

# Is there a path to healthy and sustainable diets for all?

#### Walter C. Willett, MD, DrPH

Department of Nutrition Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health

June 12, 2023



Figure 4. Trends in age-adjusted obesity and severe obesity prevalence among adults aged 20 and over: United States, 1999–2000 through 2017–2018

<sup>1</sup>Significant linear trend.

NOTES: Estimates were age adjusted by the direct method to the 2000 U.S. Census population using the age groups 20–39, 40–59, and 60 and over. Access data table for Figure 4 at: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db360\_tables-508.pdf#4.

SOURCE: NCHS, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1999-2018.



#### Prevalence of Obesity U.S. Boys and Girls by Race, Ages 6-11, 1963-2020

(Cuevas A et al., 2023)

29.834

# Estimated hazard ratios for death from any cause according to BMI for all study participants and for healthy subjects who never smoked



(Berrington de Gonzalez et al, NEJM, 2010)

#### Effect of COVID on life expectancy



(Adrasfay T, PNAS, 2021)

#### 12-month change in weight



(Gardner CD et al. JAMA 2018)

### Nurses' Health Study (n=121,700)



**Investigators:** Frank Speizer, Bernie Rosner, Meir Stampfer, Graham Colditz, David Hunter, JoAnn Manson, Sue Hankinson, Eric Rimm, Edward Giovannucci, Alberto Ascherio, Gary Curhan, Charles Fuchs, Fran Grodstein, Michelle Holmes, Donna Spiegelman, Frank Hu, Heather Eliassen, Lorelei Mucci

0.386

**Changes in Food and Beverage Consumption** and Weight Changes Every 4 Years **According to Study Cohort** 



Food

Daily Serving, per 4-Year Period (lb)

#### 23.059

(Mozaffarian D et al., NEJM 2011)



# Types of Fat and Total Mortality

► MV-adjusted results, isocaloric comparison is CHO





SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH Powerful ideas for a healthier world

(Wang D et al. JAMA Intern Med 2016)



# Annals of Internal Medicine®

October, 2019

#### Unprocessed Red Meat and Processed Meat Consumption: Dietary Guideline Recommendations From the NutriRECS Consortium

Bradley C. Johnston, PhD; Dena Zeraatkar, MSc; Mi Ah Han, PhD; Robin W.M. Vernooij, PhD; Claudia Valli, MSc; Regina El Dib, PhD; Catherine Marshall; **Patrick J. Stover, PhD**; Susan Fairweather-Taitt, PhD; Grzegorz Wo<sup>´</sup> jcik, PhD; Faiz Bhatia, PEng; **Russell de Souza, ScD**; Carlos Brotons, MD, PhD; Joerg J. Meerpohl, MD; Chirag J. Patel, PhD; Benjamin Djulbegovic, MD, PhD; Pablo Alonso-Coello, MD, PhD; Malgorzata M. Bala, MD, PhD; and Gordon H. Guyatt, MD

**Conclusion:** "The panel suggests that adults continue current unprocessed red meat consumption (weak recommendation, low-certainty evidence). Similarly, the panel suggests adults continue current processed meat consumption (weak recommendation, low-certainty evidence)."

News Release from the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, September 30, 2019. New guidelines: No need to reduce red or processed meat consumption

No Funding; strict avoidance of conflict of interest

### Ratio of Polyunsaturated Fat to Saturated Fat (P/S Ratio) for Major Protein Sources



Meta-analysis assessing the effects of red meat on LDL cholesterol (mmol/L) from RCTs by type of comparison diet (Guasch-Ferre M et al. Circulation 2019)



14.067



# Substitution for 1 serving/day of total red meat in relation to premenopausal breast cancer

Premenopausal women Legumes for total red meat Nuts for total red meat Poultry for total red meat Fish for total red meat Eggs for total red meat Total legumes, nuts, poultry and fish for total red meat\*\*



(Farvid MS et al., Int J Cancer 2014)

