



**Nutrient Rich  
Foods Coalition**™  
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## **4 NEW PUBLICATIONS PROVIDE TIMELY GUIDANCE FOR EDUCATING CONSUMERS THROUGH NUTRIENT PROFILING SYSTEMS**

***Nutrient Rich Foods approach provides science-based model for helping consumers evaluate foods' and beverages' nutrient density and build healthier diets***

**April 1, 2010** – For the American consumer, the modern supermarket aisle has become more confusing than ever. Now, in addition to price and product information, many products use front-of-package labeling and other marketing tactics in an effort to stand out as a so-called healthy food option.

The result is a puzzling, inconsistent web of nutrient profiling systems and other advice that may not help consumers make the most informed decisions. Further, the focus is often on nutrients to limit, such as sugar, fat and sodium -- rather than also considering the beneficial nutrients found in foods' and beverages' entire nutrient package.

Together, food manufacturers, retailers, nutrition science researchers and even the government are considering how to untangle that web by establishing uniform and science-based guidance for nutrient profiling systems that help people make healthier food selections, often through marketing and front-of-package labeling. The challenge for all parties is how best to define nutrient-rich foods in a way that clarifies nutrition information rather than confusing it.

**WHAT: New articles reveal that the Nutrient Rich Foods (NRF) approach can serve as a science-based model in the development of nutrient profiling systems:**

- **“The Nutrient Rich Foods Index Helps to Identify Healthy, Affordable Foods,” *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, February 2010:** The study outlines how the NRF Index, a science-based definition of nutrient density, can help people identify foods that are both nutritious and affordable when used in conjunction with a food prices database. It also notes the development of nutrient profiling models that help consumers identify affordable nutrient-rich foods across and within food groups has implications for nutrition education, food policy, and public health.<sup>1</sup>
- **“Nutrient Profiling: Global Approaches, Policies, and Perspectives,” *Nutrition Today*, January/February 2010:** The article details how the development of a science-based system of nutrient profiling can help people clearly identify nutrient-rich foods. It also emphasizes the importance of identifying a uniform, science-based nutrient profiling system that can be integrated into the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans to provide consumers, educators, legislators, and health professionals with a tool to help in planning, choosing and consuming more healthful diets.<sup>2</sup>
- **“Putting the Nutrient Rich Foods Index into Practice,” *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*, August 2009 (published March 2010):** The article outlines extensive consumer research used to create a consumer-driven, science-based educational tool to communicate the concept of nutrient density to Americans, based on the NRF Index. A key finding of this research was that consumers have a more complex approach to choosing foods than simply looking at a front-of-pack label at the grocery store. The Food Decision Cycle was developed to describe how consumers make food decisions and it revealed that a broader educational approach may be more likely to result in behavior change than a single communication venue such as front-of-pack labeling.<sup>3</sup>

- **“Defining Nutrient Density: Development and Validation of the Nutrient Rich Foods Index,” *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*, August 2009 (published March 2010):** The review details the development and validation of the NRF Index, which followed scientific guidelines for nutrient profiling and was accompanied by extensive testing. The author recommends applying some basic scientific principles to the development of any nutrient profiling system and emphasizes the importance of consumer research in the development of any model.<sup>4</sup> Related research was used as the basis for six guiding principles for profiling systems: systems should be objective, simple, transparent, balanced, validated and consumer driven.<sup>5</sup>

**WHY:** With food labeling reform now underway and the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (replacing the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans) expected by year end, nutrient profiling is receiving heightened attention as a way to help people identify healthy foods and beverages. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is in the process of evaluating front-of-package labeling and, together with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the FDA has commissioned an Institute of Medicine examination of the issue.

**HOW:** The NRF Index ranks foods based on their nutritional value and can be applied to individual foods, meals, menus and even the daily diet of Americans. The development of the NRF Index followed scientific guidelines for nutrient profiling and has been validated against an independent measure of a healthy diet. It is calculated as the sum of the percent Daily Values (DV) per 100 kcal of nine nutrients to encourage (protein, fiber, vitamins A, C and E, calcium, magnesium, iron, and potassium) minus the sum of the percent DV per 100 kcal of three nutrients to limit (saturated fat, added sugars and sodium).

**WHO:** Available for interviews is **Adam Drewnowski**, PhD, author of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* study and one of the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* studies, co-author of the *Nutrition Today* study, and director of the Center for Public Health Nutrition at the University of Washington.

#### **NUTRIENT RICH FOODS COALITION:**

The Nutrient Rich Foods (NRF) Coalition brings together leading scientific researchers, health professionals, communications experts and agricultural commodities that represent the five basic food groups. It is dedicated to helping educate people on how to get more nutrients from their diets by choosing nutrient-rich foods first.

The NRF Coalition develops nutrition education resources and tools that support the NRF approach, a positive, total diet approach that considers the complete nutrient package of foods and beverages as a way to help people build healthier diets. More information is available at [www.NutrientRichFoods.org](http://www.NutrientRichFoods.org).

#### **EDITORS NOTE:**

Copies of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* and *Nutrition Today* articles are available upon request.

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<sup>1</sup> Drewnowski A. The Nutrient Rich Foods Index helps to identify healthy, affordable foods. *Am J Clin Nutr*. Apr 2010;91(4):1095S-1101S.

<sup>2</sup> Miller G, Drewnowski A, King J, Gibney M, Clemens R. Nutrient profiling: global approaches, policies and perspectives. *Nutrition Today* Jan/Feb 2010;45(1):6-12.

<sup>3</sup> Mobley A, Kraemer D, Nicholls J. Putting the Nutrient-Rich Foods Index into practice. *J Am Coll Nutr* Aug 2009;28(4):427S-435S.

<sup>4</sup> Drewnowski A. Development and validation of the Nutrient-Rich Foods Index: tool to measure nutritional quality of foods. *J Am Coll Nutr* Aug 2009;28(4):421S-426S.

<sup>5</sup> Drewnowski A, Fulgoni VL III. Nutrient profiling of foods: creating a nutrient-rich food index. *Nutrition Reviews* Jan 2008;66(1):23-39.