Process Steps to Update and Release the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

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HMD committee to review the process to update the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
October 17, 2016 – Discussion of current process
Overview
Process Steps to Update and Release the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

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Scientific Report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee

- Independent review of current state of science on nutrition and health promotion and disease prevention
- Not a draft of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Large technical document; primary audience is Federal government
- Provides science base to be translated by Federal government into policy language for health professionals in a shorter, concise policy document

Scientific Report of the 2015 Advisory Committee
~2000 pgs. text + NEL.gov documentation
Primary audience: Federal government

Policy document 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
122 pgs. text
Primary audience: Health professionals

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Scientific justification for revisions to the Dietary Guidelines informed by the Advisory Report and public and Federal agency comments
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Advisory Report
Public & Federal Agency Comment on the Advisory Report
Work of Federal Policy Writing Team
Rounds of Review; Revision by Federal Writing Team Members
Departmental Clearance; Review & Approval by Secretaries of HHS & USDA
HHS & USDA Release the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

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Drafting the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Federal Policy Writing Team

Establish policy writing team

- Federal experts from USDA and HHS, balanced Departmental representation, includes a science writer
  - Very familiar with the Advisory Committee’s work and evidence in its report
  - Expert knowledge in the applications of the Guidelines within the Federal government
- Membership is confidential until the policy document is published
- Writers recuse themselves from activities that could be a COI
- Role is to represent the science accurately through policy language to advance the scientific basis of Federal programs

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Drafting the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Federal Policy Writing Team

Writing team initiates its work

- Reviews Advisory Report and most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans
  - Identifies major themes and organization
  - Considers previous Dietary Guidelines recommendations and the suggestions of the Advisory Report
- Supports moving forward or not moving forward
- Supports potential changes to DGA recommendations
- Supports new recommendations
- Were not addressed in the Advisory Report

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Drafting the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Federal Policy Writing Team

Writing team initiates its work

• Public and Federal agency comments are reviewed and discussed
  – Identify scientific justification within the totality of the evidence and not on individual studies
  – Scientific justification not influenced by number of comments on a topic
  – Identify areas that require attention to achieve clarity in terminology/phrasing as the science is translated to policy language

• Chapters drafting begins
  – Scientific justification discussed amongst writing team for changes to the policy language

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Translation of the Evidence into Policy Language

Language Applicable to Federal Programs

- Translate the scientific evidence into nutrition guidance that can support and advance Federal nutrition and health programs and policies

Thoughtful Context

- Consideration of unintended consequences
- Provide continuity and clarity through telling the story of what, why, and how
- Plain language where possible

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Translation of the Evidence into Policy Language

**Association** versus **Causation**

- Several factors may contribute to a health outcome
- Scientific conclusions often based on relationships/associations; studies on cause and effect not available

**Coalescence of Multiple Types of Evidence**

- Original Nutrition Evidence Library systematic reviews
- Existing systematic reviews, meta-analyses, or reports
- Food pattern modeling analyses
- Data analyses

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Translating the Science into Dietary Guidelines Recommendations

- Consider the strength of the evidence

- Recommendations themselves are not “graded”
  - Multiple reviews contribute to the body of evidence from different perspectives
  - Other sources of evidence contribute, which are not graded
    - Data analyses
    - Food pattern modeling analyses
  - Inclusion of evidence on overall dietary patterns
    - Grading individual components within the eating pattern not supported by this evidence base

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Consideration of the Strength of Evidence

• **Strong** evidence reflects a large, high-quality, and/or consistent body of evidence.
  
  – High level of certainty evidence is relevant to population of interest
  – Additional studies unlikely to change conclusions

  *Often lead to policy recommendations with the greatest emphasis because of the confidence generated by the evidence.*

• **Moderate** evidence reflects sufficient evidence to draw conclusions.
  
  – Level of certainty may be restricted by certain limitations in the evidence, such as the amount of evidence available, inconsistencies in findings, or limitations in methodology or generalizability

  *Can support recommendations of varying emphasis, including complementing those with a strong evidence base.*

• **Limited** evidence reflects either a small number of studies, studies of weak design or with inconsistent results, and/or limitations on the generalizability of the findings.

