**Added sugars**—Sugars, syrups, and other caloric sweeteners that are added to foods during processing, preparation, or consumed separately. Added sugars do not include naturally occurring sugars such as those in fruit or milk. Names for added sugars include: brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, maltose, malt syrup, molasses, raw sugar, turbinado sugar, trehalose, and sucrose.

**Body mass index (BMI)**—A measure of weight in kilograms (kg) relative to height in meters (m) squared. BMI is considered a reasonably reliable indicator of total body fat, which is related to the risk of disease and death. BMI status categories include underweight, healthy weight, overweight, and obese. Overweight and obese describe ranges of weight that are greater than what is considered healthy for a given height, while underweight describes a weight that is lower than what is considered healthy. Because children and adolescents are growing, their BMI is plotted on growth charts for sex and age. The percentile indicates the relative position of the child’s BMI among children of the same sex and age.

**Calorie**—Unit of (heat) energy available from the metabolism of food that is required to sustain the body’s various functions, including metabolic processes and physical activity. Carbohydrate, fat, protein, and alcohol provide all of the energy supplied by foods and beverages.

**Calorie balance**—The balance between calories consumed through eating and drinking and those expended through physical activity and metabolic processes.

**Calorie density**—Amount of calories provided per unit of food weight. Also known as “energy density.” Foods high in water and/or dietary fiber typically have fewer calories per gram and are lower in calorie density, while foods higher in fat are generally higher in calorie density. Calorie density is most useful when considering the eating pattern in its entirety. A healthy eating pattern with low calorie density can include consumption of a small amount of some calorie-dense foods (such as olive oil and nuts). An eating pattern low in calorie density is characterized by a relatively high intake of vegetables, fruit, and dietary fiber and a relatively low intake of total fat, saturated fat, and added sugars. (See “Nutrient dense.”)

**Carbohydrates**—One of the macronutrients. They include sugars, starches, and fibers:

- **Sugars**—A simple carbohydrate composed of one unit (a monosaccharide, such as glucose or fructose) or two joined units (a disaccharide, such as lactose or sucrose). Sugars include those occurring naturally in foods, those added to foods during processing and preparation, and those consumed separately.
- **Starches**—Many glucose units linked together into long chains. Examples of foods containing starch include grains (e.g., brown rice, oats, wheat, barley, corn), beans and peas (e.g., kidney beans, garbanzo beans, lentils, split peas), and tubers (e.g., potatoes, carrots). Refined starches are added to foods during food processing or cooking as thickeners and stabilizers. Corn starch is an example of a refined starch.
- **Fiber**—Nondigestible carbohydrates and lignin that are intrinsic and intact in plants. Fiber consists of dietary fiber (the fiber naturally occurring in foods) and functional fiber, which are isolated, nondigestible carbohydrates that have beneficial physiological effects in humans.

**Cardiovascular disease**—Diseases of the heart and diseases of the blood vessel system (arteries, capillaries, veins) within a person’s entire body.

**Cholesterol**—A natural sterol present in all animal tissues. Free cholesterol is a component of cell membranes and serves as a precursor for steroid hormones (estrogen, testosterone, aldosterone), and for bile acids. Humans are able to synthesize sufficient cholesterol to meet biologic requirements, and there is no evidence for a dietary requirement for cholesterol.

- **Dietary cholesterol**—Cholesterol found in foods of animal origin, including meat, seafood, poultry, eggs, and dairy products. Biologically, a liver is required to produce cholesterol, thus plant foods, such as grains, vegetables and fruits, and oils contain no dietary cholesterol.
- **Serum cholesterol**—Cholesterol that travels in the blood as part of distinct particles containing...
both lipids and proteins (lipoproteins). Three major classes of lipoproteins are found in the serum of a fasting individual: low-density lipoprotein (LDL), high-density lipoprotein (HDL), and very-low-density lipoprotein (VLDL). Another lipoprotein class, intermediate-density lipoprotein (IDL), resides between VLDL and LDL; in clinical practice, IDL is included in the LDL measurement. Elevated lipid levels in the blood is known as hyperlipidemia.

**Cross-contamination**—The spread of bacteria, viruses, or other harmful agents from one surface to another.

**Cup equivalent**—The amount of a food product that is considered equal to 1 cup from the vegetable, fruit, or milk food group. A cup equivalent for some foods may be less than a measured cup because the food has been concentrated (such as raisins or tomato paste), more than a cup for some foods that are airy in their raw form and do not compress well into a cup (such as salad greens), or measured in a different form (such as cheese).

**Diabetes**—A disorder of metabolism—the way the body uses digested food for growth and energy. In diabetes, the pancreas either produces little or no insulin (a hormone that helps glucose, the body’s main source of fuel, get into cells), or the cells do not respond appropriately to the insulin that is produced. The three main types of diabetes are type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. About 90 to 95 percent of people with diabetes have type 2. This form of diabetes is most often associated with older age, obesity, family history of diabetes, previous history of gestational diabetes, physical inactivity, and certain ethnicities. About 80 percent of people with type 2 diabetes are overweight. Prediabetes, also called impaired fasting glucose or impaired glucose tolerance, is a state in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be called diabetes.

**Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs)**—A set of nutrient-based reference values that expand upon and replace the former Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) in the United States and the Recommended Nutrient Intakes (RNIs) in Canada. They include:

- **Acceptable Macronutrient Distribution Range (AMDR)**—Range of intake for a particular energy source that is associated with reduced risk of chronic disease while providing intakes of essential nutrients. An intake outside of the AMDR carries the potential of increased risk of chronic diseases and/or insufficient intakes of essential nutrients.

- **Adequate Intake (AI)**—A recommended average daily nutrient intake level based on observed or experimentally determined approximations or estimates of mean nutrient intake by a group (or groups) of apparently healthy people. This is used when the Recommended Dietary Allowance cannot be determined.

- **Estimated Average Requirement (EAR)**—The average daily nutrient intake level estimated to meet the requirement of half the healthy individuals in a particular life stage and gender group.

- **Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)**—The average dietary intake level that is sufficient to meet the nutrient requirement of nearly all (97 to 98%) healthy individuals in a particular life stage and gender group.

- **Tolerable Upper Intake Level (UL)**—The highest average daily nutrient intake level likely to pose no risk of adverse health effects for nearly all individuals in a particular life stage and gender group. As intake increases above the UL, the potential risk of adverse health effects increases.

**Eating pattern**—The combination of foods and beverages that constitute an individual’s complete dietary intake over time. This may be a description of a customary way of eating or a description of a combination of foods recommended for consumption. Specific examples include USDA Food Patterns, Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) Eating Plan, and Mediterranean, vegetarian, and vegan patterns.

**Enrichment**—The addition of specific nutrients (iron, thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin) to refined-grain products in order to replace losses of the nutrients that occur during processing.

**Essential nutrient**—A vitamin, mineral, fatty acid, or amino acid required for normal body functioning
that either cannot be synthesized by the body at all, or cannot be synthesized in amounts adequate for good health, and thus must be obtained from a dietary source. Other food components, such as dietary fiber, while not essential, also are considered to be nutrients.

**Fast food**—Foods designed for ready availability, use, or consumption and sold at eating establishments for quick availability or take-out. Fast food restaurants also are known as quick-service restaurants.

**Fats**—One of the macronutrients. (See “Solid Fats” and “Oils” and Figure 3-3 in Chapter 3.)

- **Monounsaturated fatty acids**—Monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs) have one double bond. Plant sources that are rich in MUFAs include nuts and vegetable oils that are liquid at room temperature (e.g., canola oil, olive oil, and high oleic safflower and sunflower oils).

- **Polyunsaturated fatty acids**—Polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) have two or more double bonds and may be of two types, based on the position of the first double bond.
  - **Omega-6 PUFAs**—Linoleic acid, one of the n-6 fatty acids, is required but cannot be synthesized by humans and, therefore, is considered essential in the diet. Primary sources are liquid vegetable oils, including soybean oil, corn oil, and safflower oil. Also called n-6 fatty acids.
  - **Omega-3 PUFAs**—Alpha-linolenic acid is an n-3 fatty acid that is required because it is not synthesized by humans and, therefore, is considered essential in the diet. It is obtained from plant sources, including soybean oil, canola oil, walnuts, and flaxseed. Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) are long chain n-3 fatty acids that are contained in fish and shellfish. Also called n-3 fatty acids.

- **Saturated fatty acids**—Saturated fatty acids have no double bonds. Examples include the fatty acids found in animal products, such as meat, milk and milk products, hydrogenated shortening, and coconut or palm oils. In general, foods with relatively high amounts of saturated fatty acids are solid at room temperature.

- **Trans fatty acids**—Unsaturated fatty acids that contain one or more isolated double bonds in a trans configuration produced by chemical hydrogenation. Sources of trans fatty acids include hydrogenated/partially hydrogenated vegetable oils that are used to make shortening and commercially prepared baked goods, snack foods, fried foods, and margarine. Trans fatty acids also are present in foods that come from ruminant animals (e.g., cattle and sheep). Such foods include dairy products, beef, and lamb.

**FightBAC!**—A national public education campaign to promote food safety to consumers and educate them on how to handle and prepare food safely. In this campaign, pathogens are represented by a cartoonlike bacteria character named “BAC.”

**Food security**—Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes, at a minimum: (a) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods; and (b) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (e.g., without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).

**Food insecurity**—The limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways. Hunger is defined as the uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food, or the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food.

**Foodborne disease**—Disease caused by consuming foods or beverages contaminated with disease-causing bacteria or viruses. Many different disease-causing microbes, or pathogens, can contaminate foods, so there are many different foodborne infections. In addition, poisonous chemicals, or other harmful substances, can cause foodborne diseases if they are present in food. The most commonly recognized foodborne infections are those caused by the bacteria *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, and *E. coli* O157:H7, and by a group of viruses called calicivirus, also known as the Norwalk and Norwalk-like viruses.

