The 2025 Dietary Guidelines Get It Wrong: Here's What the Science Actually Says Transcript

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Opening the mismatch between science and the graphic

All right, stop. One moment. Take a look at this picture. This is the problem. Because the science inside the guidelines, it says the healthiest patterns that they're built on plants.

But the marketing image makes it look like you should be prioritizing meat and dairy. That's why today I'm gonna show you exactly where the Science and the Message don't match using their own report.

And at the end, I'll give you a 20-second plant-forward scientific evidence-based version of what this graphic should have been. I'm Dr. Columbus Batiste, an interventional cardiologist and a lifestyle advocate.

Listen, I live in the cath lab. Just ask my wife. And every day nearly I treat the end result of bad nutrition, high blood pressure, heart attacks, stroke, and heart failure.

So when the country gets a national eat this message, So here's how we're doing this today. Real simple. I'm going to give you three receipts from their own science.

Receipt number one, the healthiest patterns are plant forward. Receipt Number two, The swaps you make actually matter. its impact on cholesterol. You ready?

Let's dig in deep. All right, I need to be fair because there are things this guideline absolutely got right. Number one, they finally got loud about ultra processed foods.

The salty, the sweet, ready to eat stuff that hijacks your appetite. Second thing, take a firm stance against added sugar and sugar sweetened beverages.

What the guidelines got right

Third thing they tell people to prioritize fiber rich whole grains and cut refined carbohydrates. And this part here, it bears a lot. The Journal of Nutrition reported that habitual sugary drink intake has been linked with higher inflammatory markers like C-reactive protein, which is associated with increased cardiac events.

So yes, these parts are solid. But here's the problem. This public-facing message sounds a bit like, eat real food. Lots of options. Protein at every meal.

Healthy fats. Whole grains. Sounds great, doesn't it? I even I like that. But then you see the graphic, this inverted pyramid-style image. And the visual takeaway is protein plus dairy plus healthy fats equals the headline.

Vegetables and fruits? Well, they're present, I think. Oh, there they are, but not hit leading. Whole grains? There they, are small and quiet. That's a huge disconnect because their scientific report, it describes a very different emphasis.

All right, so we need to go through this and dig into these receipts. Let's start first with the research. So when we look at the scientific reports of this 2025 dietary guidelines advisory committee, they actually do a good job of summarizing the dietary patterns that have been linked to better health outcomes.

That's what we all care about. And here's is what repeatedly shows up in patterns with favorable outcomes. Higher intake of vegetables, fruits, legumes, and nuts.

Also, higher intake whole grains and sometimes fish and seafood. But lower intake refined grains, red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened beverages and foods, as well as saturated fat.

Plant-forward patterns in the evidence

Now listen. This is the part that should be bold in billboard material. Because guess what? The scientists, they graded the evidence linking these dietary patterns to cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes as strong in adults.

That means the force was strong with them. So the core pattern isn't confusing. The dietary pattern, eat more plants, more fiber, and more legumes and nuts.

Eat less or no red meat and processed meat. No or less sugary drinks. Have no or least saturated fat. All right, quick quiz. I don't want you to overthink this.

What food group would you guess is showing up again and again as a favorable dietary eating pattern? No, it's not steak. It's no butter. Is not cheese.

Its legumes, beans and peas and lentils, which brings us to our second receipt, protein. Now the marketing summary, highlights high quality protein as if all protein is created equal.

And then it lists everything under the earth from eggs and poultry to red meat, plus beans, and lintels. But the science gets more specific when you dig down deep inside of it.

And it talks about what happens when use swap foods. So in their own report, they highlight that substituting red meat with plant protein sources, beans and peas, nuts and seeds and soy and lentils, is associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease morbidity.

And they gave the evidence grade as moderate, which is substantial. They also note that substituting red meat with whole grains or vegetables is linked also with lower cardiovascular disease morbidity, again, grade that as a moderate.

Another significant grade. So here's my translation, the cardiologist's translation. If you want protein at every meal, That's actually okay, right? But the default protein in a heart protective pattern should lean plant first.

Now based on substitution research that was reviewed, here's the direction that tends to be the most heart-protective.

Protein swaps and heart health

Make your default proteins plant-based. Beans and lentils, tofu and tempeh. If you're not fully plant based or vegan or you are still transitioning, adopt fish or seafood as an option followed by poultry.

Now red and processed meats, they're like driving through a red light. It's not beneficial for your overall health. All right, this brings us to receipt number three, fats.

Now the marketing phrase, healthy fats, it gets thrown around once again in a similar fashion to protein, as if everything is equal. But that's not the case.

And their report is clear when it compares specific foods and specific fats. As a matter of fact, they state replacing butter with plant-based oils and spreads that are predominantly unsaturated will decrease your LDL cholesterol.

Now the advisory committee recognizes evidence as strong, right? So read that again. It's what we read in the ledger. Swapping butter for plant-based oils and spreads results in your low-density lipoprotein going down.

That's not an opinion, that's fact. that is a strong conclusion. You might be thinking, okay doc, but listen, does that show up in real-world outcomes?

Well, it's good that you brought that up because there was a large analysis published in the Journal of American Medical Association following over 220,000 US adults for 33 years.

And they found that higher butter intake, was associated with higher mortality. while higher plant-based oil intake was associated with a lower mortality.

And so they decided to develop this model, and they replaced about 10 grams a day of butter with plant based oils, And they found that it was associate with 17% lower risk of death.

