

Nutrition & Growing Consumption

Quick Facts

- 9 out of 10 Americans do not meet the 2020–2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans fruit and vegetable consumption recommendations.
- Eight out of ten healthcare dollars are spent on preventable chronic diseases.
- USDA's proposed WIC food package update provides enough fruits and vegetables for participants to meet Dietary Guidelines for Americans' recommendations.
- The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program has been shown to decrease obesity rates at a cost of only \$50–\$75 per student, per year.
- Only 5 bulk fresh produce commodities are available in The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).

Background

The federal government has established a strong framework for nutrition targets through the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) and the call to make “half the plate” fruits and vegetables. Many of the government’s own nutrition programs fall short in delivering the resources Americans need to follow the DGA. Despite decades of this evidence-based advice, consumption trends have not budged. We cannot reverse the nation’s diet-related diseases without a targeted, systemic approach of increasing Americans’ fruit and vegetable consumption. It is time that we embark on a “fruit and vegetable moonshot” through 2030 by adopting systemic, scalable policy and programs that are guided by the principle of “millions of mouths at a time” and achieve the federal government’s DGA guidance to make half the plate fruits and vegetables.

2023 and the 118th Congress Nutrition Priorities

Farm Bill

- Reform USDA's procurement programs to include a wider variety and amount of fresh produce and eliminate lowest-cost bidding in solicitations.
- Support improving dietary quality within SNAP by exploring a stand-alone fruit and vegetable benefit for SNAP families and growing the reach of the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive (GusNIP) program.
- Maintain 10% of GusNIP funding for Produce Prescription projects.
- Expand the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) to all low-income elementary schools and keep the program open to only fresh commodities.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

- USDA should release the updated WIC food package which makes permanent the enhanced fruit and vegetable benefit amount that results in low-income women and young children having access to daily recommended amounts of produce. The updated amount reflects a 3x-4x increase since the last update.
- Congress should not intervene in delaying the WIC food package release or interfere with the science-based process of updating nutrition standards in WIC.

Produce Prescriptions (PRx)

- The Indian Health Service (IHS) and Veterans Affairs (VA) should launch their respective produce prescription pilots.
- Health and Human Services (HHS) should expedite state Medicaid waivers for produce prescriptions.
- Provide a PRx benefit within Medicare to cover produce.

School Meals

- Congress and USDA should provide schools with adequate financial and procurement resources to ensure students have access to a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables.

FDA

- Promote nutrition clarity in food labeling, exploring front of pack options.
- Require fruit and vegetable claims (in name or imaging) to disclose the quantity of per serving fruit and vegetable servings in household measures.