Do your communications...

Enhance public understanding of foods, food components, and/or dietary supplements and their role in a healthful lifestyle?

- Serve-up plain talk about food and health. Advise consumers that dietary components are not “magic bullets” that work alone, but may promote good health when included as part of a healthful diet and lifestyle.

Clearly convey the differences between emerging and consensus science?

- Scientific research is evolutionary, not revolutionary. Tell consumers where new findings fall on the research continuum and within the overall body of evidence.

Communicate with accuracy and balance?

- Carefully craft your communications. Advise a healthy skepticism for potentially misleading headlines, such as “medical miracle” or “scientific breakthrough.” Suggest looking beyond dramatic language to get the full story. Explain that facts are facts, but experts may differ in opinion about how to interpret them. Present a complete picture of a study’s results, rather than select findings.

Put new findings into the context needed for an individual to make dietary decisions?

- Make your messages meaningful. Translate the latest research into what is on the consumer’s dinner plate. Spell out to whom new findings apply and what impact, if any, the findings may have on eating habits.

Disclose all key details about a particular study?

- Cite the study specifics. Discuss the research study design (such as characteristics of participants and quantity of food consumed) to help the public understand the results and their validity.

Consider peer-review status?

- Point out the peer-review process as a key measure of a study’s credibility, although it is not the only key. Whether a study has been through the peer-review process is not a guarantee of conclusive results—it is one piece of a larger puzzle made up by the overall body of evidence.

Assess the objectivity of research?

- When assessing a study’s objectivity, consider the full facts—including not only disclosure of funding sources, but also the peer-review process, methodology, and conclusions.
Guidelines for Communicating the Emerging Science of Dietary Components for Health

International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation and Institute of Food Technologists (IFT)

Consumers’ appetites for food and nutrition news seem nearly insatiable. In recent years, scientific evidence has revealed that bioactive dietary components may benefit health in ways that extend beyond meeting basic nutritional needs. Looking further than the hottest topics and trends is important in helping to translate how the latest research about food and nutrition could change what’s on the public’s plate.

Refer to the checklist to enhance your communications, helping consumers enjoy health-promoting foods as part of an overall healthful lifestyle—leading them to better health.

For more information on the Guidelines please visit:
http://www.ific.org/nutrition/functional/guidelines

In Summary:

- Serve-up plain talk about food and health.
- State that scientific research is evolutionary, not revolutionary.
- Carefully craft your communications.
- Make your messages meaningful.
- Cite the study specifics.
- Point out the peer-review process as a key measure of a study’s credibility, although it is not the only key.
- When assessing a study’s objectivity, consider the full facts.

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