

The (Big, Fat) American Dream

Recently arrived Latinos are healthier than those who have been living here.

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Recent Hispanic immigrants have low incidences of diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol, according to a study from the University of Southern California. But those incidences skyrocket once they adapt to American ways of eating. How can we return to our healthy roots?

Balance the nutrients. The Latino Nutrition Coalition created a Hispanic-specific food pyramid. According to this pyramid, a healthful plate should contain 50 percent fruits and vegetables, 25 percent cereals or starches and 25 percent protein (meat, legumes or nuts).

Get moving! Although some Latinos have jobs that require physical effort, this may not be enough to prevent diabetes and heart disease. A recent study found that walking as little as 30 minutes, five times a week improves health in general.

Don't overeat. In the U.S., "recent immigrants encounter diets they don't recognize, with enormous portions and processed ingredients with high concentrations of sugar and calories," says Dr. Héctor Bourgues, a Mexican nutritionist. "We should only eat until we're satisfied."

Go back to the traditional. In her book *Gordito Doesn't Mean Healthy*, nutritionist Claudia González recommends eating corn tortillas, since they have more fiber and less fat than the flour kind.
