the attention of government, healthcare providers, schools, industry and other nutrition stakeholders turns to implementation efforts that ensure the **recommendations are actionable for all Americans**. In this context, it is important to highlight that, in addition to its many nutritional benefits, **yogurt is convenient, versatile and appeals to all ages**. **This makes it a practical choice consumers can feel good about making every day as they look for ways to apply the DGAs to their daily lives**. The DGAs recommend increasing intake of nutrient-dense foods, such as fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products, like yogurt, and recognize the nutritional value of yogurt by including one serving of a sweetened strawberry yogurt in an example of a daily healthy eating pattern.
- **WIC** – In 2015, yogurt was added to the **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)** food package, which serves to safeguard the health of low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children up to age five who are at nutritional risk. **The inclusion of yogurt is encouraging for those on the front lines of public health, especially because of the role yogurt can play in improving the diet of WIC participants at critical life stages and for vulnerable population groups**. In its current review of the WIC Food Package, the National Academies has the opportunity to provide WIC participants with the chance to add more yogurt to their diet by encouraging utilization of all package sizes of yogurt, among other opportunities.
- **School Nutrition** – Yogurt has a strong history, and even stronger future, in building healthy school meals. **Yogurt is a great option in schools because it is appealing to kids, and because most yogurts contain calcium, vitamin D and potassium which, combined with yogurt's high quality protein content, can aid muscle and bone growth**.⁸ However, updated school breakfast standards that require additional servings of fresh fruit and whole grains have increased costs, and because the updated standards have also made optional, and no longer mandatory, the meat or a meat alternate serving at breakfast, it had the unintended consequence of schools foregoing serving much-needed protein (meat/meat alternate) at breakfast, including yogurt. Some potential solutions include increasing school breakfast funding, as well as adding fresh fluid milk to the list of commodities available to schools, allowing them to direct their commodity milk toward the production of yogurt, and reducing the cost of yogurt. USDA is currently in the process of considering this proposal.

ONE YOGURT EVERY DAY

Despite growth in popularity over recent years, the average American still eats less than one cup of yogurt in any given week, compared with nearly double that amount in Canada and five times that in some European countries. The *One Yogurt Every Day* campaign was created to promote healthy eating and increase awareness of the benefits of regular yogurt consumption. This effort brings forward science-based nutrition education and the voices of health and nutrition experts to amplify the benefits of yogurt across life stages and diverse populations. For consumers, *One Yogurt Every Day* can be an important first step toward creating a more balanced diet and a healthier lifestyle. For policymakers, *One Yogurt Every Day* is a practical, specific and easily achievable recommendation that would help close the gap on shortfall nutrients and help improve Americans' diet quality.

MEET OUR NUTRITION ADVISORS

One Yogurt Every Day's Nutrition Advisors are a group of dynamic, credentialed professionals whose expertise can help pave the road to a healthier future.



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Constance Brown-Riggs, MEd, RD, CDE, CDN, is the owner and president of CBR Nutrition Enterprises, a nutrition consulting and counseling service. She is a certified diabetes educator, former spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and author of *The African American Guide to Living Well with Diabetes*, as well as *Eating Soulfully and Healthfully with Diabetes*.



Robert Murray, MD, is a professor of Human Nutrition in the College of Education and Human Ecology at The Ohio State University, and spent much of his career in pediatrics. He is also the Director of the Center for Healthy Weight and Nutrition at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

References: 8. Webb D, Donovan SM, and Meydani SN. The role of yogurt in improving the quality of the American diet and meeting dietary guidelines. Nutrition Reviews 2014; 72:180-189.

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