



March 2025

BENEFITS BUZZ...



The rising rates of obesity and diet-related chronic diseases are a growing concern worldwide. This issue takes a closer look at the factors that contribute to this growing issue and how we can address them.

IN THIS EDITION

- National Nutrition Month
- Updates & Reminders

POOR DIET CHOICES



Many individuals are consuming diets high in processed foods, sugars, and unhealthy fats.

These choices are often influenced by convenience, taste preferences, and lack of nutritional knowledge. The modern food environment, with the prevalence of fast food chains, sugary beverages, and ultra-processed snacks, often makes unhealthy options more accessible than nutritious ones. Over time, these choices can lead to obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic conditions.

✦ Enjoy this article from United Healthcare on ways to eat healthy on a budget.

[CLICK HERE](#)



LACK OF ACCESS ✦

In many low-income, urban or rural areas, there is limited access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy food options. This is often referred to as a "food desert," where grocery stores and farmers' markets offering healthy choices are far away or nonexistent. People in these areas may have to rely on convenience stores or fast food outlets, where healthier options are either unavailable or too expensive.



Inadequate Nutritional Screening and Counseling:



Despite the strong link between diet and health outcomes, many healthcare settings lack adequate nutritional screening. For example, routine screenings for obesity or malnutrition may not always be comprehensive, and patients might not receive the counseling they need to make healthier choices. Even when counseling is provided, healthcare professionals may not always have the time or resources to deliver effective nutrition education. This leaves patients without the guidance they need to manage their diet-related health concerns.

Genetics and Biology

Genetic Predisposition: Genetics can play a role in obesity, as some people may be more predisposed to gain weight due to factors such as metabolism, fat storage, and how their body regulates hunger and satiety.

Physical Inactivity

Sedentary Lifestyles: Many Americans have sedentary jobs, spend a lot of time sitting (like working on computers or watching TV), and lack sufficient physical activity. The rise of technology, like smartphones and streaming services, has also contributed to people spending more time indoors and less time moving.

TAKE ACTION!

While personal responsibility and lifestyle choices are important, broader societal changes—such as improved access to healthy foods, better nutrition education, and more opportunities for physical activity—are necessary to address the poor nutritional issue at its roots. It requires coordinated efforts from individuals, communities, governments, and industries to make meaningful change.

Nutrition Guidelines and Recommendations

Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA): Every five years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) publish the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These guidelines provide evidence-based recommendations on what constitutes a healthy diet for people of all ages, and they are used to inform public health policies and programs.

[Learn more here.](#)



Food Labeling and Transparency

Nutrition Facts Label: The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) has updated the Nutrition Facts Label on packaged food to make it easier for consumers to make healthier choices. Key changes include larger fonts for calorie counts, updated serving sizes, and added information on added sugars.

Front-of-Pack Labels: Some food manufacturers are voluntarily adopting front-of-pack labeling, which provides a quick summary of nutritional information, making it easier for consumers to make healthier decisions at a glance.

More Transparency in Ingredients: There is also increased focus on ingredient transparency, helping consumers identify what's in the food they eat and make better-informed choices.

GET ACTIVE

Free 1-Week Trial Membership!

The Club At City Center

Group fitness classes

Lap swimming

Sauna & steam room

And much more!

Call now to schedule your trial: 510-895-1010

Take the first step toward your wellness today!



MEAL PREP

Create a Weekly Menu: Plan your meals ahead of time to reduce the temptation of buying fast food or unhealthy snacks. Make a shopping list based on your menu to avoid impulse purchases.

Use What You Have: Check what's in your pantry and fridge before shopping to avoid buying duplicates.



Watch for Sales and Use Coupons

Take Advantage of Discounts: Stock up on non-perishable or freezable items when they go on sale.

Use Coupons: Many stores have apps or websites with coupons that can save you money, especially on healthier items.



Grow Your Own Food

If possible, plant a small garden with affordable, easy-to-grow foods like tomatoes, herbs, spinach, or carrots. This can save money in the long run and provide fresh, nutritious options.

[Click here to engage with your healthcare provider.](#)

Engaging with your healthcare providers about improving your diet and exercise habits is a great way to take proactive steps toward better health.



ATTENTION PLEASE



Have questions regarding the **FMLA** process or need to submit a request? The **Risk Management Division** now has a dedicated email address for Family Medical Leave inquiries. Please direct all questions and requests to **FamilyMedicalLeave@oaklandca.gov** for assistance.

ISSUE	WHO TO CONTACT	HOW
CHANGE OF ADDRESS	Payroll Reporter for your department.	-
WITHHOLDINGS (W-2, ETC)	Payroll Reporter for your department	-
RETIREMENT QUESTIONS	Retirement Division	Nhan Hua NHua@oaklandca.gov