

Minister of Health



Ministre de la Santé

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K9

SEP 21 2017

Barbra Allen Bradshaw, M.D.  
Carol Loffelmann, M.D.  
ballenbradshaw@gmail.com

Dear Drs. Bradshaw and Loffelmann and Cosignatories:

I am writing in response to your correspondence of July 24, 2017, addressed to the Honourable Jane Philpott, former Minister of Health, regarding the revision of Canada's Food Guide. As you may be aware, I was appointed federal Health Minister on August 28, 2017.

I too believe in the importance of helping Canadians make healthy food and lifestyle choices. The Government of Canada is committed to the Healthy Eating Strategy, aiming to make the healthier choice the easier choice for all Canadians.

The Healthy Eating Strategy involves action on a number of initiatives including the revision of Canada's Food Guide, restricting the commercial marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children, eliminating industrially produced trans fats, reducing sodium in processed foods, and improving food labels to give more information on added sugars and artificial dyes in processed foods. All of these efforts will make healthy eating easier for Canadians. More information on the Strategy can be found at <http://bit.ly/2vBnVwV>.

To develop Canada's Food Guide, Health Canada translates the science on food and health into evidence-informed population-level dietary guidance to help support healthy eating and reduce the risk of nutrition-related chronic diseases and conditions of public health importance in Canada. It is used by a range of stakeholders, including the provinces and territories, non-governmental organizations, and health professionals to develop nutrition policies and programs. Canada's Food Guide is intended for the general population. Patients with medical conditions who require specialized dietary advice are encouraged to consult a health care professional.

We recognize the importance of understanding the totality of the evidence base to inform our policies. Health Canada's 2015 evidence review for dietary guidance is available at <http://bit.ly/2vZDxLC>. The magnitude of the Department's review reflects our commitment to considering the best available evidence in policy development.

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The evidence review provides the foundation for our dietary guidance. The main sources of evidence for the review were:

- 29 high-quality reports with systematic reviews of associations between food and health (cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer, osteoporosis, and obesity) from federal agencies such as the U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee and from leading scientific organizations, such as the World Health Organization and the World Cancer Research Fund; we set strict inclusion criteria for any reports on the relationship between food and health to be considered. For example, the report must have been published by leading scientific organizations and governmental agencies with an expert panel and an evidence grade must be provided;
- nationally representative data on the food and nutrient intakes and the health status of Canadians; and
- findings from the assessment of the use of Canada's Food Guide.

Building on the dietary guidance evidence review, we continue to monitor the most recent data, including consideration for relevant evidence, such as high quality, peer-reviewed systematic reviews, and reports from leading scientific organizations and governmental agencies.

Health Canada is committed to ongoing engagement throughout the revision of Canada's Food Guide. During the policy development phase of the new food guide, officials from the Office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion (ONPP) will only seek expert advice from academics, health professional associations, federal, provincial and territorial officials, and non-governmental organizations interested in health. To ensure that the development of dietary guidance policy for Canadians is free from conflict of interest, representatives from the ONPP will not be meeting with representatives from the food and beverage industry to discuss dietary guidance policy development during the revision of Canada's Food Guide. However, all stakeholders and Canadians, including industry, are invited to participate in the open public consultations that are being conducted to ensure new dietary guidance resources are useful and relevant.

As you are aware, on June 10, 2017, Health Canada launched an online public consultation on revising Canada's Food Guide, which ended on August 14, 2017, (<https://www.foodguideconsultation.ca/>). Information on our consultation on restricting unhealthy food and beverage marketing to children is available at <http://bit.ly/2wNdWTP>.

To stay informed about the revision of Canada's Food Guide, please register for the Consultation and Stakeholder Information Management System (CSIMS) at <https://csims-sgici.hc-sc.gc.ca/csims/login.html>. At the areas of interest page, select "Canada's Food Guide/Nutrition." If you are already registered in CSIMS, please ensure that your information is up to date.

Thank you for writing. We appreciate your support as Health Canada revises Canada's Food Guide to strengthen its recommendations for healthy eating.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ginette Petitpas Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a stylized "T" at the end.

The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, P.C., M.P.