

Nordic nutrition recommendations and dietary habits.

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Introduction

The Nordic Nutrition Recommendations (NNR) is a set of dietary guidelines created by the Nordic countries in order to promote healthy and sustainable dietary habits. These recommendations are based on the latest scientific research and aim to provide a balanced and varied diet that meets the nutritional needs of individuals throughout their lives.

The NNR is divided into different age groups, from infants to the elderly, and covers various aspects of nutrition such as energy intake, macronutrients, vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber. The guidelines emphasize the importance of consuming a variety of foods from all food groups, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein sources, and healthy fats [1].

One of the key principles of the NNR is to reduce the intake of saturated and trans fats, which are known to increase the risk of cardiovascular disease. Instead, the guidelines recommend consuming more unsaturated fats, such as those found in oily fish, nuts, and seeds. The NNR also recommends limiting the intake of added sugars, salt, and alcohol.

Another important aspect of the NNR is promoting sustainable dietary habits. The guidelines recommend reducing meat consumption and increasing the intake of plant-based foods, such as legumes and vegetables. This not only has health benefits but also helps to reduce the environmental impact of food production [2].

In addition to the NNR, the Nordic countries also have their own traditional dietary habits that have been linked to improved health outcomes. For example, the Finnish diet includes a high intake of fish and berries, which are rich in omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants, respectively. The Norwegian diet includes a lot of seafood, while the Swedish diet is rich in whole grains, vegetables, and fruits.

Overall, the NNR and Nordic dietary habits promote a healthy and sustainable approach to nutrition. By emphasizing a varied and balanced diet, reducing the intake of unhealthy fats and sugars, and promoting sustainable food choices, these guidelines can help individuals improve their health and reduce their environmental impact.

It is important to note that the NNR is not a one-size-fits-all approach and may need to be adjusted based on an individual's specific health needs and lifestyle factors. For example, athletes may require a higher intake of protein and carbohydrates to support their training, while individuals with certain medical

conditions may need to restrict certain types of foods. The NNR also emphasizes the importance of physical activity for overall health and well-being. Regular physical activity can help to maintain a healthy weight, improve cardiovascular health, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer [3].

In addition, the Nordic countries have a strong culture of food and mealtime traditions, which emphasize the importance of socializing and enjoying meals with family and friends. This approach to food and mealtime can have additional benefits beyond just nutrition, as social connections and a sense of community have been linked to improved mental health and overall well-being.

Overall, the NNR and Nordic dietary habits provide a framework for healthy and sustainable nutrition. By emphasizing the importance of a balanced and varied diet, reducing the intake of unhealthy fats and sugars, promoting sustainable food choices, and incorporating physical activity, these guidelines can help individuals improve their health and well-being [4].

The NNR has been regularly updated since its inception in the 1980s, reflecting changes in scientific knowledge and the evolving understanding of nutrition and health. The most recent version of the NNR was published in 2022, which includes updates on recommendations for protein intake, added sugars, and sustainable food choices. One of the key updates in the 2022 version of the NNR is the recommendation for increased protein intake for individuals over the age of 65, to help maintain muscle mass and function. The guidelines also recommend limiting the intake of added sugars to less than 10% of total energy intake, as higher intake has been linked to an increased risk of obesity and chronic diseases.

In terms of sustainability, the NNR recommends reducing the intake of animal-based foods and increasing the intake of plant-based foods, such as legumes, whole grains, and vegetables. The guidelines also encourage the use of seasonal and locally produced foods, as well as reducing food waste and avoiding excessive packaging [5].

The NNR has been widely adopted by Nordic countries and has also influenced dietary guidelines in other countries. The guidelines have been shown to have a positive impact on public health, including a reduction in the incidence of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer.

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Conclusion

The Nordic Nutrition Recommendations and dietary habits provide a comprehensive framework for healthy and sustainable nutrition. By emphasizing a balanced and varied diet, reducing the intake of unhealthy fats and sugars, promoting sustainable food choices, incorporating physical activity, and incorporating social connections and mealtime traditions, these guidelines can help individuals improve their health and well-being. The regular updates to the NNR reflect the evolving understanding of nutrition and health, and ensure that the guidelines remain relevant and effective in promoting public health.

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