

House of Delegates Background Fall 2019

Professional Issue: Total Diet Approach (TDA)

History of the Total Diet Approach

- The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics [Total Diet Approach to Healthy Eating position](#) was adopted by the House of Delegates Leadership Team on September 13, 2001; reaffirmed June 30, 2005, and August 31, 2010. This position was in effect until December 31, 2016 at which time it was slated to begin the revision process.
- Choosing a variety of foods has been a cornerstone principle in dietary guidance over the years. That emphasis has evolved to a more specific encouragement of varied choices of nutrient dense items within basic food groups.
- Since 2001, this statement has been widely cited by members and the media; it has also been internationally cited by professional organizations and publications and has become the Total Diet Approach (TDA) philosophy of the Academy based on the Total Diet Approach position statement.
- Following an extensive process evaluation in 2017, the [method](#) for establishing an Academy position statement was revised in 2018 and published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The new process requires that both a scoping and systematic review are done on a specific topic. For a position paper, the systematic review would need to have sufficiently strong evidence to warrant a rating of grade I or II. When the evidence is lower than a grade II, a consensus statement will be written to highlight emerging areas in nutrition and dietetics.
 - Previously the term “stance” was only applied to position papers; however, with the change in methodology for position papers, it is important to reexamine what evidence is required for a stance in emerging areas.
 - The “Total Diet Approach” position statement is that the total diet or overall pattern of food eaten is the most important focus of healthy eating. All foods can fit within this pattern if consumed in moderation with appropriate portion size and combined with physical activity. The Academy strives to communicate healthy eating messages that emphasize a balance of food and beverages within energy needs, rather than any one food or meal.
 - While this is an important philosophy, it is not based on specific research questions or studies and thus would not be able to be renewed per the new methodology for position or consensus statements. So, it was officially “retired” in 2018.
- The House of Delegates will use member input and information from the Board of Directors for the dialogue on the Total Diet Approach and answer the overarching question, “Is the Total Diet Approach still relevant for a healthy population?”

Professional Issue Question:
Is the “Total Diet Approach” still relevant for a healthy population?

Meeting Objectives:

1. Develop recommendations for the Academy Board of Directors on the “Total Diet Approach” terminology and stance as an effective message to communicate food and nutrition information to the public.
2. Answer the question, “Does the Total Diet Approach stance position RDNs and NDTRs as trusted advisors for consumers?”

Member Surveys

An Academy Member Engagement Zone Question and HOD Member Pulse Survey were launched to obtain input from members on the “Total Diet Approach” and the results will be shared with delegates.

Member Survey Question:
*When working with your patients and clients,
do you feel the “Total Diet Approach” is relevant to your practice?
Provide the rationale for your response.*

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis: Total Diet Approach

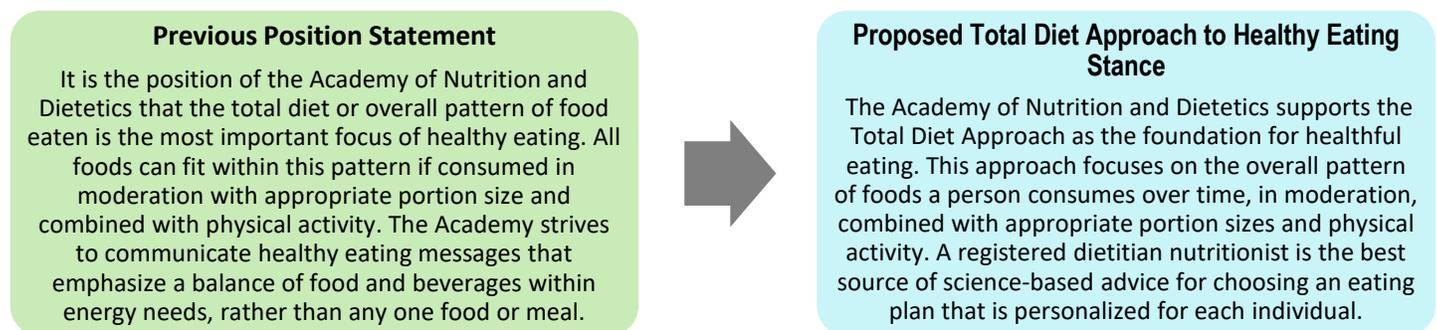
In July, the Academy Board of Directors completed the SWOT analysis on the following pages as one step in determining if the Academy continues to promote the Total Diet Approach philosophy in consumer messaging.

