

Dutch dietary guidelines: dietary protein sources and dietary patterns 2025

executive summary



The *Dutch dietary guidelines* (DDG) provide advice on foods, drinks and dietary patterns for the general population in the Netherlands. The last version of the guidelines was published in 2015 (DDG2015). The present advisory report (DDG2025) – which was drawn up by the Health Council's Standing committee on Nutrition – focusses on protein sources (legumes, nuts, dairy products, fish, meat, eggs, and meat and dairy substitutes) and more plant-based dietary patterns. Guidelines on other topics, such as vegetables, fruit and cereals, will follow in a later advisory report. Until then, the DDG2015 will remain in force for those topics. An overview of the guidelines can be found at the bottom of this summary.

The DDG are tailored to the general population. The Netherlands Nutrition Centre translates the guidelines into information about healthy, sustainable and safe eating patterns for specific target groups.

Preventing chronic diseases and reducing environmental impact

The prevention of chronic diseases in the Dutch population is the main goal for the DDG2025, as before. In the last 10 years, an increasing

number of studies have been published on the health effects of nutrition. Based on this, the committee evaluated the effects of food groups and dietary patterns on common chronic diseases, such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and various types of cancer. New is that the committee has additionally looked at the intake of harmful substances through food. These guidelines also pay more attention to the environmental impact of food. The current food system – from production to consumption, including food waste – causes about 30% of greenhouse gas emissions and 60% of biodiversity loss worldwide. The continuation of this food system will make it increasingly difficult to produce enough healthy food for everyone in the future. The revised DDG are therefore important for the health of future generations.



Healthy and sustainable dietary pattern

Based on the evaluation of the scientific literature, the committee recommends a more plant-based and less animal-based dietary pattern. Compared to the current Dutch dietary pattern, this mainly involves a reduction in the consumption of red meat (such as beef

and pork) and processed meat (such as meat products) and an increase in the consumption of legumes (such as brown beans, soybeans, lentils, chickpeas) and unsalted nuts (including peanuts). This is beneficial for public health, as it lowers the risk of chronic disease. In addition, it leads to a lower environmental impact. Regarding fish, the committee recommends sustainably caught or sustainably farmed varieties to limit overfishing and damage to ecosystems.

The guidelines revised in the current advice are in line with the Health Council advice *A healthy protein transition* published in 2023. It concluded that the shift to a dietary pattern with a protein ratio of 60% plant-based and 40% animal-based (compared to an average of 60% animal protein in the current dietary pattern) is good for the health of most Dutch people and is beneficial for the environment. The committee emphasizes the urgency of this shift, and in its current advisory report it provides recommendations for the composition of such a dietary pattern.

Variety in the dietary pattern

The biggest step towards a healthier and more sustainable dietary pattern is a lower consumption of red and processed meat and a higher consumption of legumes. The committee recommends varying between food groups that are consumed instead of red and processed meat. It is important for both health and the environment to choose mainly plant-based products, such as legumes, whole grains and nuts. Eggs and

(unprocessed) white meat can also serve as alternatives to a limited extent.

In addition to variation between food groups, the committee also advises varying within a food group, for example between different types of legumes. This promotes a more varied intake of nutrients and helps to keep the intake of potentially harmful substances low.

Considerable shift requiring a broad approach

The advised shift to a more plant-based dietary pattern represents a considerable change from the current situation. The committee emphasizes that every (further) step towards the guidelines contributes to better health and lower environmental impact. Robust government policies that work towards sustainable production of healthy food and a physical, social and economic environment in which healthy and sustainable food becomes the norm is important to support consumers.

Dutch dietary guidelines 2025

To optimally promote the health of present generations and to contribute to the health of future generations, the Health Council's Standing committee on Nutrition advises:



The 2015 overarching guideline remains in force
A more plant-based and less animal-based dietary pattern in accordance with the guidelines for specific food groups.

Revised and new guidelines 2025 protein sources		Guidelines 2015 that remain in force until they are revised	
	250 grams of legumes per week		At least 200 grams of vegetables and at least 200 grams of fruit per day
	15 to 30 grams of unsalted nuts per day		At least 90 grams of brown bread, wholemeal bread or other whole grain products per day. Whole-grain products instead of refined cereal products
	A few portions of dairy products per day, with variation between types		Soft margarines, liquid cooking fats, and vegetable oils instead of butter, hard margarines, and cooking fats
	100 grams of sustainable fish per week, preferably an oily fish		Filtered instead of unfiltered coffee
	No more than 200 grams of red meat per week. As little processed (red and white) meat as possible		3 cups of tea per day
Remaining protein sources evaluated in 2025			As little sugar-containing beverages as possible
	White meat		No more than 6 grams of salt per day
	Eggs		Nutrient supplements are not needed, except for specific groups for which supplementation applies
	Plant-based substitutes for meat and dairy		
		No guideline. These products can be part of a healthy and sustainable diet, but the extent to which they do so depends on the rest of the diet	

This publication can be downloaded from healthcouncil.nl.

Preferred citation:

Health Council of the Netherlands.

Dutch dietary guidelines: dietary protein sources and dietary patterns 2025.

The Hague: Health Council of the Netherlands, 2025; publication no. 2025/19e.

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