Top Ten Things To Know
Implementing AHA Pediatric and Adult Nutrition Guidelines

1. Improving dietary habits, engaging in regular physical activity and avoiding exposure to tobacco products is critical to achieving optimal health.

2. Data trends show that calorie intake across all ages have increased and yet the interventions for obesity especially in children, such as diet counseling, have not been proven to work, based on the following barriers:
   - lack of assessment of the patient’s interest in making dietary change,
   - primary care providers have low estimate of self efficacy with regard to nutrition counseling,
   - providers are unwilling to confront patients on weight issues, and
   - time restrictions on reimbursement impose limitations on traditional medical office visits.

3. AHA recommends that health providers learn behavior change and motivational interviewing strategies; these strategies should be incorporated into educational programs for physicians, nurses, and dietitians.

4. With time constraints during office visits, providers should deliver simple positive messages directed at the major causes of poor nutrition using concrete examples, such as eat breakfast, eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, limit intake of sugar containing beverages to less than 12 oz./day, limit snacks to once a day, eat smaller portions, weigh yourself regularly and adjust dietary intake based on your weight.

5. AHA proposes five community based implementation strategies that should be evaluated for efficacy and that may inspire governmental policy, industry, foundations, and voluntary groups to influence social change.

6. Communities should collaborate with the food industry to create a healthy food environment to ensure items of high quality are served in schools and at work places.

7. The media should be used to counterbalance unhealthy food messages.

8. Food producers should generate nutritious foods and AHA recommends subsidies and financial incentives for its recommended food choices.

9. Health professionals and health care practitioners who are commonly consulted for nutrition advice should improve their skill level.

10. In order to empower consumers, AHA calls for more comprehensive labeling of foods and portion size.


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