



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250-1300
Voice (202) 720-4623
Email: oc.news@usda.gov
Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

USDA and HHS Invite Public Comments on Topics and Scientific Questions for the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

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New Step Increases Transparency in Development of Dietary Guidelines

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26, 2018 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today announced a new step in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) development process. For the first time, the departments will seek public comments on the proposed priority topics and supporting scientific questions that will guide the development of the upcoming 2020-2025 edition of the DGA. The public may submit comments through the Federal Register; the comment period will be open from Feb. 28, 2018 to March 30, 2018. The topics, supporting scientific questions, and link to submit public comments will be available at DietaryGuidelines.gov.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans serves as the cornerstone of federal nutrition programs and policies. This new public comment stage at the beginning of the DGA development process helps maintain the integrity of the process and ensure transparency in communicating the topics that meet the priorities of federal nutrition programs. This new approach allows for more public participation over this multiyear development process. It also improves customer service by being more responsive to stakeholder recommendations and feedback.

“The American taxpayer is an essential customer – indeed, a shareholder,” said Brandon Lipps, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for the Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services at USDA, the administrative lead for the 2020-2025 DGA. “We’re proud to be taking this important step forward towards greater transparency, and ensuring that the American public’s voice is heard throughout this process.”

USDA and HHS are proposing a life stage approach for this edition of the DGA, focusing on priority scientific questions from birth through older adulthood. The 2014 Farm Bill mandated that, starting with the 2020-2025 edition, the DGA provides guidance for women who are pregnant, as well as infants and toddlers from birth to 24 months. In addition to a focus on life stages, the topics and supporting questions for public comment reflect a continued focus on patterns of what we eat and drink as a whole, on average and over time, not on individual foods or food groups.

“We know that good nutrition together with physical activity can help decrease Americans’ risk of developing serious health conditions across the life span,” said Don Wright, MD, MPH, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health at HHS. “The Dietary Guidelines for Americans help support healthy choices at home, school, work, and in the community. That’s why we are encouraging the public and stakeholders in nutrition to submit comments up front to help inform the next edition of the guidelines.”

The 2020-2025 DGA topics which USDA and HHS propose are based on four criteria:

- *Relevance* – the topic is within the scope of the DGA and its focus on food-based recommendations, not clinical guidelines for medical treatment;
- *Importance* – the topic has new, relevant data and represents an area of substantial public health concern, uncertainty, and/or knowledge gap;
- *Potential federal impact* – there is a probability that guidance on the topic would inform federal food and nutrition policies and programs; and
- *Avoiding duplication* – the topic is not currently addressed through existing evidence-based federal guidance (other than the Dietary Guidelines).

USDA and HHS will consider all public comments submitted in finalizing the list of topics and supporting questions to be examined in the development of the 2020-2025 DGA.

After finalizing the topics and supporting questions, USDA and HHS will post a public call for the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee nominations. The areas of expertise needed will be based on the final topics and supporting scientific questions, resulting in a coordinated and efficient scientific review.

For information and links, go to [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov).

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The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGA) serves as the cornerstone of federal nutrition programs and policies, providing food-based recommendations to help prevent diet-related

chronic diseases and promote overall health. According to the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990, the DGA is mandated to reflect the preponderance of scientific evidence, and is published jointly by USDA and HHS every five years.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service administers 15 nutrition assistance programs. In addition to the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#), these programs include Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for [Women, Infants and Children](#), the [National School Lunch Program](#), and the [Summer Food Service Program](#) which together comprise America's nutrition safety net. For more information, visit www.fns.usda.gov.

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