### Plant-based Diets and Athletic Performance

Design: Randomized, 4-week cross-over study of 22 college athletes on three diets: Whole Food Plant-Based (WFPB), Plant-Based Meat Alternative (PBMA), Animal Protein (Animal)

Outcomes	WFPB	PBMA	Animal
<b>Runners</b> 12-minute time run, meters	2768	2789	2791
<b>Resistance Trainers</b> <i>Machine composite</i> <i>strength, total kg</i>	298	303	313

Conclusion: No significant difference between different sources of protein intake

(Roberts AK et al, BMC, 2022)

14.118

# Summary of Protein Sources

Replacing red meat with a variety of other protein sources, especially nuts, soy, and other legumes, will have major health benefits.



#### Composition of milk from humans, cows, and plants (per cup, 8 oz, or 240 mL)

Type of Milk		Calor Pro (g)	Prot. (g)	Sugar (g)		Fat (g)		Calc.	Pot.	Fiber
				Natural/ Added	Sat.	Mono.	Poly.	(mg)	(mg)	(mg)
Human		172	2.5	17/0	4.9	4.1	1.2	79	125	0
Cow	Whole milk (3.5% fat)	149	7.5	12/0	4.5	2	0.5	276	322	0
	Low fat milk (1% fat)	102	8	12.5/0	1.5	0.7	0.1	305	366	0
Soy	"Unsweet Soymilk" <i>Silk</i>	80	7	1/0	0.5	1	2.5	300	350	2
Almond	"Unsweetened Almondmilk" Califa Farms	35	1	0/0	0	N/A	N/A	430	35	1
Cashew	"Cashew Unsweetened" Pacific Foods	50	1	0/0	0.5	N/A	N/A	44	N/A	N/A
Coconut	"Coconut Unsweetened" So Delicious	45	0	0/0	3.5	N/A	N/A	130	40	1
Rice	"Enriched Unsweetened" <i>Rice Dream</i>	70	0	<1/0	0	1.5	0.5	325	N/A	0
Hemp	"Hemp Unsweetened" Pacific Foods	60	3	0/0	N/A	0.5	3.5	257	100	N/A
Oat	"Oat Yeah, the Og sugar one" Silk	60	1	0/0	0	N/A	N/A	460	170	1

(Willett & Ludwig, NEJM 2020)

# Pooled hazard ratios (95% CI) for type 2 diabetes according to overall, healthful, and unhealthful plant-based diet indices



(Satija A et al. PLOS Med 2016)

### SSBs and ASBs in relation to total mortality

(*n* = 118,316 men and women with 36,436 deaths)



(Malik VS et al. Circulation 2019)





The EAT-*Lancet* Commission on Healthy Diets From Sustainable Food Systems

> Food Planet Health



Base: Nuts, soy, beans, fruit, vegetables, whole grains, plant oils





Estimated avoided premature deaths among adults by global adoption of reference diet

	Percentage	Number		
Comparative Risk Model*	19%	11100 000 (using Global Burden of Disease number of total deaths; 158 countries)		
Global Burden of Disease Model†	22-4%	10886000 (195 countries)		
Empirical Disease Risk‡	23.6%	11600000 (190 countries)		

### Turning up the heat

Temperatures in 2020 tied 2016's record levels. They were about 1°C above a 1951–80 average, or 1.25°C hotter than preindustrial levels.



Science, 22 Jan, 2021 vol 371, page 335

# **Environmental Effects per Serving of Food Produced**

![](_page_27_Figure_1.jpeg)

![](_page_28_Picture_0.jpeg)

Mai Pham, STAR GINGER | LEMON GRASS KITCHEN

#### West Africa

![](_page_29_Picture_1.jpeg)

![](_page_30_Picture_0.jpeg)

Feeding 10 billion people a healthy diet within safe planetary boundaries is possible and will improve the health and well being of billions of people. This could allow us to pass onto our children a viable planet.

![](_page_31_Picture_1.jpeg)