



# Research Shows That Consuming Avocados May Improve Diet Quality

A healthy dietary pattern contributes to overall health and reduces the risk of diet-related chronic diseases, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers.<sup>1</sup> The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage choosing more nutrient-dense foods in place of less healthy options to:

- ✓ Meet nutrient needs,
- ✓ Help achieve a healthy body weight, and
- ✓ Reduce the risk of chronic disease.<sup>1</sup>

*However, most Americans do not follow the Dietary Guidelines.<sup>1</sup> Higher intakes of vegetables are consistently associated with the healthiest eating patterns. Yet...*



*fewer* than

**1 in 10**

Americans consume enough vegetables<sup>1</sup>



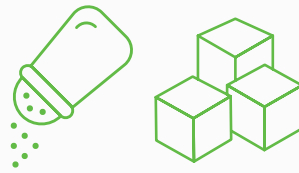
**74%**

of Americans **exceed** the limit for refined grains

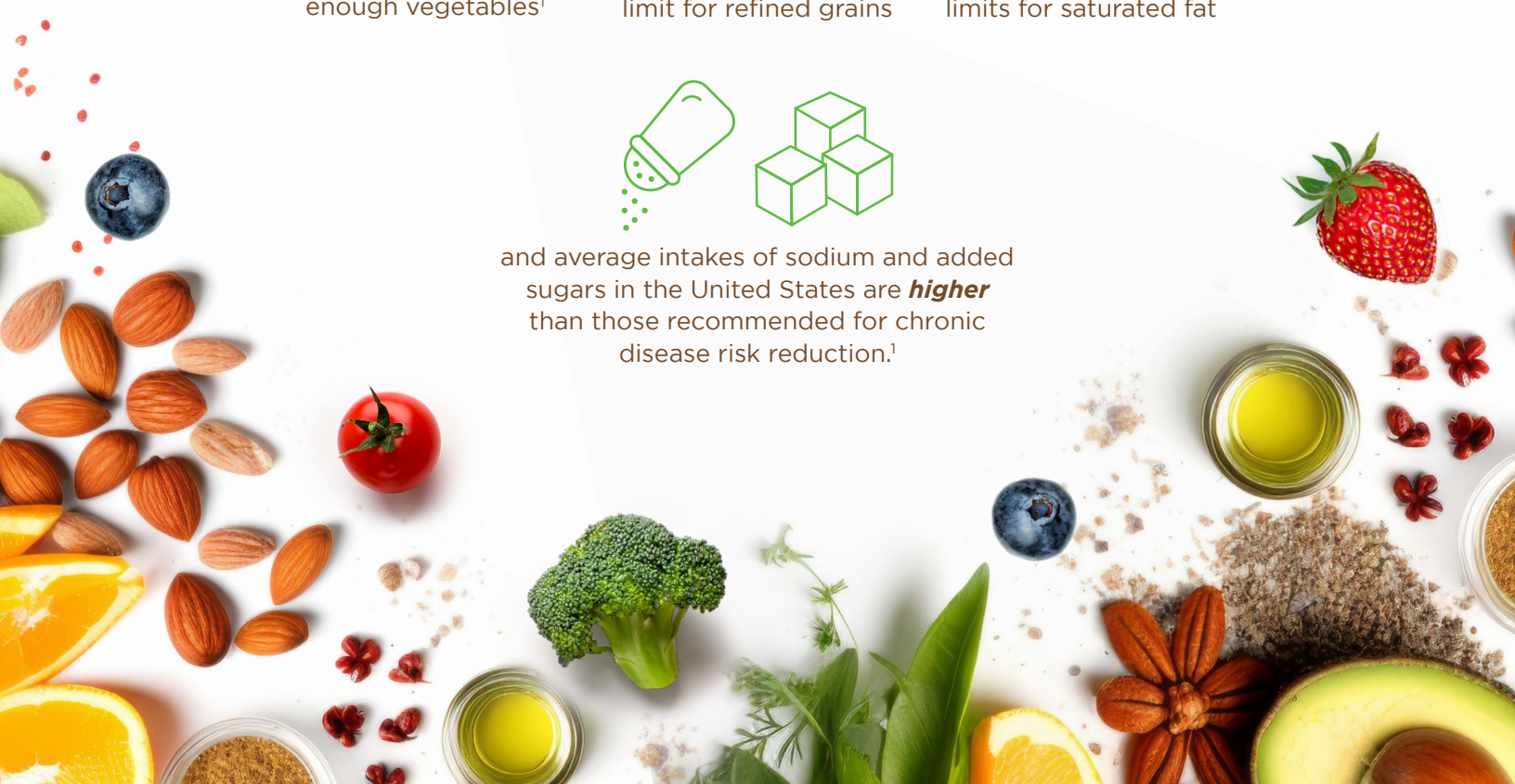


**77%**

of Americans **exceed** limits for saturated fat

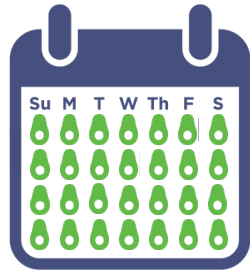


and average intakes of sodium and added sugars in the United States are **higher** than those recommended for chronic disease risk reduction.<sup>1</sup>



