

Food choices affect chronic illness

Diets high in both saturated fat and sugar can even increase the risk of kidney and liver diseases. Simple and manageable adjustments to diet and beverage choice can result in dramatic improvements in health. They can also serve as preventive measures against silent killers such as obesity, hypertension – elevated blood pressure – and diabetes, protecting the health of main organs such as the brain, eyes, heart, and kidneys, and increasing life span.

Dietary trends

Although nutritional intake in the United States has improved in recent years, the population is still largely falling short of recommended nutritional guidelines. Notably, people do not consume enough vegetables, whole grains, and fatty acids, and they eat too many empty calories and salty meals.

The association between diet and cardiovascular disease in the United States is well known; in particular, diets high in sodium and low in vegetables, whole grains and fatty acids are most strongly associated with hypertension, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes. High-sodium diets are most predictive of mortality due to cardiometabolic disease.

Sugar (carbohydrates and glucose)

There is a lot of confusion in the public sphere regarding sugar and carbohydrates and whether these two are different or the same. Neither train of thought is completely correct: Sugars are, in fact, a type of carbohydrate.

Carbohydrates are a major macronutrient and are essential for human health. They are most easily ingested and converted to glucose, which is the essential energy source for all cells of the body. After carbohydrate ingestion, blood glucose increases and the pancreas responds by releasing insulin, which allows glucose to enter the cells of the brain, liver, muscles, and adipose tissue to be used as energy.