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to result in healthful dietary and lifestyle changes when messages have a consistent emphasis on a total dietary pattern that is balanced and moderate • Helps consumers understand and apply the principles of healthful diet and lifestyle choices • Stresses physical activity and focus on the big picture: the overall eating patterns that define a person’s well-being • Promotes an enjoyable pattern of diet and activity as part of a long-term overall healthful lifestyle • Encourages parents, teachers, and other role models to help children become accustomed to healthful food and lifestyle choices • Uses successful educational strategies and technologies with appropriate theories and models to promote behavioral change • Emphasizes long-term eating habits and a contextual approach that incorporates nutrient-rich foods and provides more useful information to guide long-term food choice • Is supported by federal nutrition programs: <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i>, <i>MyPlate</i>, <i>Healthy People 2020</i>, <i>Nutrition Facts Label</i> • Is supported by American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, Robert Johnson Wood Foundation • Encourages practitioners to achieve an active professional and unbiased approach to promoting healthful eating and physical activity patterns • Nutrition messages are more effective when focused on positive ways to make healthful food choices over time, rather than individual foods to be strictly avoided • Cited by members, the media, and internationally by professional organizations and publications • Separates the food from the person – treating the individual
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be misinterpreted as legitimizing unlimited consumption of foods with low nutrient density • Plethora of food items in the average supermarket and an infinite array of recipe combinations, the futility of attempting to sort all food items into dichotomous categories becomes evident, leading to confusion and frustration • “All foods fit” tagline may be associated with promotion of junk foods • May be misinterpreted into a one-size-fits-all approach that does not address the needs of a population affected by diet-related chronic disease. • Focus on food and not the person • People are not homogenous

Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a full range of available and appropriate communication technologies and embrace newer channels, such as social media, to communicate with professional colleagues and the public • Food and nutrition practitioners can continue to strengthen skills, update competencies, and document outcomes • Use successful educational strategies and technologies with appropriate theories and models to promote behavioral change • Evaluate and share information on the effectiveness of communication strategies used in food and nutrition programs • Design nutrition education messages for the public that will reduce confusion from the high volume and apparent inconsistencies of nutrition advice • Add personalized nutrition to messaging and emphasize a key attribute that delineates the work of the RDN apart from other health care workers, MNT, and individualized preventive care • Develop research projects (systematic reviews, prospective cohort studies, etc.) that focus on targeted/personalized nutrition interventions which aligns with the National Nutrition Research Roadmap developed by USDA and HHS • Demonstrates that RDNs are valuable allied health professionals who should collaborate with policymakers, other nutrition and dietetics practitioners, and food manufacturers to reach a consensus definition of “nutrient density” • Move RDN into technology space, providing counsel • Incorporate secondary attributes for nutrition and health
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient evidence to meet current position paper standards • Isn't possible for all consumer messaging (such as publications and websites) to be evidence-based • Changes in new government regulations, such as the <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> • Technological advances (AI, apps) provide users the ability to instantaneously learn calorie and nutrient content of foods, helping them set weight loss goals, or assist them with food preparation or personalized diets • Competitors in the marketplace promoting specific diets, such as health coaches and nutritionists • Changing quality standards or specifications on diet products or services • Acknowledged weaknesses may seriously threaten the profession/organization

Proposed Total Diet Approach to Healthy Eating Stance

During the September 2019 Academy Board of Directors Meeting, a proposed Total Diet Approach to Healthy Eating stance was drafted and, if approved, would replace the position statement. As with any professional issue, any changes would need to respect the Academy’s Principles and the Code of Ethics for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession.



Next Steps

The House of Delegates will be conducting a dialogue on the proposed stance and use of the term “Total Diet Approach” during the Fall 2019 HOD Meeting. The HOD will also seek additional input from Academy Committees prior to making recommendations to the Board of Directors.