

SAY 'NO' TO RADICAL PROPOSED CHANGE IN US DIETARY GUIDELINES ON ALCOHOL

2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee proposes dangerous shift in the way moderate drinking is defined and promotes moderate drinking as part of a healthy dietary pattern

Deadline for public comment: April 8th

Please submit online comments to:

<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2015/comments/writeComments.aspx>

THE PROPOSED CHANGE:

- Without providing any explanation or evidence for a radical change, the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee proposes to **increase limits used to define “moderate” drinking**.
- The current (2010) U.S. Dietary Guidelines define moderate drinking as up to 1 drink per day for women and up to 2 drinks per day for men (daily limits). In contrast, the proposed change would base these 1/2 limits on average rather than daily consumption and suggests it is safe for women to drink up to 3 drinks in a day and men up to 4 drinks in a day so long as the averages are not exceeded. This effectively **triples the daily limit for women and doubles the daily limit for men**.
- Furthermore, the report implies that drinking is recommended as part of a healthy lifestyle: “the U.S. population should be encouraged to consume dietary patterns that are rich in vegetables . . . ; moderate in low- and non-fat dairy and alcohol (adults).”

THE PROBLEM:

- Since most adult drinkers in the U.S. don't drink every day, the proposed change effectively encourages consumption right up to binge drinking levels, thus increasing health risk.
- Binge drinking (4 or more drinks per occasion for women; 5 or more drinks per occasion for men) causes more than half of all alcohol-related deaths each year in the U.S., and impairment and increased risk begin below those levels. The proposed changes are, therefore, dangerous for public health.
- There are **no** randomized studies showing any health benefits from any level of alcohol consumption as well as no evidence that moderate drinking promotes a healthy lifestyle.

SUGGESTIONS FOR RESPONSE:

- The **risk of harm goes up with increased drinking** with excessive use responsible for 1 in 10 deaths among working-age adults in the U.S.
- Most people don't drink daily so using a weekly average (and relaxing the guidelines) gives permission for individuals to drink right up to the point of binge drinking.
- In light of the new evidence about risk from drinking alcohol at even very low levels, the Dietary Guidelines should encourage Americans to **drink less - not more** - to prevent alcohol-related harms.

ACTION NEEDED

Urge rejection of the proposed changes to the Dietary Guidelines on alcohol and retain the recommendations on alcohol in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines.

Base your thoughtful response and online comments on the science and evidence.

Post your comments by April 8, 2015 at

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