



Eatwell plate external reference group – summary of key themes and outcomes of consideration

PHE received 129 comments as part of the eatwell plate review. There were 8 main themes drawn from this correspondence, which are summarised below. Comments received by PHE are available in full at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-plate-external-reference-group-review>

Theme	Action
Review the size of the food group segments in the eatwell plate.	The segment sizes of the food groups have been adjusted to reflect current government advice on a healthy balanced diet. Linear programming has been used to formulate the segment sizes, as agreed by the External Reference Group (ERG) as the most robust approach to take. This modelling process took the current intakes of the consumed foods in the UK (according to the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS)), applied the revised government dietary recommendations and modelled the fewest possible changes needed to achieve the proposed recommendations.
Development of government recommended portion sizes based on a review of evidence.	Provision of portion size information has been considered during this review. A number of complexities exist around developing recommended portion sizes, as detailed in ERG/EATWELLPLATE/14/9, including the wide variation in nutrient

	<p>content of an individual food types. However, Public Health England (PHE) plans to publish typically consumed portion size information for a small range of frequently consumed foods. This information has been drawn from the NDNS and will provide a reference point for consumers.</p>
<p>Removing foods high in fat, salt and sugar from the plate / explore the concept of 'discretionary foods'.</p>	<p>Following positive consumer feedback and reinforcement from the ERG, foods high in fat, salt and sugar have been removed from the main visual (with the exception of oils and spreads) and grouped as foods to 'eat less often and in small amounts'. Consumer research highlighted that the removal of these products from the main image aided consumer understanding of the role of these foods and drinks in the diet. It was also found that having these food products outside of the main image helped consumers to reflect the need to move their overall intakes towards a healthier lifestyle.</p>
<p>More clearly communicate the time frame that the model relates too / removal of knife and fork</p>	<p>The Eatwell Guide does not feature a knife and fork. Consumer research found that the presence of a knife and fork on the eatwell plate were no longer considered appealing aspects of the overall design. It was felt that these added little to the meaning of the model and could cause confusion when interpreting the plate to be a recommendation for every mealtime. The wording of the subtitle makes it clear that the guide refers to the balance of diet overall and not every meal.</p>
<p>Strengthen health messaging in relation to wholegrain starchy carbohydrates, salt, physical activity and hydration.</p>	<p>Consumer testing highlighted that most people found it helpful to have additional messaging on the guide as this helped to answer some of the immediate questions raised when looking at the image alone. The wording that was found to offer the greatest impact and understanding across the variety tested with consumers was</p>

	<p>adopted for the final model; this includes messaging on wholegrain and higher fibre, choosing foods with less fat, salt and sugar, and inclusion of messaging on hydration.</p> <p>PHE recognises the role of activity in maintaining a healthy weight. However, given the focus of this resource on food/ drink consumption and limitations of what can be achieved in a single visual, PHE has not included physical activity messaging.</p>
<p>Highlight differences between unsaturated and saturated fats and oils. Promote benefits of oily fish consumption.</p>	<p>Messaging accompanying the oils and spreads section of the guide includes choosing unsaturated fats.</p> <p>Messaging around eating oily fish is included in the guide, which also includes images of salmon and mackerel. Supporting material includes information on the benefits of eating oily fish.</p>
<p>Clearer advice on what the model depicts, including clarity on whether it represents a healthier version of a 'normal' diet or if it is a prescriptive 'idealistic' diet.</p>	<p>The Eatwell Guide depicts the balance of foods that should be consumed for a diet consistent with government recommendations. It is based on commonly consumed and widely recognised foods. Foods high in fat, sugar or salt have been removed from the main image, with accompanying messaging that if these foods are included in the diet then they should be eaten less often and in small amounts. Consumer testing highlighted that moving these foods out of the main image sent the clearest and most consistent message that these products are not recommended as part of a healthy balanced diet.</p>
<p>Take account of environmental and sustainability considerations alongside health. Promote sustainable fish and reducing meat consumption.</p>	<p>Messages around sustainability were tested during the consumer research and the best performing aspects incorporated into the guide.</p> <p>PHE commissioned the Carbon Trust to analyse the sustainability of the Eatwell Guide compared to the current diet. The results of this work have been published.</p>