

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 5.1

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE

Thirty-third Session

Berlin, Germany

27 - 31 May 2024

FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY ISSUES IN THE REGION

Prepared by the Türkiye

Contribution of Türkiye on Discussion Paper

FOODBASED DIETARY GUIDELINES Proposed by the Member States of the European Union

I. Introduction and FoodBased Dietary Guidelines in Türkiye

Climate change, natural disasters and ongoing conflicts in various parts of the world have all demonstrated the importance of safe and accessible food for human health. Unfortunately, a significant portion of the world's population still face food insecurity and malnutrition.

"Dietary Guidelines" generally aim to ensure adequate and balanced intake of energy and nutrients by individuals and to facilitate healthy diet patterns by predicting healthy choices of which foods, in what types and in what quantities to consume according to age, gender, physiological and special condition and physical activity level (PAL). It includes food-based consumption (portion/unit of measure/amount) recommendations. Since they are based on foods and consumption amounts, they are also called "Food-Based Dietary Guidelines" (FBDG), or simply "Dietary Guidelines". FBDG provide the basis for healthy food choices and diets for the individual and the public.

Knowing that the first dietary guidelines in Türkiye was published by the Hacettepe University Institute of Nutrition and Food Sciences under the name "Healthy Nutrition" in 1975. In this guideline, food groups are presented with the "Five Leaf Clover" symbol. Food groups were described as (i) milk and milk products, (ii) meats and other foods sourced protein, (iii) fresh vegetables and fruits, (iv) legumes and cereals, (v) fats and foods including sugar. In later years, the clover was revised to have four leaves, stalk was added to the clover, and fats and sugars were placed in the stalk and removed from the main food groups¹.

International Conference on Nutrition (ICN) was organised by the participation of World Health Organisation (WHO) and Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome in December 1992, main purpose was to eliminate hunger and to reduce and prevent all forms of malnutrition. After this conference, member countries began to prepare National Food and Plan of Action for Nutrition with the purpose of preventing public from being ill by improving nutritional well-being. One of these strategies is also preparation and implementation of Dietary Guidelines to improve persons and national nutrition status. Dietary Guidelines contains a series of proposals that are composed with the aim of explaining all conditions related to nutrition and giving information to public concerning adequate and balanced nutrition. These guidelines take into consider not only traditional nutrition habits and attract attention to changing view aspects but also the ecologic environment, socio-economic and cultural factors as well as biologic and physical environment. After ICN, "National Food and Plan of Action for Nutrition" in Türkiye formed in coordination of State Planning Organisation (SPO) in 2003. Several activities were determined with the aim of public's awareness regarding to nutrition and to give people healthy nutrition

¹ Nutrition Guidelines in Türkiye, 2022, https://hsgm.saglik.gov.tr/depo/birimler/saglikli-beslenme-ve-hareketli-hayat-db/Dokumanlar/Rehberler/Turkiye_Beslenme_Rehber_TUBER_2022_min.pdf

habits. Development of Dietary Guidelines in Türkiye was one of the activities that was available in this action plan.

Türkiye published its FBDG in 2004. The English version was published in 2006. Türkiye is currently revising its guidelines². The dietary guidelines are endorsed by Directorate General for Primary Health Care under the Ministry of Health³. FBDG in Türkiye is symbolled by four-leaf clover divided into four basic food groups: milk and dairy; meat, eggs, fish, legumes and seeds; vegetables and fruit; and bread and cereal.



The use of the clover is symbolic, because in Türkiye it symbolizes happiness. In addition the leaves are heart-shaped, suggesting health and love. The bottom half of the circle is surrounded by the statement 'adequate and balanced nutrition'. Above there are olive branches, which symbolize peace, long life and make reference to olive oil, a very important component of the Mediterranean diet.

Adequate and Balanced Nutrition is the basic requirement for people helping them to achieve their growth and development potentials, to prevent from the diseases and to lead a higher quality in life. Since age, gender, genetic, activity and physiological characteristics of the person affect the quality and the quantity of the food to be ingested, all nutritional plans should be individualized accordingly. However, some general nutrition and dietetic principals specifically designed for the public should be determined and applied for healthy population growth. This guidelines has been developed with the aim of providing the people to the essential food and nutrient amounts to be considered as their basic requirements for their daily consumption and the principals instructed depending on the dietary pattern and food habits of the people living in Türkiye. Nutritional practises specific for the groups and the diseases (such as elderly, workers, athletes, pregnant and lactating women, diabetes, cardiac disease, cancers. etc) should be prepared under the observation and control of scientifically approved and certified experts. It should be emphasised that nutrition is being specific to person and each person must design his/her nutrition programme under the collaborative work and control of the healthcare professionals. The FBDG published in 2004 highlighted the recommendations about adequate and balanced nutrition, the importance and the pattern of breakfast, management of body weight, physical activity and health; correlation between sugar consumption and health, salt consumption and health, dietary fat and fatty acids; the importance of breast feeding; effect of alcohol consumption to health; importance of fluid consumption.

