



The Healthy Eating Index (HEI) is a measure of diet quality in terms of conformance to Federal dietary guidance. It is used to monitor the quality of American diets; to examine relationships between diet and health-related outcomes and between diet cost and diet quality; to determine the effectiveness of nutrition intervention programs; and to assess the quality of food assistance packages, menus, and the U.S. food supply. The HEI is a scoring metric that can be applied to any defined set of foods, such as previously collected dietary data, a defined menu, or a market basket, to estimate a score. The HEI-2010, which assesses diet quality as specified by the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, is made up of 12 components, as shown below. The total HEI-2010 score is the sum of the component scores and has a maximum of 100 points.

HEI- 2010 ¹ component	Maximum	Standard for maximum score	Standard for minimum score of zero
▲ Adequacy (higher score indicates higher consumption)			
Total Fruit ²	5	≥ 0.8 cup equiv. / 1,000 kcal ¹⁰	No fruit
Whole Fruit ³	5	≥ 0.4 cup equiv. / 1,000 kcal	No whole fruit
Total Vegetables ⁴	5	≥ 1.1 cup equiv. / 1,000 kcal	No vegetables
Greens and Beans ⁴	5	≥ 0.2 cup equiv. / 1,000 kcal	No dark-green vegetables, beans, or peas
Whole Grains	10	≥ 1.5 ounce equiv. / 1,000 kcal	No whole grains
Dairy ⁵	10	≥ 1.3 cup equiv. / 1,000 kcal	No dairy
Total Protein Foods ⁶	5	≥ 2.5 ounce equiv. / 1,000 kcal	No protein foods
Seafood and Plant Proteins ^{6,7}	5	≥ 0.8 ounce equiv. / 1,000 kcal	No seafood or plant proteins
Fatty Acids ⁸	10	(PUFAs + MUFAs) / SFAs ≥ 2.5	(PUFAs + MUFAs) / SFAs ≤ 1.2
▼ Moderation (higher score indicates lower consumption)			
Refined Grains	10	≤ 1.8 ounce equiv. / 1,000 kcal	≥ 4.3 ounce equiv. / 1,000 kcal
Sodium	10	≤ 1.1 gram / 1,000 kcal	≥ 2.0 grams / 1,000 kcal
Empty Calories ⁹	20	≤ 19% of energy	≥ 50% of energy

¹Intakes between the minimum and maximum standards are scored proportionately.

²Includes 100% fruit juice.

³Includes all forms except juice.

⁴Includes any beans and peas not counted as Total Protein Foods.

⁵Includes all milk products, such as fluid milk, yogurt, and cheese, and fortified soy beverages.

⁶Beans and peas are included here (and not with vegetables) when the Total Protein Foods standard is otherwise not met.

⁷Includes seafood, nuts, seeds, soy products (other than beverages) as well as beans and peas counted as Total Protein Foods.

⁸Ratio of poly- and monounsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs and MUFAs) to saturated fatty acids (SFAs).

⁹Calories from solid fats, alcohol, and added sugars; threshold for counting alcohol is > 13 grams/1,000 kcal.

¹⁰Equiv. = equivalent, kcal = kilocalories.

Further details on the HEI- 2010 and scores for the U.S. population are available at <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/HealthyEatingIndex.htm> and <http://riskfactor.cancer.gov/tools/hei/>.

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