



## About the Nutrient Rich Foods Coalition

Nutrient density is a long-standing dietary principle and a cornerstone of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid. In 2005, the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC), after a comprehensive review of the current literature on diet and health, called for more research in developing a scientifically valid definition for nutrient density that could be useful on the food label and in determining what criteria are necessary for foods to meet this definition.

**The goal of the Nutrient Rich Foods Coalition (NRFC), a partnership that brings together leading scientific researchers, health professionals, communications experts and commodity organizations, is consistent with the DGAC's call to action: To develop a scientifically valid, consumer-relevant definition of nutrient density. The NRFC is working to develop a science-proven, consumer-tested food guidance system based on the total nutrient package of a food or beverage – not just the nutrients to avoid – that can help educate people on how to get more nutrition for their calories.**

Through the following research, education and communications efforts, the NRFC aims to shift the way people choose foods and beverages, from focusing on calories alone, “good or bad foods” or “nutrients to avoid” to understanding the complete nutrient package as a way to build better diets and improve overall diet quality:

- **Scientific research:** The NRFC has been working with leading researchers to develop a scientifically valid definition of nutrient density. The definition has been validated against objective measures of a healthy diet, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Healthy Eating Index. It takes into account both nutrients that are encouraged for optimal health, as well as nutrients to limit in the diet. Since 2004, at least 6 peer-reviewed articles related to the Nutrient Rich Foods (NRF) Index have been published. This includes scientific research, such as a peer-reviewed article published in the August 2009 issue of the *Journal of Nutrition* which describes the development and validation approach taken to develop the Nutrient Rich Foods Index. There are also reviews, such as the January 2008 edition of *Nutrition Reviews* on the criteria or guiding principles by which nutrient profiling systems should be developed and evaluated.
- **Health professional education:** The NRFC has created a comprehensive *Live Well!* tool kit to help health professionals educate consumers about how to follow the recommendations of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and *MyPyramid* and “get more nutrition from their calories.” In addition, on March 17, 2009, the NRFC welcomed health and nutrition thought leaders to the “Achieve Better Health with Nutrient Rich Foods” Symposium in Washington, D.C. Co-hosted by the American Society for Nutrition, the School Nutrition Association and the University of Washington Center for Public Health Nutrition, the event laid the foundation for a more nutrient-rich emphasis in nutrition education by focusing on a positive, total diet approach to living well.
- **Communications outreach:** The NRFC Web site ([www.NutrientRichFoods.org](http://www.NutrientRichFoods.org)) offers consumer-friendly resources that provide practical advice, easy tips, creative recipes and a grocery shopping list to help make enjoying a nutrient-rich lifestyle easier.

The NRFC works closely with a Scientific Advisory Committee to guide nutrient density research and a Consumer Communications and Nutrition Behavior Advisory Committee to effectively communicate the NRF approach to consumers and health professionals. Leading health professional organizations [support](#) the NRF approach, which considers the total nutrient package of a food or beverage, as a way for Americans to build and enjoy a healthier diet by getting more nutrition from their calories.

The following commodity organizations are members of the NRFC: California Avocado Commission, California Kiwifruit Commission, California Strawberry Commission, Egg Nutrition Center, Florida Department of Citrus, Grain Foods Foundation, The Beef Checkoff through the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Dairy Council, National Pork Board, U.S. Potato Board, Wheat Foods Council, and the Wild Blueberry Association of North America.