II. Importance of Nutrition and Health Surveys

National surveys and National Health Information Network data have been assessed evidence based evaluation. Increasing public awareness, trainings, and reducing the environmental conditions that facilitate obesity including schools and workplaces, constitute priority intervention areas. Because of the extension of human life, health needs have begun to focus on problems specific to older ages. Today, non-communicable diseases and common risk factors constitute important areas of struggle. Cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases are the most common health problems. Obesity, which is among the reasons that cause and facilitate these diseases, has been on national agenda as an important public health problem. The Ministry of Health, in line with national strategic plan, has been updating and implementing Healthy Nutrition and Active Life Program - Adult and Child Obesity Prevention - Physical Activity Action Plan in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO).

"National Nutrition and Health Surveys" has been planning at regular intervals, usually at 5-10 years intervals. Regular updating of the guidelines in the light of evidence-based data is also a necessity for public health. Underweight, podginess, iron deficiency- anaemia, iodine deficiency, folic acid and vitamin D deficiencies, tooth decay, obesity and nutrition-related non-communicable chronic diseases (cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, and some types of cancer, diabetes, and osteoporosis) are frequently encountered problems in

² Food Based Dietary Guidelines – Türkiye, <https://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/turkey/en/>

³ Nutrition Guidelines in Türkiye, 2004, <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/df2808c3-b417-43f4-b148-836e675c7cd3/content>

the society and impair the quality of life. The purpose of healthy (optimal) nutrition is protecting, improving and developing the health of all individuals throughout life, increasing the quality of life and adopting a healthy lifestyle (healthy nutrition and physical activity habits, preventing alcohol and tobacco use). FBDG should support the national strategy for improving and promoting lifestyle and environmental conditions, ensuring sustainable food security, and raising individuals' awareness and training on nutrition and health issues.

The Nutrition and Health Survey (TBSA) Reports in Türkiye were published in regularly (2017⁴, 2019⁵, and 2022⁶). In accordance with the surveys data, FBDG in Türkiye was revised and published in 2022¹. This guidelines provides science-based recommendations about the foods and beverages that should be consumed in order to improve and protect the health of Turkish people, reduce the risk of non-communicable chronic diseases while establishing the needs of nutritional requirements.

This Guideline are including the topics on (i) Nutrients and food groups, (ii) Nutritional recommendations for managing and maintaining healthy body weight and preventing non-communicable chronic diseases, (iii) Foods and nutrients that should be increased in consumption, (iv) Foods and nutrients that should be reduced in consumption, (v) Food safety, (vi) The importance of nutrition and energy balance in the lifetime, (vii) Nutrition for special dietary uses such as workers, sportsman, vegans, etc. and (viii) Current issues in nutrition such as fermented foods, food supplements, novel foods, sustainable nutrition.

III. Sustainable FoodBased Approaches in FBDG

Sustainable agricultural practices or agro-ecological agriculture are practices that offer effective solutions to both environmental and socio-economic problems such as unemployment and poverty with low budgets. FAO is declared that family farming promotes social justice, saves cultural identities and economically strengthens rural areas. Due to this strategic importance, the United Nations declared years 2019-2028 as the "Decade of Family Farming". Small-scale family farming, which forms the 'peasant food network', feeds more than 70% of the world's population, using less than 25% of worldwide agricultural resources.

Traditional Turkish Cuisine with the diversity has been offered by the interaction with different cultures and fertile lands throughout a long historical process. It is one of the unique world cuisines that exemplifies sustainable nutrition with its healthiness, low environmental impact, diversity, high nutritional value, cultural heritage quality and positive local economic return. Turkish ancient food culture, which has been formed through the accumulation of centuries, is protected within the framework of UNESCO, and contributes to sustainable food systems.

There are many recommendations in the FBDG. Preparing sustainable shopping basket or the importance of nutrition in season are a few of these recommendations (Table 1).

