

# Nutrition, health and sustainability: looking ahead

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## Executive summary

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Health Council of the Netherlands



With a view to nutrition education and nutrition policy the Health Council of the Netherlands periodically assesses scientific findings in its so-called dietary guidelines. So far the focus has been on health. However, there is increasing attention to the aspect of sustainability. At the request of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport the Health Council has explored how the perspectives of health and sustainability can be integrated in nutrition advice. Whenever possible, insights into consumer behavior should be included as well. According to the Council, a modular approach should be a priority, i.e. a piecemeal integration of data based on advances in knowledge.



The Health Council of the Netherlands, established in 1902, is an independent scientific advisory body. Its remit is “to advise the government and Parliament on the current level of knowledge with respect to public health issues and health (services) research...” (Section 22, Health Act).

The Health Council receives most requests for advice from the Ministers of Health, Welfare and Sport, Infrastructure and Water Management, Social Affairs and Employment, and Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. The Council can publish advisory reports on its own initiative. It usually does this in order to ask attention for developments or trends that are thought to be relevant to government policy.

Most Health Council reports are prepared by multidisciplinary committees of Dutch or, sometimes, foreign experts, appointed in a personal capacity. The reports are available to the public.

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