Now this is observational data, so it's not proof, right? Causation and correlation, but it is a powerful signal that replacement actually matters, which you're replacing on your plate matters.

Here's the cath lab truth. I've seen healthy looking people, fit people muscular people. who tell me how they eat almost any and everything, but their arteries don't match their outward appearance.

Their arteries are highly blocked in disease.

Fats, butter, and plant oils

So I'll tell you this, when a public graphic visually elevates butter adjacent, saturated fat heavy choices without scientific clarity on replacement, all that happens is confusion.

And I tell ya this confusion is not neutral. Confusion, it costs lives. All right, quick check in. Real life stuff, what's your default fat that you use at home?

Be honest, you still using lard? How about ghee? Margarine? Butter? Olive oil? Because that one replacement shows up in the science and in your labs. Another mismatch from the dietary guidelines for America.

Written guidance, it says prioritize fiber-rich whole grains. But the visual, whole-grains look small and secondary, hard to find them. And here's the problem.

Most people aren't going to read the report. They won't identify the fact that there is power in consuming whole grain. they're going to follow the picture.

A picture is worth a thousand words. So the pictures should make the right thing obvious. Whole grains and legumes are foundational. They're not optional.

Besides that, this is where I do give the Dietary Guidelines Association some credit again. Once again, calling out that ultra processed foods and sugar sweetened beverages, it is a big deal.

And remember, sweet drinks aren't neutral. they push your metabolism and your inflammation in the wrong direction. If you do one thing this week after watching this video, replace your sweet drink.

Replace it with water or maybe sparkling water, a little lemon, lime and mint. Maybe some unsweetened green tea or coffee. Now not that coffee that you turn into a dessert with the sugar in the cream, but real coffee, black coffee That one move, it can change your metabolic direction.

All right, so the summary document that they put out also says that chronic diseases may actually improve low carb eating. Now, the honest truth is that can be true, but only if we stop pretending that all carbs are the same.

There are two types of carbs, there's whole food carbohydrates and there are ultra processed carbohydrates. That's what I call garbage. Now garbage, once again, these are carbs or carbohydrates that behave like garbage in

your body.

It's the stuff that's engineered to be easy to overeat, easy-to-absorb, sweet drinks, packaged snacks, refined bakery goods.

Whole grains, sugary drinks, and low-carb nuance

And here's a key that studies are continually telling us. Ultra-processed carbohydrates are associated with a higher chronic disease risk, while whole-food, fiber-rich carbs, like beans and intact grains, they're protective.

Similar magnitude, opposite directions. So when someone tells me, doc, I'm going low carb. I've cut out carbs. My first question is, what exactly are you cutting out?

Are you getting garbage or are cutting beans and greens and oats? Because those are not the same move. If low-carb means fewer sugary drinks and refined snacks, that is tremendous.

It low car means you're ditching fiber rich foods and you are replacing them with saturated heavy fat choices. Now you trading one risk for the other.

Carb quantity matters for some people, but carb quality it matters for everyone. All right, quick moment. Choose your move. If you're going low carb or you've gone low-carb, what have you or are you replacing those carbs with?

More vegetables and legumes or more cheese and butter? Now that replacement, it determines whether your labs are going to improve or your risk shifts sideways.

So here's a clean close the loop, right? Their science back patterns are plant-forward. High vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, lower bread and processed meat, sugary drinks, refined grains, and saturated fat.

There's substitution evidence it favors plant based swaps. Red meat for plant protein, whole grains or vegetables is linked with lower cardiovascular disease mortality.

Fat science? It's clear. Swapping butter for plant oils, it will lower your LDL and there is strong evidence to support this as well as evidence that support a lower mortality when we swap butter with plant-based oils.

But I'll tell you what, that visual depiction, It doesn't lead with legumes and whole grains. It leads with protein, dairy, and fats as the headline. And it makes you question what is the truth, but we've just uncovered what the true is.

The science is, build the pattern around plants. The graphic implies, lead with animal products. That contradiction? That's the whole problem. So the graphic has to match the science.

Period. Alright, here's that 20 second version, I promise. Here's how to apply the best science without getting trapped in the graphic.

Closing summary and plant-forward takeaway

Just make half your plate with vegetables and fruit. Put one quarter legumes or soy, talking about beans and lentils, tofu, tempeh, another quarter whole grains, oats, brown rice, quinoa, or maybe even a starchy vegetable like a purple potato, depending on your goals.

Add in some seed-based dressings or olive oil to top it off to get that flavor. and then transform your drink from sugary beverages to water-based drinks.

And if you want a simple weekly scorecard, make sure you get in beans on a daily basis, eliminate the sweet drinks, and try to incorporate whole grain meals throughout the day.

If you do that consistently, you're aligned with the dietary patterns repeatedly associated with better outcomes. All right, quick safety note. You can't forget this.

Always consult with your provider. Make sure you're engaging in shared decision-making because I'll tell you what, we work for you, you don't work us.

And remember this, if you have chest pain, don' self-diagnose, get evaluated. All right, last, I want you to drop a comment. Now, do you think the national graphics should show beans and vegetables at the top?

Since that's what the evidence keeps supporting, type in yes or no. No, i'm not here to erase your culture or your traditions. I'm here help you build new traditions surrounding health-promoting foods that can help lower your health risk.

Mainly, so you can stay out with my calf lab. All right, I want you to always remember, if you want to go fast, go alone. If you wanna go far, together.

Let's go together by building healthier hearts and stronger communities. So like it, share it. Send it save a life. I'll see you next time.