# A Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases in Malta 2010

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Ministry for Health, the Elderly and Community Care

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2020

## Adopted by:
Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
Directorate, Public Health Regulation Division

## Country(ies):
Malta

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## Adopted year:
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## Type of policy:
NCD policy, strategy or plan with healthy diet components

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## Goals

**Goals, objectives or targets related to nutrition:**

The overall goal of the NCD strategy is: To develop a multifactorial approach to NCD prevention through tackling common risk factors targeting both at a population level, and also high-risk groups.

**The strategy aims to:**

- Reduce the burden of NCD by targeting the following major chronic diseases: cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, mental ill-health and cancer;
- Reduce the burden of oral diseases;
- Improve the individual risk profile by focusing on: four lifestyle-related factors: diet, physical activity, tobacco and alcohol four biological risk factors: obesity, hypertension, hyperlipidaemia and carbohydrate abnormalities

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## Strategies

**Strategies and activities related to nutrition:**

- To encourage the population to follow the dietary guidelines issued by the Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention in Malta
- To continue discussions with the food industry on product reformulation, for instance by decreasing fat and salt content of food.
- To consider initiatives to make the price of fish and rabbit more reasonable to the Maltese consumer.
- Promote healthy attractive and easy to cook recipes
- Renew current policy on breastfeeding which includes; increasing awareness provision of assistance to mothers, making breastfeeding easier at most places and ensuring a legal framework for the marketing of breast milk substitutes (CINDI 2000).
- To review the structures responsible for the design and implementation of nutrition related programmes.
- Strengthening compliance with the ban of sale of junk food from school canteens
- Campaigns to increase fruit and vegetable consumption targeting children and younger age groups
- Increasing availability of fruit and vegetables in canteens and restaurants
- Promote the Mediterranean diet
- Adopt the twelve steps to healthy eating advised by WHO
  - Eat a nutritious diet based on a variety of foods originating mainly from plants, rather than animals.
  - Base meals on a variety of bread, grains, pasta, rice or potatoes.
  - Eat a variety of vegetables and fruits, preferably fresh and local, at least five portions per day (at least 400g per day).
  - Maintain body weight within the recommended limits.
  - Control fat intake (not more than 30% of daily energy) and replace most saturated fats with unsaturated vegetable oils or soft margarines.
  - Replace fatty meat and meat products with beans, legumes, lentils, fish, poultry or lean meat.
Use milk and dairy products (yoghurt and cheese) that are low in both fat and salt.
- Select foods that are low in sugar limiting the frequency of sugary drinks and sweets.
- Choose a low-salt diet. Total salt intake should not be more than one teaspoon (5g) per day, including the salt in bread and processed cured and preserved foods.
- If alcohol is consumed, limit intake to no more than two drinks (each containing 10g of alcohol) per day.
- Prepare food in a safe and hygienic way. Steam, bake, boil or microwave to help reduce the amount of added fat.
- Promote exclusive breastfeeding and the introduction of safe and adequate complementary foods from the age of about six months, but not before four months, while breastfeeding continues during the first years of life.

- Perform studies to assess the present situation
- A study to assess the nutritional status and eating habits of the whole population and sub-groups within this population.
- An analysis of the nutrient content of traditional Maltese food

M&E Indicators related to nutrition:

Strategy targets

Healthy diet

- Reduce the frequency of intake of processed meat products which currently stands at 15% daily by 5%.
- Increase the frequency of intake of fish by reducing the percentage of the population who never consume fish by 20% from the current level of 41.6%.
- Increase the proportion of the Maltese population who consume vegetables on a daily basis by 25% especially in younger age groups.
- Reduce consumption of sweets, sweet pastries, and sugared soft drinks six times a week or more by 10%.
- Limit salt consumption by 10%
- Reduce the mean daily intake of animal fat per capita by 10%

Obesity

- To maintain the percentage of 13 year olds above the 95th weight centile below 15%
- To reduce the prevalence of obesity in the Maltese population over the age of 15 years from 22% to 18%

Raised blood sugar

- By the year 2000, the prevalence of non-insulin dependent diabetes in those aged 34 and over should be reduced to not more than 7.5% and of IGT should be reduced to no more than 9%.
- To limit the prevalence of persons with diabetes among those aged 34 years and over to 10%

Raised blood pressure

- By the year 2005, the diastolic blood pressure distribution in the general population should be reduced by 10mmHg. This could result in a 30% decrease in total attributable mortality.
- The prevalence of self-reported hypertension in Maltese adults should be reduced by 3%.

Raised serum cholesterol

- By the year 2005, the serum cholesterol level in the general population should be reduced by 1% from the present level.
- To reduce the self-reported prevalence of hypercholesterolemia by 2%.
- To encourage Maltese adults with a family history of heart disease, high blood pressure or stroke to start monitoring their blood cholesterol levels at least biannually if on treatment, or once annually if not on treatment.

M&E Indicator types:

Outcome indicators

URL link:

File upload:
MLT 2010 National NCD Strategy.pdf

Reference:
Policy topics:

- Overweight in children 0-5 yrs
- Overweight in adolescents
- Fat intake
- Sodium/salt intake
- Sugar intake
- Fruit and vegetable intake
- Breastfeeding promotion/counselling
- International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes
- Capacity building for the Code
- Complementary feeding promotion/counselling
- Regulation/guidelines on types of foods and beverages available
- Monitoring of children’s growth in school
- Promotion of healthy diet and prevention of obesity and diet-related NCDs (general)
- Dietary guidelines
- Food-based dietary guidelines (FBDG)
- Reformulation of foods and beverages
- Fats
- Salt/sodium
- Regulating marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children
- Creation of healthy food environment
- Media campaigns on healthy diets and nutrition
- Nutrition counselling on healthy diets
- Physical activity and healthy lifestyle

Partners in policy implementation

- Government
  - Health
- National NGO(s)
- Other
  - Details: more
    Voluntary Organisations; Professional Groups

Links