

RFK Jr's New Dietary Guidelines

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February 2026

Bottom line at the top: While it may be healthy to move food pyramid emphasis for protein food sources, vegetables and fruits to the top of the food pyramid, we shouldn't ignore science which supports the health benefits of a plant-based diet, which does not require full-on veganism to achieve.

The current Health and Human Services cabinet Secretary is RFK Jr, a non-scientist with strong ties to beef and dairy ranchers, and whose summer job was milking cows and goats on a ranch. His new MAHA (Make America Healthy Again) approach to diet upends decades of medical science. He has redrawn the food guide pyramid to prioritize high protein meat and "real food", like vegetables, full-fat dairy, and fruits. Carbohydrate food and grains have sunk to the bottom, as afterthoughts. He has started a war on sugar and processed foods, accusing previous U.S. government policy of promoting processed foods (see below), contributing to diabetes and heart disease. What really happened, unfortunately, was changing food preferences and the food industry's switch to sugary, carb-heavy pastries and cereals as a consequence of asking folks to eat less fat.

Junior intends to end the "war on saturated fats", which he believes were unfairly demonized, despite clear data that saturated fats drive up LDL-cholesterol, the 'bad' one, which clogs arteries and is directly related to coronary artery disease. He would have us eat saturated fat, like bacon grease and lard, rather than seed oil polyunsaturated fats, which are precursors of inflammatory mediators in the blood, but don't kill within a measurable timeline, as saturated fat does. He includes olives and avocado as whole food sources of healthy fats, fish as a source of protein rather than their healthy fats, and would eliminate all seed oils, even

safflower oil, which is a great source of healthy, albeit expensive monounsaturated fat and essential fatty acids. Eating RFK Jr.'s diet excluding all seed oils for very long, even while eating olive oil, would likely cause the neurologic, immune and skin symptoms of EFAD (essential fatty acid deficiency).

Though members of past advisory councils may have had their research funded by manufacturers of ultra-processed food, as he professes, there was NO final governmental pyramid or advice which specifically recommended highly processed foods. A series of events eventually led to them being consumed, starting with one of the most profound dietary changes which followed the industrial revolution, when white bread gained the appearance of luxury. Once people lost their affinity for whole grain foods, it became necessary to add back vitamins, fiber and minerals as science discovered their role in health. Wartime gave the government an impetus to influence nutritional health with a series of food enrichment laws, starting with the 1938 Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, which mandated that white flour and cereals be enriched with thiamin, niacin, riboflavin and iron. Folic acid enrichment followed in 1996 when folate deficiency was linked to newborns' neural tube defects. These added nutrients don't fully replace nutrients lost from whole grains, which are also rich sources of fiber, copper and other trace minerals. Most of the USDA recommended diets in the past made carbohydrate foods the largest pyramid portion for the day to assure adequate calories, with added verbiage encouraging whole grains, which satiate sooner than simple carbs and are healthier.

More recent versions of official advice have skewed toward the Mediterranean Diet, which emphasizes "whole foods," including seafood, vegetables, fruit, olive oil, whole grains, legumes, nuts and dairy, and the Dietary Council was strongly considering a recommendation to reduce added sugar.

Previously, official advice typically advised sugar intake of less than ten percent of total daily calories, including that in natural foods. Added sugar information is not usually available on food labels, which typically give the total sugar content, including that naturally in the food from which it was made, though canned fruits and vegetable labels often report them both, providing total sugar grams with an extra line saying, “includes x grams added sugar”. No labels indicate which sugar type (glucose, fructose, lactose or galactose) predominates, since that would only be significant for knowledgeable doctors of people with applicable medical conditions.