

Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) 39

From Monday, June 27, 2016

Nutrient reference values for the guidelines on nutrition labelling

AGREED - 27 June 2016

A lack of vitamins and minerals in a person's diet can have serious health consequences. For example, Vitamin A deficiency can cause blindness and increase the risk of disease and death from severe infections. Foods high in Vitamin A include eggs, milk, liver, yellow and orange vegetables, and leafy greens. Another example is iron deficiency-the most widespread nutritional disorder in the world. A lack of iron can cause anaemia (lower than normal level of red blood cells) which stops the body from getting the amount of oxygen it needs. Iron deficiency anaemia can lead to pregnancy complications and delayed growth and development in infants and children. Foods high in iron include meat, shellfish, and some leafy green vegetables. The Codex Alimentarius Commission has adopted nutrient reference values for Copper, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus, and Vitamin A to be included in its Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling.

PART I. PROPOSED DRAFT NEW OR REVISED NUTRIENT REFERENCE VALUES FOR LABELLING PURPOSES IN THE *GUIDELINES ON NUTRITION LABELLING* (CAC/GL 2-1985)

(for adoption at Step 5/8)

3.4.4.1 NRVs-R Vitamins

Vitamin A (μg RAE or RE)

800

Minerals

Magnesium (mg)

310

Iron (mg)**

14 (15% dietary absorption; Diversified diets, rich in meat fish, poultry, and/or rich in fruit and vegetables)
22 (10% dietary absorption; Diets rich in cereals, roots or tubers, with some meat, fish, poultry and/or containing some fruit and vegetables)

Copper (μg)

900

Phosphorus (mg)

700

Vitamin E

Malaysia and Indonesia argued for higher levels of Vitamin E, and recommended that this NRV-R discussion be returned to Step 3 (in need of further discussion at the Committee level), instead of the CCNFSDU Chair recommendation for the CAC to adopt this at Step 5/8 (final). The NGOs, NHF and CRN stressed the fact that the proposed level of 9 mg/day is too low for the general population. As a compromise, the CAC chair recommended and it was approved by the delegations to return this NRV-R to Step 5, which does revert this issue back to CCNFSDU for further discussion. CRN comments are presented below.

The Codex step procedure

Before a decision is made to undertake the development of a new standard or other text, a project proposal is prepared and discussed at Committee level.

STEP 1

The project proposal is reviewed by the Executive Committee and compared against the criteria and priorities established by the Commission.

STEPS 2, 3 AND 4

A draft text is prepared (Step 2) and circulated to member countries and all interested parties for comment (Step 3). The draft and the comments are reviewed at Committee level (Step 4) and, if necessary, a new draft is prepared.

STEP 5

The Commission reviews the progress made and agrees that the draft should go to finalization. After this stage, the draft is also endorsed by the relevant General Subject Committees so that it is consistent with Codex general standards.*

STEPS 6 AND 7

The approved draft is sent again to governments and interested parties for comment and finalized by the relevant Committee. The draft is submitted to the Commission for adoption.

STEP 8

Following a final round of comments, the Commission adopts the draft as a formal Codex text. The standard, guideline or other text is then published by the Codex Secretariat.

*** Sometimes the text is considered to be ready for final adoption at this stage - often called Step 5/8.**

CRN Comments

Thank you madam Chair. The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN) representing US and multinational dietary supplement and nutritional products manufacturers offers the following science-based comments:

We are concerned that Vitamin E values are not where they need to be. The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans report established vitamin E as a shortfall nutrient.

According to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey data, as many as 93% of Americans fall short on this essential nutrient when it comes to intake from diet alone.

Using multivitamins has helped decrease that figure, “but it’s definitely a nutrient the American population is not getting enough of.”

Research out of Oregon State University's Linus Pauling Institute outlined some recent findings—most notably, vitamin E's significance during fetal development and throughout the first years of life, the correlation between adequate intake and dementia later in life, and the difficulty of evaluating vitamin E adequacy through blood level measurements alone.

The review of multiple studies, published in *Advances in Nutrition* revealed that inadequate vitamin E is associated with increased infection, anemia, stunting of growth, and poor outcomes during pregnancy for both infant and mother, and neurological disorders and muscle deterioration in children with an overt deficiency.

On the other hand, increased vitamin E concentrations at birth were associated with improved cognitive function by age two. The nutrient was also found to possibly slow Alzheimer's progression, increase cognitive function, and even reduce risk of dementia.

The University of Maryland Medical Center states that "Many population studies have found that people with higher levels of Vitamin E in their bodies have a lower risk of heart disease."

Bottom line....potencies need to increase not decrease.