

Food Environment and Food Choice

Simply knowing or understanding what constitutes a healthy diet is not enough to change an individual's diet or lifestyle. Understanding how the food environment affects dietary and lifestyle choices is necessary before effective policies can be instituted that will change a population's diet in a meaningful way. Examples of key questions that should be addressed include: Is current dietary guidance an effective way of communicating dietary change? Do food assistance programs promote positive dietary patterns or have negative dietary and health consequences? What role does food advertising play in food decision-making? How do farm-to-fork food systems, with an increased emphasis on local agricultural production and consumption, influence dietary patterns and behaviors? Can they be ultimately be used to promote healthy behaviors and improve public health? How can we most effectively measure, monitor, and evaluate dietary change?



Novel Foods and Food Ingredients

Having an affordable, available, sustainable, safe and nutritious food supply is also an important underpinning for making significant changes to a population's diet and lifestyle. Examples of key research areas to address include: Enhancing our knowledge of the nutrient and phytonutrient content and bioavailability of foods produced, processed, and consumed; and studying how to better align and foster collaboration between nutrition and agricultural production. Can shifting agricultural focus from principally agronomic to include quality factors (such as taste, flavor, and nutritional value) have positive effects on fruit and vegetable consumption? Can we leverage technologies, such as biotechnology and nanotechnology, to develop novel foods and food ingredients that will improve health, both domestically and abroad, and provide credible, tangible functional health benefits?

Public/ Private Partnerships

To tackle these enormous challenges requires the coordinated efforts of public and private partners. The development of public/private partnerships between industry, government, academia, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has the potential to advance nutrition research, enabling meaningful changes to be made to American and global diets (e.g., increase fruit and vegetable consumption to match government recommendations). We need to examine successful examples of public/private partnerships which have resulted in improved nutritional status and food security in specific populations.