**Fortification**—The addition of one or more essential nutrients to a food, whether or not it is normally contained in the food. Fortification may be used for the purpose of preventing or correcting a
deficiency in the population or specific population groups; to restore naturally occurring nutrients lost during processing, storage, or handling; or to increase the nutrient level above that found in comparable food and to serve as a meaningful source of the specific nutrient.

**Hypertension**—A condition, also known as high blood pressure, in which blood pressure remains elevated over time. Hypertension makes the heart work too hard, and the high force of the blood flow can harm arteries and organs, such as the heart, kidneys, brain, and eyes. Uncontrolled hypertension can lead to heart attacks, heart failure, kidney disease, stroke, and blindness. Prehypertension is defined as blood pressure that is higher than normal but not high enough to be defined as hypertension.

**Macronutrient**—A dietary component that provides energy. Macronutrients include protein, fats, carbohydrates, and alcohol.

**Nutrient dense**—Nutrient-dense foods and beverages provide vitamins, minerals, and other substances that may have positive health effects, with relatively few calories. The term “nutrient dense” indicates the nutrients and other beneficial substances in a food have not been “diluted” by the addition of calories from added solid fats, added sugars, or added refined starches, or by the solid fats naturally present in the food. Nutrient-dense foods and beverages are lean or low in solid fats, and minimize or exclude added solid fats, sugars, starches, and sodium. Ideally, they also are in forms that retain naturally occurring components, such as dietary fiber. All vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat milk and milk products, and lean meats and poultry—when prepared without solid fats or added sugars—are nutrient-dense foods. (See “Calorie density.”)

**Oils**—Fats that are liquid at room temperature. Oils come from many different plants and from seafood. Some common oils include canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean, and sunflower oils. A number of foods are naturally high in oils, such as nuts, olives, some fish, and avocados. Foods that are mainly oil include mayonnaise, certain salad dressings, and soft (tub or squeeze) margarine with no trans fats. Most oils are high in monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats, and low in saturated fats. A few plant oils, including coconut oil and palm kernel oil, are high in saturated fats and for nutritional purposes should be considered solid fats. Hydrogenated oils that contain trans fats also should be considered solid fats for nutritional purposes. (See “Fats” and Figure 3-3 in Chapter 3.)

**Ounce-equivalent (oz-eq)**—The amount of a food product that is considered equal to 1 ounce from the grain group or the protein foods group. An oz-eq for some foods may be less than a measured ounce if the food is concentrated or low in water content (nuts, peanut butter, dried meats, or flour), more than an ounce if the food contains a large amount of water (tofu, cooked beans, cooked rice, or cooked pasta).

**Portion size**—The amount of a food served or consumed in one eating occasion. A portion is not a standardized amount, and the amount considered to be a portion is subjective and varies. (See “Serving size.”)

**Protein**—One of the macronutrients. Protein is the major functional and structural component of every cell in the body. Proteins are composed of amino acids, nine of which cannot be synthesized to meet the body’s needs and therefore must be obtained from the diet. The quality of a source of dietary protein depends on its ability to provide the nitrogen and amino acid requirements that are necessary for the body’s growth, maintenance, and repair.

**Refined grains**—Grains and grain products missing the bran, germ, and/or endosperm; any grain product that is not a whole grain. Many refined grains are low in fiber and enriched with thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and iron, and fortified with folic acid as required by U.S. regulations.

**Seafood**—Marine animals that live in the sea and in freshwater lakes and rivers. Seafood includes fish, such as salmon, tuna, trout, and tilapia, and shellfish, such as shrimp, crab, and oysters.

**Serving size**—A standardized amount of a food, such as a cup or an ounce, used in providing information about a food within a food group, such as in dietary guidance. Serving size on the Nutrition Facts label is determined based on the Reference Amounts...
Customarily Consumed (RACC) for foods that have similar dietary usage, product characteristics, and customarily consumed amounts for consumers to make “like product” comparisons. (See “Portion size.”)

**Solid fats**—Fats that are usually not liquid at room temperature. Solid fats are found in most animal foods but also can be made from vegetable oils through hydrogenation. Some common solid fats include: butter, beef fat (tallow, suet), chicken fat, pork fat (lard), stick margarine, coconut oil, palm oil, and shortening. Foods high in solid fats include: full-fat (regular) cheese, cream, whole milk, ice cream, well-marbled cuts of meats, regular ground beef, bacon, sausages, poultry skin, and many baked goods (such as cookies, crackers, donuts, pastries, and croissants). Solid fats contain more saturated fatty acids and/or *trans* fatty acids, and less monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fatty acids than do most oils, which are liquid at room temperature. (See “Fats” and Figure 3-3 in Chapter 3.)

**Sugar-sweetened beverages**—Liquids that are sweetened with various forms of sugars that add calories. These beverages include, but are not limited to, soda, fruit ades and fruit drinks, and sports and energy drinks.

**Whole grains**—Grains and grain products made from the entire grain seed, usually called the kernel, which consists of the bran, germ, and endosperm. If the kernel has been cracked, crushed, or flaked, it must retain nearly the same relative proportions of bran, germ, and endosperm as the original grain in order to be called whole grain. Many, but not all, whole grains are also a source of dietary fiber.