

## Australian Dietary Guidelines Review

Scoping Survey - due 3pm, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021

GLOBE response

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/nutrition/australian-dietary-guidelines-review>

Note: Goal of the survey is to identify the issues that we want looked at, rather than provide the evidence for why it should be part of the guidelines. The ADG review team conduct the evidence review.

6. List up to 4 topics from the **existing** Guidelines which you believe should be updated in the review (for example food safety or vegetable intake). Please provide a brief explanation for each topic suggested.

1. Clearly articulate definitions of healthy and less healthy diets so it is meaningful for consumers, researchers, policy makers and those responsible for the provision of food, including retailers. We recommend that the ADGs provide guidance on the upper consumption levels of nutrients that can be harmful to health (saturated fat, free sugars and/or sodium). For example for free sugars such guidance could take the form: *“Ideal upper consumption level: >5% of total energy intake.”*
2. Review definition and categorisation of ‘discretionary foods’, including the latest research on the degree of processing of food. Reconsider use of the term ‘discretionary’ as there is evidence that it is not well understood by many Australians and terminology such as ‘less healthy’ may be clearer. It is critical that the definition is specific enough so that researchers, policy makers, advertisers and those responsible for the provision of food, including retailers, can easily determine the healthiness of particular products. Particular attention should be paid to:
  - Sugars and sweeteners: provide clear recommendations about upper consumption levels and definitions for sugars that are harmful to health i.e. free sugars. In addition, consider the impact of non-nutritive sweeteners on dietary patterns. Reflect this in recommendations related to fruit juices and diet beverages.
  - Alcohol recommendations should be updated to reflect the new alcohol guidelines. Consideration should be given to including alcohol as a standalone guideline.
  - Assessment of emerging new products from the food industry e.g. new functional beverages.
3. Maintain a strong food-based focus. There is evidence that consumers are better able to understand food-based guidelines and reflect them in their diet. Food-based categorisations are also in line with the way in which we choose foods and eat them. We note that food-based guidelines consider the benefits of foods beyond their macronutrient content, can account for the requirements for micronutrients that are represented in the food groups, and can encourage eating a variety of foods. A food-based approach can also consider evidence related to the level of processing of foods.

4. Review the presence of some less healthy foods being recommended in the food groups (e.g. ultra-processed white bread in the grains food group). There is a risk that the presence of these products undermines consumer confidence in the guidelines and complicates public health messages and policies.

7. List up to 4 topics, **not already included** in the Guidelines, which you believe should be considered for inclusion in the review. Please provide a brief explanation for each topic suggested.

1. It is imperative that the dietary guidelines consider the sustainability of the food supply and the impact of dietary choices on the environment. There is evidence that, for the most part, diets that are recommended for good health are also likely to have a lower environmental impact than the current Australian diet. A sustainable diet that considers the long-term supply of safe, nutritious and affordable foods is vital to ensure the health and wellbeing of Australians for generations to come.
2. The ADGs should ensure they are inclusive, equitable and support healthy diets for all Australians, including specific groups. Diets and eating behaviours are diverse, varying based on aspects such as stage of life, culture, affordability and food access. Specific groups are likely to need additional information and resources to apply and understand the guidelines as relevant for them. Common groups include: older adults, vegetarian and vegan diets, different cultures, includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those requiring affordable or easy to prepare diets. This need could be met through additional resources that illustrate how the ADGs apply to specific groups.
3. We recommend that the ADGs include prominent information about the context in which food is eaten, how food decisions are made and how Australians can overcome food environment factors that are barriers to eating in a manner consistent with the ADGs. In addition, the ADGs are currently used to inform and evaluate food related policy and research including marketing of foods, food price, availability of foods in settings such as schools and hospitals, and catering guidelines for workplaces and events. The guidelines should include explicit consideration of this to ensure they can be readily applied to these examples.

8. What changes would you suggest to the presentation of the [Guidelines](#) and the [Eat for Health resources](#) (for example the [Australian Guide to Healthy Eating](#) or [Food Essentials section](#)) to make them easier to understand and/or use (for example information presented in different ways such as short videos or factsheets)?

- The current AGDs are followed by very few Australians, its important that sufficient funding is allocated to communicate and support the adoption and awareness of the guidelines by individuals and those that supply food. Ensure broad publication and promotion of the guidelines through multiple channels including social media.

- Ensure the model presents the food groups in a simple and memorable way – refer particularly to the Canadian example. Additional resources should be used to illustrate and explain the details rather than an attempt to include it all in one image.
- The guidelines include resources that support policy and research, such as clearly defining healthy and less healthy foods, e.g. updating the ABS discretionary food list.
- Consider application of the guidelines beyond the individual level. This may include guidance around food provision for retailers, manufacturers, caterers, or advertisers.
- Accessible resources that cater to a variety of needs, including for people with a disability, people that speak languages other than English and those with low literacy.
- Additional resources should be allocated to communicate the guidelines with vulnerable groups.
- Conduct consumer research on what is meaningful and well understood by consumers.
- Label reading guidelines that outline easy to understand guidelines (e.g. 'green', 'amber' or 'red') regarding interpretation of the amount of sugars, saturated fat, sodium and fibre in a packaged food