

Abstract

Review and Update of the Maternal (Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women), Infant and Toddler Dietary Guidelines [†]

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Early-life nutrition in utero, via breastfeeding (when possible), and during complementary feeding to joining the family diet, lays the foundation for optimum growth, health and neurodevelopment across the lifespan. Additionally, maternal diet is important for a woman's own health and wellbeing. Clear, concise and trusted dietary guidance for these life-stages is needed, based on the most up-to-date international evidence.

The University of Auckland was contracted by the Ministry of Health to review and update the Maternal, Infant and Toddler Dietary Guidelines (MAT0-2), published in 2006-08. The process for the review broadly follows that used to develop the recent Eating and Activity Guidelines for New Zealand Adults, with statements based on high-quality international reviews, developed with experts, and then tested with practitioners and the general public.

An umbrella review of 23 relevant guidelines and review documents was undertaken in early 2019 to inform the development of 12 preliminary statements for the guidelines, which were further developed by the Technical Advisory Group at a workshop in May 2019. Five focus groups, conducted by Moana Research, were held in June/July 2019 with 53 mothers (including pregnant women), fathers, grandparents, caregivers, and early childhood teachers, to test the understandability and acceptability of the draft statements. Thematic analysis of focus group transcripts resulted in recommendations to inform the final statements and future resources. The online stakeholder consultation in July 2019 received 40 organisation and 32 individual submissions. Agreement with the draft statements was generally high among stakeholders, but several key issues and points of contention were raised relating to maternal healthy weight, introduction to solids and allergies.

The process to review and update New Zealand's Maternal, Infant and Toddler Dietary Guidelines has been transparent and robust, similar to development of food-based dietary guidelines in other countries, and will result in pragmatic advice for the public.



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