  *Insufficient to inform Key Recommendations.*

  *Can be useful to reinforce recommendations with stronger evidence, clarify why a recommendation is not possible, or identify emerging topics.*

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Types of Guidance Found in the Dietary Guidelines

- **Guidelines**: Highlight overarching guidance
- **Key Recommendations**: Provide further guidance on how to meet the overarching Guidelines
- **Supporting Text**: Provides scientific and public health rationale and additional context and technical details
- **Appendixes**: Elaborate on specific topics and provide technical tables, glossary definitions, etc.

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Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan. All food and beverage choices matter. Choose a healthy eating pattern at an appropriate calorie level to help achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, support nutrient adequacy, and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

A healthy eating pattern includes:
- A variety of vegetables from all of the subgroups—dark green, red and orange, legumes (beans and peas), starchy, and other
- Fruits, especially whole fruits
- Grains, at least half of which are whole grains
- Fat-free or low-fat dairy, including milk, yogurt, cheese, and/or fortified soy beverages
- A variety of protein foods, including seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, legumes (beans and peas), and nuts, seeds, and soy products
- Oils

A healthy eating pattern limits:
- Saturated fats and trans fats, added sugars, and sodium

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Evidence shows that healthy eating patterns, as outlined in the Guidelines and Key Recommendations, are associated with positive health outcomes. The evidence base for associations between eating patterns and specific health outcomes continues to grow.

- Strong evidence shows that healthy eating patterns are associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD).
- Moderate evidence indicates that healthy eating patterns also are associated with a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancers (such as colorectal and postmenopausal breast cancers), overweight, and obesity.
- Emerging evidence also suggests that relationships may exist between eating patterns and some neurocognitive disorders and congenital anomalies.
Types of Guidance Found in the Dietary Guidelines

Guidelines

Key Recommendations

Supporting Text

Appendixes

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Rounds of Review and Iterative Updates by Writing Team Members

- Federal Expert Technical Review
- External Peer-Review
- Departmental Clearance
- Secretarial Review and Approval

*Iterative review and input from Federal agencies builds consensus on the policy document, culminating with approval by the Secretaries*

*All reviews are confidential. Documents password protected when possible.*

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Rounds of Review and Iterative Updates by Writing Team Members

Federal Expert Technical Review

- Reviewers selected based on
  - Subject matter expertise
  - Familiarity with work of Advisory Committee
  - Knowledge of Federal nutrition programs and policies

- Intent of review: technical accuracy and translation of science base from Advisory Report to policy document

Lead writing staff

- Attribution removed, comments collated
- Comments reviewed, discussed, and revisions to draft made
  - Substantive changes may result in second review to ensure changes do not introduce new issue

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Rounds of Review and Iterative Updates by Writing Team Members

External Peer-Review

• Required for influential scientific documents that are not published in peer-review journals; independent input from non-government scientists

• Reviewers selected to include leading nutrition experts with awareness of the DGA, including former members of the preceding Advisory Committee

• Intent of review: clarity and technical accuracy and translation of science base from Advisory Report to policy document

• Suggested content revisions reference the scientific basis within the Advisory Report
Rounds of Review and Iterative Updates by Writing Team Members

External Peer-Review

Lead writing staff

- Attribution removed, comments collated
- Comments reviewed, discussed, and revisions to draft made
  - Substantive changes may result in second review to Federal staff to ensure changes do not introduce new issue
- As required by Office of Management and Budget, information published on the Department’s website after the release of the Dietary Guidelines
  - Names of the peer reviewers
  - Summary of the peer-reviewer comments (without attribution)

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Rounds of Review and Iterative Updates by Writing Team Members

Departmental Clearance
- Agency review
  - Nutrition policies and programs
  - Review for concurrence
    - Concur without comments or with minor comments
    - Non-concur with major comments provided
      - Action must be taken to reach concurrence
- Review by Offices of Under Secretaries of FNCS and REE of USDA, Assistant Secretary for Health of HHS
- Review by Offices of the Secretary (HHS and USDA)
  - Departmental communications staff; Government relations
- Substantive revisions may require additional review

Secretarial Review and Approval
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