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## **American Cancer Society Releases New Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines;**

### **Recommendations Urge More Physical Activity, Community Action**

ATLANTA — February 28, 2002 — The American Cancer Society, the nation's largest voluntary health organization, announced today the release of its new Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines for Cancer Prevention. The new guidelines place more emphasis on the importance of physical activity for both youth and adults, and provide a first-time recommendation for communities to play a role in improving the health of their residents.

“People planning to make changes in their diet and looking to adopt a healthier lifestyle should be sure to also include a strong commitment to regular physical activity,” said Tim Byers, MD, MPH, professor, Preventive Medicine at the University of Colorado Health Science Center and national volunteer for the American Cancer Society. “These healthier behaviors are made easier if governments, worksites, schools and neighborhoods help facilitate them and provide access to the resources people need.”

According to the Society, nearly one-third of the more than 500,000 annual U.S. cancer deaths are attributable to diet and physical activity habits. The Society's newest guidelines, similar to earlier versions, stress adopting a diet with a wide variety of healthy foods that are primarily plant-based. They advise eating five or more daily servings of vegetables and fruits and recommend eating whole grains over refined grains for more nutrients and fiber. In addition, based on evidence that cancer risk is influenced by the *type* of fat consumed, rather than simply

the total amount, the guidelines recommend limiting the intake of foods high in saturated fat.

The new guidelines also urge people to limit their consumption of alcohol if they drink at all, and to lose weight if overweight or obese.

“Maintaining a healthy weight is important to reduce cancer risk. The most healthful way for people to do this is to make healthy dietary choices and to increase their level of physical activity,” said Byers. Physical activity affects cancer risk indirectly, through its role in helping to prevent overweight and obesity, and also plays a more direct role. For example, with colon cancer, physical activity accelerates the movement of food through the digestive system, which reduces the time that the lining of the bowel is exposed to potentially cancer-causing substances. Physical activity’s likely role in breast cancer risk reduction is that it decreases the amount of exposure of breast tissue to circulating estrogen.

“Based on this evidence, we encourage people to be active for at least thirty minutes on five or more days of the week,” Byers said. “And children and teens need to be active at least an hour every day.”

New to this edition of the Society’s guidelines are recommendations for changes in communities, workplaces and schools to ensure that Americans have opportunities to be physically active and eat healthfully.

“Physical education in schools, zoning and urban planning to provide and promote activity, worksite policies and programs that support activity are examples of issues that are critical if people are going to be successful in changing their lifestyles for the better over the long-term,” said Colleen Doyle, MS, RD, director of nutrition and physical activity for the American Cancer Society.

Every five years, the Society works with experts in the fields of nutrition, physical activity and cancer prevention to review current scientific evidence and develop recommendations that reflect the best of what is known about the relationship between diet, activity and cancer risk.

For information about the guidelines, and to obtain a copy of “Living Smart,” the American Cancer Society’s guide to eating healthy and being active, call toll-free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit the American Cancer Society website at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

The American Cancer Society is the nationwide community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy and service.

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