⁴ The Nutrition and Health Survey in Türkiye, 2017, https://hsgm.saglik.gov.tr/depo/birimler/saglikli-beslenme-ve-hareketli-hayat-db/Dokumanlar/Kitaplar/TBSA_2017_Ozet_Bulgular.pdf

⁵ The Nutrition and Health Survey in Türkiye, 2019, https://krtknadm.karatekin.edu.tr/files/sbf/TBSA_RAPOR_KITAP_20.08.pdf

⁶ Turkish Statistical Institute, <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Turkiye-Saglik-Arastirmasi-2022-49747>

Table 1. Sustainable Nutrition

9.5.5.2. Sürdürülebilir alışveriş önerileri		9.5.5.3. Mevsiminde tüketim önerileri																														
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IV. Coordination between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry

- School Canteens and Trainings for students

The first place that children meet, apart from their families, is the canteens in schools, which provide public nutrition services and where they get at least one meal a day. Thanks to the food safety knowledge and nutritional habits that children acquire at an early age, problems that may arise in the later periods of their lives can be prevented, their mental development will be completed in a healthy way, and they will successfully complete their social adaptation and education. For this reason, it is of great importance that the foods offered for consumption in school canteens are safe, healthy and nutritious.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, whose main goal is to protect consumer health at the highest level, continues its work in line with this goal. All segments of society, from ages 7 to 70, have responsibilities regarding food safety and healthy nutrition. Especially the health of children, who are the guarantee of future, concerns all of us.

Regarding school canteens, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry continue their work in cooperation within the scope of their duties. In this context; "Regulation on Special Hygiene Rules for School Canteens", "Hygiene Guide for School Canteens", and "Communiqué on School Food" have been published by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and official controls at school canteens are carried out by official inspectors in cooperation with other Ministries.. Within the scope of Strategic Plan; 81 Provincial Directorates have been providing training on food safety to students since 2018 in order to raise awareness of students, one of the most vulnerable consumer groups.

National Menu Planning and Implementation Guidelines for Mass Catering and Healthy Nutrition and Active Life Program Action Plan (2024-2028) has been still drafting.

- The Project on Capacity Building on Food Literacy

The FAO – Türkiye collaboration is a good example of international cooperation working to address some global challenges. For more than seven decades, FAO and Türkiye have cooperated closely across almost all areas of agriculture, food security, fisheries, climate change, forestry and rural development. In recent decades, this cooperation has deepened, resulting in a variety of projects and programmes implemented at both the local and regional level. Through the government-funded FAO-Türkiye Partnership Programmes, Türkiye has shared its technical knowledge and know-how in the domain of agriculture with a range of countries located in Central Asia, Africa, the Caucasus and the Balkans. Key components of this collaboration include successful Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects, which have played a pivotal role in fostering biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and sustainable natural resource management, reflecting the shared vision of FAO and Türkiye for creating a harmonious balance between agricultural progress and environmental stewardship.

Looking ahead, Türkiye will continue working to enhance this close collaboration with FAO across a broader range of areas in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, to ensure “better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life”⁷.

The Project on Capacity Building on Food Literacy (TCP/TUR/3805/C5)⁸ was carried out years 2021-2022. The objective of the project was to enhance food and nutrition literacy in Türkiye through multi-sectoral collaboration and awareness raising.

<p>Strategic objectives of the project;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop food literacy skills. 2. Provide accurate and up-to-date information on food safety and nutrition. 3. Prevent the spread of misleading information about food. 4. Develop a consumer-centred approach to providing food and nutrition information. 5. Raise awareness about food systems. 	<p>Raising awareness about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - nutritional diversity and quality - food waste reduction - food literacy - sustainable food systems - sustainable management and use of ecosystems, natural resources, water and biodiversity
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- World Food Safety Day

World Food Safety Day/ Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Türkiye to promote importance of food safety⁹.



The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MoAF), as the competent authority in Türkiye in the area of food safety from farm to fork, is pleased to announce that a well-attended event is organized to celebrate World Food Safety Day on 7 June 2024.

The event aims to highlight the importance of food safety and promote the efforts of the MoAF and its stakeholders in matters of food safety regulations, implementation and crisis preparedness.

⁷ FAO Türkiye Newsletter; January 2024, <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/0a074de6-2613-4497-a9b7-9eb257813e11/content>

⁸ Project supported by FAO, <https://www.fao.org/turkiye/programmes-and-projects/project-list/en/>

⁹ WFS, Türkiye, <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/world-food-safety-day-2022/events/event-details/en/c/1682650/>

In the homepage of Codex Alimentarius ¹⁰, all members are encouraged to celebrate the WFSD to increase awareness of consumers.

Theme is  **"Food safety: prepare for the unexpected"**

Slogan is  **"Food safety is everyone's business"**

¹⁰ WFSD, Codex Alimentarius, <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/world-food-safety-day/theme-slogan/en/>