# CLINICAL STUDY EVALUATES THE IMPACT OF AVOCADO INTAKE ON DIET QUALITY

A 26-week randomized controlled study conducted among 1,008 adults with obesity examined changes in diet quality in response to avocado supplementation.<sup>2</sup>



Participants in the intervention group were provided one avocado per day.



Those in the control group were instructed to maintain their usual diet and limit their avocado intake (< 2/month).

***The intervention group also received instructions on ripening, preparing, and serving avocados.***

Diet quality was measured using the Healthy Eating Index (HEI-2015)<sup>3,4</sup>, which assesses alignment with the Dietary Guidelines. HEI-2015 scores were calculated using self-reported data from 24-hour dietary recalls completed at four time points (baseline and weeks 8, 16, and 26) throughout the study. Researchers adjusted the HEI-2015 calculation to align with the USDA's classification of avocados as a vegetable. Avocado servings were included in the Total Vegetable HEI-2015 component and excluded from the HEI-2015 fruit components.

***Despite employing the most conservative estimate of diet quality, providing daily avocados improved diet quality (4.74 points using HEI-2015) compared with the control group.***

Improvements were driven by increased scores for total vegetables, fatty acid ratio (ratio of unsaturated to saturated fatty acids), sodium, refined grains, and added sugars. Adherence to the intervention was associated with better HEI scores and was similar irrespective of participants' race, ethnicity, age, or BMI categories. Improvements in diet quality were not associated with changes in cardiometabolic risk factors. Those in the avocado group also had increased potassium and fiber intake and decreased consumption of animal protein.



*Strengths of the study include the study design, which reduces bias, and the large and diverse sample of participants recruited from four locations throughout the United States, which enhances generalizability. In addition, adherence was high, with 88% of participants in the intervention group reporting avocado intake and over 91% of participants in the control group reporting not consuming avocados during the study. The Avocado Nutrition Center supported this research, which adds to a growing body of evidence showing that avocados can be part of healthy dietary patterns and may displace less healthy options.*

## Reference:

1. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition. 2020.
2. Petersen KS, Smith S, Lichtenstein AH, et al. "One avocado per day as part of usual intake improves diet quality: Exploratory results from a randomized controlled trial." *Curr Dev Nutr*. 2024.
3. Reedy J, Lerman JL, Krebs-Smith SM, et al. "Evaluation of the Healthy Eating Index-2015." *J Acad Nutr Diet*. 2018.
4. Krebs-Smith SM, Pannucci TE, Subar AF, et al. "Update of the Healthy Eating Index: HEI-2015." *J Acad Nutr Diet*. 2018.
5. Clarke, AE, et al. "The Effect of Daily Avocado Intake on Food and Nutrient Displacement in a Free-Living Population with Abdominal Obesity." *Curr Dev Nutr*. 2024.

# TRANSLATING THE SCIENCE OF DIET QUALITY AMONG ADULTS WITH OBESITY



Approximately 74% of adults in the United States have overweight or obesity.<sup>1</sup> The study examined the alignment of a dietary pattern with nutrition recommendations that can help people maintain health and prevent the development of diet-related chronic diseases like obesity.<sup>1</sup>

*The Dietary Guidelines for Americans* encourage healthy eating patterns that consist primarily of nutrient-dense foods and beverages, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and unsaturated fats, and limit foods and drinks high in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.<sup>1</sup>

**Avocados can fit into various healthy eating patterns, such as those recognized by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Avocados are naturally low in saturated fat and do not contain any sodium or added sugars.**

## RECIPES FOR YOUR PATIENTS

Encourage your patients to choose dishes that incorporate a variety of food groups throughout the day.



**Tropical Salad with Avocado and Grilled Shrimp**



**Avocado Bruschetta with Pomegranate and Feta**



**Avocado and Watermelon "Poke"**

Visit [www.LoveOneToday.com/recipes](http://www.LoveOneToday.com/recipes) for more meal and snack ideas for your patients.