



Proposed Scientific Questions

Note: This document shows the proposed scientific questions that HHS and USDA posted for public comment from April 15 – May 16, 2022. HHS and USDA are considering public comments as we work to prioritize the questions and determine if edits or changes are needed. Updated questions will be available when the Committee begins its work.

The proposed scientific questions to inform the next edition of the *Dietary Guidelines* focus on diet and health outcomes across the lifespan. This includes the relationship between diet and risk of overweight and obesity with a new emphasis on weight loss and weight maintenance. New questions also address ultra-processed foods and food-based strategies that can be used by individuals and families to support implementation of the *Dietary Guidelines* and help prevent or manage overweight and obesity.

All scientific questions will be reviewed with a health equity lens to ensure that resulting guidance in the *Dietary Guidelines* is inclusive of people with diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, unless a specific population is identified in the question, the question will consider evidence across the lifespan, including for infants, toddlers, children, adolescents, adults, individuals who are pregnant or lactating, and older adults. For all questions examining the outcome of growth, size, body composition, risk of overweight and obesity, and weight loss and maintenance:

- Weight loss and maintenance will only be considered for adults and older adults.
- Gestational weight gain and post-partum weight loss will be examined for individuals who are pregnant or lactating.

There are two topics not on the list of questions to be examined by the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee that will be addressed in separate processes.

- Alcoholic beverages remain a high priority topic, but because it requires significant, specific expertise and has unique considerations, it will be examined in a separate effort led by HHS Agencies that support work on this topic.
- Sustainability and the complex relationship between nutrition and climate change is an important, cross-cutting, and high priority topic that also requires specific expertise. HHS and USDA will address this topic separate from the Committee's process to inform work across the Departments.

Existing evidenced based Federal guidance can be used to inform the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030*. These topics do not require formal review by the Committee. These include, but are not limited to:

- Healthy Food Environments (e.g., [Community Preventive Service Task Force findings](#))
- Oral Health (e.g., [CDC Oral Health](#))
- Food Safety (e.g., [FoodSafety.gov](#))
- Specific Nutrient Recommendations ([Dietary Reference Intakes](#))
- Human milk, infant formula, and health outcomes (e.g., Forthcoming federal systematic reviews)
- Seafood (e.g., [FDA/EPA Advice about Eating Fish](#))
- Eating Disorders (e.g., [National Institute of Mental Health](#))
- Physical Activity ([Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#))

The proposed questions below are organized by the approach that will be used to answer each question: Nutrition Evidence Systematic Review (NESR) systematic reviews, food pattern modeling, and data analysis.



Systematic Reviews

The proposed systematic review questions are organized into the following topics:

Dietary Patterns Across Life Stages

- What is the relationship between dietary patterns consumed and:
 - growth, size, body composition, risk of overweight and obesity, and weight loss and maintenance?
 - risk of cardiovascular disease?
 - risk of type 2 diabetes?
 - risk of certain types of cancer (breast, colorectal, lung, prostate)?
 - risk of cognitive decline, mild cognitive impairment, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease?
 - risk of sarcopenia?
 - bone health?
 - all-cause mortality?
- What is the relationship between consumption of dietary patterns with varying amounts of ultra-processed foods and growth, size, body composition, risk of overweight and obesity, and weight loss and maintenance?
- What is the relationship between dietary patterns consumed before and during pregnancy and:
 - risk of gestational diabetes?
 - risk of hypertensive disorders of pregnancy?
 - gestational age at birth?
 - birth weight standardized for gestational age and sex?
- What is the relationship between dietary patterns consumed before and during pregnancy and lactation and developmental milestones, including neurocognitive development, in the child?

Specific Dietary Pattern Components

Complementary Foods and Beverages

- What is the relationship between 1) timing of introduction, and 2) types and amounts of complementary foods and beverages and:
 - growth, size, body composition, and risk of overweight and obesity?
 - iron and zinc status?

Beverages

- What is the relationship between beverage consumption (beverage patterns, dairy milk and milk alternatives, 100% juice, low- or no-calorie sweetened beverages, sugar-sweetened beverages, coffee, tea, water) and:
 - growth, size, body composition, risk of overweight and obesity, and weight loss and maintenance?
 - risk of type 2 diabetes?

Added Sugars

- What is the relationship between food sources of added sugars consumed and:
 - growth, size, body composition, risk of overweight and obesity, and weight loss and maintenance?
 - risk of type 2 diabetes?

Saturated Fat

- What is the relationship between food sources of saturated fat consumed and risk of cardiovascular disease?

Strategies for Individuals and Families Related to Diet Quality & Weight Management

- What is the relationship between repeated exposure to foods and food acceptability?
- What is the relationship between parental and caregiver feeding practices during childhood and adolescence and:
 - growth, size, body composition, and risk of overweight and obesity?
 - consuming a dietary pattern that is more aligned with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*?
- What is the relationship between timing of eating occasions (e.g., eating breakfast, limiting eating late in the day, snacking, intermittent fasting, time-restricted eating) and:
 - growth, size, body composition, risk of overweight and obesity, and weight loss and maintenance?
 - consuming a dietary pattern that is more aligned with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*?
- What is the relationship between specific food-based strategies during adulthood and body composition, risk of overweight and obesity, and weight loss and maintenance?



Food Pattern Modeling

Food pattern modeling methodology continues to evolve to reflect variability in intakes and a range of possible healthy dietary patterns. The Committee will be asked to answer the following question:

Considering each life stage, should changes be made to the USDA Dietary Patterns (Healthy U.S.-Style, Healthy Mediterranean-Style, and/or Healthy Vegetarian), and should additional Dietary Patterns be developed/proposed based on:

- Findings from systematic reviews, data analysis, and/or food pattern modeling analyses
- Population norms (e.g., starchy vegetables are often consumed interchangeably with grains), preferences (e.g., emphasis on one staple grain versus another), or needs (e.g., lactose intolerance) of the diverse individuals and cultural foodways within the U.S. population?

Changes to Dietary Patterns may include increases or decreases in amounts of food groups/subgroups and/or recategorization of food groups/subgroups, as well as subsequent changes to calories available for other uses, including for added sugars.



Data Analysis

Data analysis continues to be an important source of evidence to inform the development of the *Dietary Guidelines*. Prior to the establishment of the Committee, HHS and USDA will conduct data analyses that describe current dietary intakes, prevalence of nutrition-related chronic health conditions, and dietary components of public health concern to inform the work of the Committee and development of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030*.

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