

# 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee

## *Identifying the Topics and Scientific Questions to be Examined by the Committee*

**What:** For the first time, the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services identified topics and scientific questions *prior to* establishing the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.

**Why:** The Departments added this step to promote a deliberate and transparent process, respond to feedback on the *Dietary Guidelines* development process, identify expertise needed on the Committee, help manage resources, and ensure the scientific review conducted by the Committee addresses Federal nutrition policy and program needs.

**Who:** The process used to identify topics and scientific questions was led by the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion and the HHS Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion and vetted by the USDA Acting Deputy Under Secretary of Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services and HHS Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health – *with input from the public and Federal agencies.*

**How:** Four criteria were used throughout the process to prioritize the topics and scientific questions:

- Relevance to creating the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*,
- Importance to public health,
- Potential Federal impact on food and nutrition programs, and
- Avoiding duplication of Federal efforts.

*First,* Federal nutritionists, including scientists and programmatic experts, from USDA, HHS, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Agency for International Development participated in the development of proposed topics and supporting questions. The [initial list](#) was informed by the needs of Federal nutrition-related programs and initiatives.

*Next,* USDA and HHS posted the topics and supporting scientific questions for public comment. During the public comment period of February 28-March 30, 2018, more than 12,000 comments were received via more than 6,000 submissions to [our page](#) on Regulations.gov. Simultaneously, Federal agencies also provided comments on the topics and scientific questions. USDA and HHS considered each public and agency comment in relation to the four criteria in refining the topics and questions.

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## *Identifying the Topics and Scientific Questions to be Examined by the Committee – continued*

*Finally*, USDA and HHS posted the revised topics and scientific questions reflecting public and Federal agency comments. The main topic areas remain the same, with changes reflecting priority issues. For full transparency, USDA and HHS are providing the refined topics and scientific questions to the public in two formats:

- [List A](#) is organized by life stage, which follows the format of the topics and questions posted for public comment. This format makes it as easy as possible for the public to see what has changed.
- [List B](#) provides the identical topics and questions, reorganized to reduce redundancy and better reflect how the Departments will ask the Committee to proceed with its scientific review.

USDA and HHS have determined that the *2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines* will take a life stage approach, focusing on priority scientific questions from birth through older adulthood. In addition to a focus on life stages, the topics and supporting questions reflect a continued focus on patterns of what we eat and drink *as a whole*, on average and over time, to help prevent disease and keep people healthy – now from birth into older adulthood.

The topics and questions are available through [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://DietaryGuidelines.gov) and will inform the expertise needed on the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. The Committee will be established to conduct an independent, science-based review of these topics and questions to be considered by USDA and HHS as the Departments develop the *2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

*The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 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 Dietary Guidelines is mandated to reflect the preponderance of scientific evidence, and is published jointly by USDA and HHS every five years.*