



American Society for Nutrition
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Oral Testimony on the Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee provided by Sarah Ohlhorst, MS, RD, ASN Director of Government Relations:

Good morning! The American Society for Nutrition or ASN appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee or DGAC. ASN is a scientific, professional society with more than 5,000 members who conduct nutrition research to help all individuals live healthier lives.

ASN applauds the work of the 2015 DGAC and notes the important contributions of many ASN members that led to this report. ASN is still reviewing the complex technical report, but I will provide the Society's initial impressions here.

ASN appreciates the work of this Committee to highlight important areas where the research is still advancing, and commends the Committee for the research recommendations included in its technical report. ASN encourages the government to translate these research needs into research funding priorities and encourages nutrition researchers to use them as a guide for future research efforts.

ASN commends the Committee's focus on healthful dietary patterns and urges the government to maintain a total diet approach in its translation of the report to dietary guidance. ASN supports dietary guidance that helps consumers to select nutrient-rich foods and beverages as part of a healthful diet and that leads to positive behavior changes. ASN supports the Committee's recommendation that dietary guidance should account for cultural, social, and economic factors that affect dietary patterns and eating behaviors and habits, such as snacking.

ASN encourages the government to carefully consider the recommendations within the Scientific Report to create clear, consistent messages that most effectively communicate dietary guidance to the general public and are based on the strongest evidence. From our initial review of the report, it appears that some statements would be confusing if translated directly to consumers without providing context or if taken in isolation. For example, Chapter 5 states that aspartame in amounts currently consumed is safe and poses minimal health risk, while Chapter 6 states that low-calorie sweeteners should not be used as a primary replacement for added sugars in the diet. The first statement addresses a safety issue and the second provides a health recommendation, but these could easily be misconstrued. Thus, ASN urges the government to provide consistent recommendations that provide clarity for consumers, as well as food, nutrition, and health professionals, in the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. ASN also assumes that a focus on calorie reduction and obesity prevention will continue to be emphasized.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. ASN will provide a more detailed response in our written comments.